CHAPTER IV
ROSMERSHOLM

Sado-Masochistic Merger in the Boondocks

Originally titled as The White Horses, Rosmersholm saw the light of the day on 23rd November, 1886. Like other important plays of Ibsen, this play is also marked as one of the finest achievements of Henrik Ibsen. But before I come to the actual analysis of the play with focus on the theme of Search for freedom, it will be worth while to make a mention of the contemporary reception which the play met with, as also the various viewpoints with which different literary critics have studied the play over the last century. To begin with, as in case of almost all the plays, this play Rosmersholm also received a number of hostile comments. For example when the play was first staged in Bergen, spectators described it as a play full of solemn absurdities and contrived truths. A few comments of the contemporary press are in order. The Times described the play as, "A handful of disagreeable and somewhat enigmatical personages... Ibsen is a local or provincial dramatist." The Standard commented as "Impossible people do wild things for an apparent reason... Those portions of the play which are comprehensible are utterly preposterous... Ibsen is neither dramatist, poet, philosopher, moralist, teacher, reformer----nothing but a compiler of rather disagreeable eccentricities." The Morning Advertiser reacted as, "His play is morbid, in fact it is not a play but a tiresome exposition of a fantastic theory that no healthy mind can accept.... Ibsenism, a craze happily confined to a few... Ibsen worship is a hysterical thing." The Morning Post was not sure whether the ideas contained in the play will be accepted. In its opinion, "Love, truth, religion and self-respect have still some hold upon us, and it is hardly likely that Ibsen’s gloomy ideas will be generally accepted." While The Evening News labelled the play as, “Mr. Ibsen’s silly sayings.” The People went to the extent of stating, “Ibsen’s gruesome play... His repulsive drama... Greeted with the silence of contempt when the curtain finally fell.” Last but not
the least, *The Stage* states that the play, "Studies insanity best fitted for the lecture room in Bedlam... At the fall of the curtain there was loud applause, and but the faintest attempt at hissing." ⁷

However after the English translations of the play were made available, spectators found the play as charged, to an extraordinary degree, with the explosive elements of modern thought and morals. Although they found the play ending in utter darkness yet they saw many flashing threads of hope and love. Similarly no two opinions of the literary critics are similar. To some, the play is chiefly devoted to local Norwegian politics while to others like Oswald Crawfurd, "The play is a psychological study of the progress of the establishment of the individuality of two lovers, one semi-virtuous, conventional prig, the other a young adventuress, with a singularly contradictory and complicated nature." ⁸ An eminent critic Cleanth Brooks studies *Rosmersholm* from structural perspectives with special reference to unities and finds that Ibsen has very strictly adhered to the observance of Aristotelian unities. However, he is doubtful whether Ibsen has successfully handled structure. To him the inner complexity of characters points towards complexity of meaning but his study reveals that the play falls short of the tragic stature of Lear or Oedipus. Brooks describes Rosmer as too weak a person while it is Rebecca who calls the shots in the play. Therefore his analysis boils down to this comment:

Treated from the beginning as Rebecca's tragedy, it might have reached a high level. Certainly, it has the essential ingredients: Rebecca has a mixture of motives (though none of them is crass), she embarks on a great project, she fails, and she is ironically pulled down by the very forces from which she would save Rosmer. She can transcend them and win him from them only by complying with them and suffering from the same death into which she had forced Beata.⁹

Raymond Williams studies the play in terms of the tensions which engird the major characters. In his opinion:
It realises the tension which had lain behind *Brand* — the inevitable conflict between response to vocation and inherited debt. Ibsen examines this experience in a double aspect, through Rosmer and Rebecca, but it is a single experience just as, in the play, Rosmer and Rebecca come to realise: 'We are one. Rosmer is a creature of his past, 'the death in life' of Rosmersholm. To fight his way out of life. To bring light, where the Rosmer family from generation to generation has been a centre of darkness, his own strength is insufficient.'

Martin Lamm's analysis reveals that the play is an attempt of Ibsen to bid farewell to the social play and his study of the play is on traditional lines. He opines that, "In Rosmersholm the past is not dead but living and somehow connected with the finest and the most sensitive aspects of personality." G.B. Shaw views the play as a study on the, "subject of the danger of forming ideals for other people and interfering in their lives with a view to enabling them to realise those ideals." For Allardyce Nicoll, *Rosmersholm* is about the spectacle of an iron-minded female goading Rosmer to glorious battle with the entrenched forces of the conservative clergy. It is a play, "in which the outward semblance is realistic, the inner core spiritually symbolic and in which Ibsen turned to give his attention to the modern emancipated woman." While Michael Meyer studies the play in terms of Freudian Schema of repression of sexual instincts yet he thinks that Ibsen is obsessed with the question whether it lay or did not lay within man's power to drive away ghosts and white horses. And in that context, Meyer finds a close link of *Rosmersholm* with *The Lady From The Sea*. In his opinion, "In Rosmersholm, a potentially happy relationship between the two people is destroyed by the power of the past; in *The Lady From The Sea*, Wangle and Ellida overcome that power." For Desmond MacCarthy, "*Rosmersholm* is a play made out of the divided allegiance of the modern conscience to two different moralities both seemingly fitted yet unfitted to guide men. The tug of war between the ethics of the will to power and Christianity, between the gospel of self assertion and of renunciation, had been a vital matter to Ibsen." In the same vein F.L. Lucas reads a play as a clash between the old and new moralities and connects this
clash to the conscience of the inalienable past. However, he finds the play well fitted in the larger expression of Ibsen’s psyche. In his opinion:

Rosmersholm could well have been called Ghosts or it could have been called Crime and Punishment. If A Doll’s House is in part a battle between moralities masculine and feminine, Rosmersholm is a battle between moralities old and new. For here the conscience of the past overcome by new radicalism goes underground, yet still lives on, though at level less conscious. \(^{16}\)

G. Wilson Knight finds the play as re-working in modern terms the opposition of Emperor and Galilean and studies the play as a thesis about the terrible impact which over burdening traditions have upon the individuals. In his opinion about Rebecca, “She is stronger than any other person or all the persons together in the play: but she is not stronger than the dead. The contest is being fought out as a contest between cosmic life in Rebecca and supernatural death in Rosmers.” \(^{17}\) A modern critic Hans Heiberg, agrees with Francis Bull that Rosmersholm and Ghosts are like movements of the same symphony but finds the play both pessimistic as well as the most optimistic. He analyses the play from the view point of characterisation and fixes Rebecca in the slots which are there for Nora, Mrs. Alving etc. He views Rosmer in terms of sexual anxiety, Brendel in terms of the hollow aesthetics and Madam Helseth in terms of the chorus of classical tragedy. But, Rebecca, on the other hand, apart from the little portrait of Aasta Hansteen in The Pillars of Society, is the first woman in Ibsen’s contemporary writing, who has brought herself up, as society has not been able to do it. In relation to society into which she erupts, she is a revolutionary and a revolutionary, independent in thought and will.” \(^{18}\)

Ronald Gaskell finds that the play is in line with the extreme idealism of Brand and Julian’s break with the Church. In a sense Rosmersholm is Emperor and Galilean rewritten but for him the play is a fine illustration of Brand’s out cry, “To be wholly one self! But how, with the weight of the
inheritance of sin?" Errol Durbach states that *Rosmersholm* is the bleakest and the most depressing of Ibsen's plays, in which an entire century of romantic rhetoric, once fired by the spirit of revolution and the politics of a restored democratic paradise seems to have fizzled. In the person of Brendel he finds a nightmare vision of aspiration horribly defeated. However Durbach finds a moral vision in the play as he states, "No man can legislate for another or liberate another: The morality of freedom demands that each emancipate himself and the fundamental assumption of the spiritual democrat is that man is the source of his own moral system." For J.D. Dhingra, the play is a case study of an individual who undergoes immense mental agony because of his enslavement to putrid past. He opines:

The "White horses" in the form of obsessive aristocratic family traditions continue to prey upon the individual struggling to emancipate himself. Rosmer's fastidious tastes—his fear of sex, insistence on purity of women, his intense cultivation of the intellect as a bulwark against the emotions — are all extrinsic, and are alien to his nature. He is constrained to acquire them in the background of the traditions he has inherited from his ancestors; and these together constitute a part of his craze which prevents him from becoming what he would have become if he had followed his real nature.

Gail Finney, an eminent modern critic on Ibsen, has studied the play from an absolutely new angle. He has made an attempt to study the character of Rebecca West in the larger context of what he calls the emergence of New Woman, a literary type which flourished above all in the Victorian fiction of 1890s. His description of the New Woman is as:

The New Woman typically values self-fulfillment and independence rather than the stereotypically feminine ideal of self-sacrifice; believes in legal and sexual equality; often remains single because of the difficulty of combining such equality with marriage; is more open about her security than the 'Old Woman'; is well-educated and reads a great deal; has a job; is athletic or otherwise physically vigorous and, accordingly, prefer comfortable clothes (sometimes male attire) to traditional female garb.
Finney states that while recognition of the emancipating qualities of 'New Woman' are important for understanding of Ibsen's position vis-à-vis feminism yet, Ibsen's emancipated woman can not be identified with the type. Similarly Janet Garton, a Senior Lecturer in Scandinavian Studies at the University of East Anglia, makes a very detailed analysis of Rosmersholm from very new perspectives. She finds the play as a blend of ancient folklore and modern psychology. She traces the working of repressive forces both on the conscious and unconscious level in the psyche of Rosmer and Rebecca and comes to conclusion:

She is a sea creature dying on the land; she is a woman of passion for whom sex can no longer be disentangled from guilt and fear. Neither she nor Rosmer have fully acknowledged their past repressions, and as a result neither can resolve them and move on; the repressions therefore express themselves destructively, as each lures the other to the other world, into the water.  

After acquainting ourselves with the view points of all the above mentioned critics, it will be a fruitful effort if we make a mention of Ibsen’s own comments about the play. In a letter to Bjornson’s nephew, Bjorn Kristensen, Ibsen clearly wrote:

Certainly, the call to work is something that runs right through, Rosmersholm. But apart from that, the play deals with the struggle that every serious-minded man must wage with himself to bring his way of life into harmony with his convictions. The different functions of the spirit do not develop uniformly or comparably in any one individual. The acquisitive instinct rushes on from one conquest to the next. Moral consciousness, however, 'the conscience', is by comparison very conservative. It has its roots deep in tradition and in the past generally. From this comes the conflict within the individual. But naturally the play is first and foremost a work about people and their destiny.
Regarding the most central character Rebecca West, Ibsen's notes and jottings come to a great help in appreciation of the play. Therefore a rough note taken from his provisional draft is in order:

She is an intriguer and she loves him. She wants to become his wife and she pursues that aim unswervingly. Then he becomes aware of this, and she openly admits it. Now there is no more joy in life for him. The demonic in him is roused by pain and bitterness. He determines to die, and she is to die with him. This she does.  

While Ibsen's own focus comes out clearly from this letter as well as the jottings about Rebecca, the various perspectives offered by different critics state only partial truths about the interpretation of the play. The analysis of almost all the critics is on traditional lines as they dwell again and again on same themes like that of the dead past confronting the individual as living present, the theme of crime and punishment, sin and retribution yet no critic so far has worked in any sustained manner to bring out the restraints and impediments which block an individual's search for freedom from humanistic perspectives offered by modern psychology. Janet Garton does attempt to bring out the impact of repressive forces on the individual both on conscious and unconscious level. My analysis takes its cue from Janet Garton's attempt with the sole aim of delving deep into the attempts of Rebecca and Rosmer in their search for freedom in the framework of Alfred Adler's Individual Psychology. Rebecca believes that she is free, that she was initiated into freedom by her exposure to freedom-affirming literature and avant-garde ideas, but in reality she is overburdened and badly conditioned. The analysis in regard to the theme of freedom in psychological revisioning of her character using Adlerian psychology will be attempted – something which has not been done by any critic in any sustained manner. It will be worthwhile here to give an all too-brief outline of Adler's theory of neurosis, for its systematic application on Rebecca's attempts in her search for freedom. According to Adler:
The most important characteristic of life is motion... The chief characteristic of a movement is... direction and, therefore in a psychic movement, a goal... Striving towards a goal... we find everywhere in life. Everything grows "as if" it were striving to overcome all imperfections and achieve perfection. This urge toward perfection we call the goal of overcoming, that is, the striving to overcome. 26

Adler further states that human beings are blessed with an ability to shape their destinies to overcome primitive desires and uncontrollable environment and to improve their lives through self-awareness. He believes that human beings are unified and self-consistent entities, indivisible in mind and body, creative and self-determined, striving dynamically for perfection, according to their subjectively-held private beliefs and ideals, which Adler describes as 'fictional finalism'. They are fundamentally responsible for their own behaviour and life-direction, they are inherently social beings motivated primarily by social needs. All human behaviour occurs in social context. There is an innate and elemental urge for power, enlargement, expansion and superiority among human beings and this urge springs out of deep-seated desire to compensate for the organic or psychological defect with which they are born. Adler theorizes that depending upon the social embeddedness and social interest in an individual, his creative-self develops a particular style of life, which itself is determined by so many factors like birth-order, childhood experiences and fictional finalism. Those who indulge in over-compensation of the defects, become neurotic either negatively or positively. The main purpose or goal or life-line then becomes set in the direction of compensating for the defect and so overcoming the feelings of inferiority. In some cases, the effort is successful and one becomes a specialist and acquires distinction. But often, the effort fails of true success and then neurosis develops as a flight from reality. The patient develops symptoms which he uses as excuses for the failure to display his superiority which he secretly claims, uses them as justifications for withdrawing from the task of asserting himself and establishing himself as an accepted and useful member of society. Adler asserts that desire for power and superiority is fundamental and most powerful. But when we strive to perform the role of god-
like-ness, it is sure to result in crime. Therefore all forms of neurosis and developmental failures are expressions of inferiority and disappointments.

Seen in this broad frame work of Adler's theory of neurosis, the entire game plan of Rebecca West becomes crystal clear. Instead of examining Rebecca's attempts to satisfy her urge for power in isolation, it will be worth while to understand her attempts in the social context because paramount to Adlerian theory is the conviction that all behaviour, without exception, occurs in social context and the essence of human nature can only be grasped through understanding of social relationships. Every individual has a natural aptitude for social interest, the innate ability to engage in co-operative reciprocal social relationships. This development of social interest takes place in social environment. Other people, initially the mother, then the family members and finally those beyond home contribute to the development process. However, it is the mother, the child's first and the most influential contact with other person who exerts the greatest impact on the development of social interest. It is the mother's task to foster in her child, a sense of cooperation, relatedness and comradeship. Ideally, the mother should display a genuine, deep-rooted love for the child. Any behaviour which intensifies the child's feeling of being neglected and unloved brings about a lack of autonomy, inability to cooperate with the children. Adler viewed father as the second most important influence in fostering the child's social interest. The father must avoid the dual errors of emotional detachment and paternal authoritarianism. In both cases, social interest will be thwarted. Children whose father is tyrannical learn to strive for power and personal esteem rather than social superiority. Maladjusted people are those who lack social interest, they are self-centred, strive for personal superiority over others and lack social goals. Each lives according to his or her own private meaning, pre-occupied with self-protection and self-interest. Adler goes further to expand the theory that it is the order of the birth, one's ordinal position in the family that conditions the life style of the child.
Placed in this perspective which is directly related to Adler's concept of 'Birth order Effects', Rebecca, we learn, is born out of amoral union between a parish doctor Mr. West and Gamvik, a woman of humble origins. The relationship between the two remains undefined much to the detriment of Rebecca's upbringing as a healthy child in a congenial environment. No celebrations over her birth took place as her birth had to be kept a closely guarded secret from society like the one at Rosmershom, which was tradition, custom and convention bound. Her upbringing took place in the uneasy hands of the mother who must have had to undergo tremendous stress, afraid of a volley of questions both real and imaginary. How could she offer her daughter the cosy comforts of the family environment in which the father was a casual and thief-like visitor? Although, not much is known about her relationship with the mother, yet she does remember that her mother used to suppress a good number of facts from her. She tells Rector Kroll later in the play, "My mother never spoke of any such visit. No, never. Nor did Dr. West either, not a word about it" (RS.p.1013). Therefore, the most important influence of the mother was not that of tender-hearted handling. After the death of her mother, Rebecca had no where to go except to the person, who was described as a benefactor and who was too willing to adopt her. She had no choice then, being too small, to decide things for herself. Living with a foster-father without mother, was in it self not a very happy experience, especially when the foster father was a person of so-called emancipated ideas, full of perversions. More-over, the motives with which Dr. West adopted her were far away from being sacred, pious and fatherly. Instead, the desire to adopt was born out of base, degraded, and animal-like ulterior motives. Such motives never let Dr. West adopt a healthy attitude towards Rebecca. Dr. West could never shower motherly affections on Rebecca in the manner of Krishnan, the central character in the novel The English Teacher of R.K. Narayan. While Krishnan devotes his total self in the upbringing of his daughter Leela after the death of his wife Sushila, it is but natural for Leela to grow into a beautiful, healthy and sober girl. On the contrary, lack of that affection on the part of Dr.
West makes Rebecca a woman with negative will and nasty notions about life. He could not become a caring father and Rebecca often found him lost in the pursuit of his debaucheries resulting into paralysis. Rector Kroll reminds us of her maltreatment at his hands after her mother’s death:

And then he takes you into the house – as soon as your mother dies, he treats you harshly and yet you stay with him. You know that he won’t leave you a half-penny – as a matter of fact you got only a case full of books – and yet you stay on; you bear with him; you nurse him to the last. (RS.p.1012).

Thus far from receiving a soothing parental care, Miss West grew under overburdening childhood experiences. Far from being a star of parents’ eyes, she had to live as a victim of neglect, placing her in a highly anxious, insecure, and self-protective state of mind. However, childhood being the most impressionable age, she came in close contact with the books, which Dr. West used to read. Being too immature to grasp the rather new and advance ideas contained in those books, she acquired fragmentary knowledge about forbidden concepts. At a time, when she should have been groomed with lullabies of the mother or fairy tales of grandmother, Miss West was placed in an environment in which:

You have read a number of new ideas and opinions. You have got a smattering of recent discoveries in various fields – discoveries that seem to overthrow certain principles which have hitherto been held impregnable and unassailable. But all this has only been a matter of intellect, Miss West – a superficial acquisition. It has not passed into your blood. (RS.p.1014).

Thus, Rebecca’s early childhood was conditioned by over-intellectualisation about concepts which are alien to the psyche of children but which contribute a great deal to the making of what Adler calls ‘style of life’. We may say that her formative years were not very conducive to her development as a healthy normal child. By the time, Dr West brings her to Rosmersholm which is a place utterly new to her, she has grown enough to understand this for her self, but
still too helpless to take major decisions. But soon after the death of Dr. West, she stands free and firm to choose her future course of life. The fact that Dr. West even used her as his mistress was not a traumatic experience in father–daughter relationship because Dr. West's books had already taught her so many things which she believed to be true and acceptable, far from being immoral. After all she had been watching Dr. West so closely both before and after her mother's death. The questions about morality and ethics might never have entered her mind because of her socialisation under Dr. West. But by the time she comes to Rosmersholm, she is in her full-blooded youth and energy but always conscious of her parentage, "It is perfectly simple, Rector Kroll. I have no wish to be taken for an illegitimate child" (RS.p.1013). To be taken or branded as an illegitimate child is no small a stigma and barrier, especially in the development of the self. Therefore, this obsession about dubious parentage takes the form what Adler calls inferiority complex. In his monograph entitled 'Study of organic inferiority and psychical compensation', Adler proposed that in each individual, certain organs are somewhat weaker than others, making the person more susceptible to illness and diseases involving these organs. People with severe organic weaknesses and defects will often try to compensate for them with training and exercise, which often results in the development of the individual's skill and strength. While organic inferiority can lead to striking accomplishments in person's life but it can also lead to an inferiority complex if the individual's attempt at compensation are unsuccessful. Adler suggested that the process of compensation could also proceed in psychological sphere. Individuals are often driven to compensate not only for organic inferiority but also for subjective feeling of inferiority, those that arise from uniquely felt psychological or social disabilities. Adler viewed inferiority feelings as the motivational basis for essentially all human striving. All individual progress, growth and development results from the attempts to overcome one's inferiorities – be they are imagined or real. It is a condition common to all people and as such, not a sign of weakness or abnormality. Adler believed that the feelings of
inferiority or inadequacy begin in infancy which is a period of dependence upon adults to survive. A neglected child begins to feel unwanted. He goes to life, lacking confidence in his ability to be useful, to gain affection and esteem from others. This feeling plays a crucial role in the emergence of neurosis in adulthood. But when a person reacts to his weakness by over-compensating, he may develop superiority complex. This involves a tendency to exaggerate one's physical, intellectual or social skills. Accordingly, a person becomes boastful, egocentric and sarcastic.

It is in this broad framework that Rebecca's arrival at Rosmersholm has to be seen and examined. In her attempts to compensate for the inferiority, first thing which Rebecca does is to study social and political climate of Rosmersholm. She comes in contact with the established pillars of society and penetrates into their minds by knowing more and more about them through different sources. It is through Rector Kroll that she learns about the on-going conflict between the old and the new, between the established order and the new order, between darkness and light and between freedom and suppression. She learns about the war of words going on for sometime between the orthodox and the radicals through different newspapers, 'The County News' of Rector Kroll and 'The Beacon', represented by Mortensgard. It is through Miss Helseth, a family servant at Rosmersholm that she learns about the inner details of personal lives of the people who matter at Rosmersholm, so that she is able to take into account all factors which are likely to block her way to freedom. She even learns ominous details based on peculiarities of Rosmersholm about the dead clinging to its folks inextricably. 'It is as if they could not tear themselves away from the folk that are left' (RS.p.948), she learns. Having studied objectively the physical, social and political environment, Rebecca relates that environment to her personal ambition and life. Embedded in the knowledge of new ideas and placed in the new environment, she feel, that a great wide New World is opening before her and it is dominated by two opposing forces represented by Rosmer on the one hand
and Rector Kroll on the other. Being Parish doctor’s daughter, she comes to acquaint herself with the top brass, the cream and the gentry of Rosmesholm. To be acquainted with the people of high social order suits her well to hide her inferiority complex born out of unfortunate upbringing. Moreover, people with high status and high birth have a better chance of affording her compensation which she very badly requires and for which she has to make incessant efforts. Therefore she concentrates on individuals like Rosmer and Kroll on the one hand and Beata on the other. This concentration springs out of her deep seated desire to come out of the trauma of psychological inadequacy that she is illegitimate. She comes close to Rector Kroll and finds him as a hard-core conservative with immense faith in the established order of society fully backed by the Church. Moreover Kroll is a married man with two grown-up children Laureates and Hilda. She finds him a militant politician with staunch belief in orthodox commitments, always up with cudgels against new philosophy of radicalism, which he describes as pernicious, subversive and anarchic spirit. He is a ‘confirmed partisan, a desperate fanatic’ and one of the ‘myrmidons of morality’, always advocating traditions and conventions of the existing order and who finds it a gigantic task to get all the errors rooted out again” (RS.p.918). Despite Kroll’s life style being diametrically opposed to that of Rebecca, she needs him more and more for furthering her personal ambitions. She simply can’t ignore him to keep her foothold in Rosmersholm. After all Kroll is Rosmer’s brother-in-law whom she finds more suitable to hide her inferiority complex. Therefore, she maintains a cool and calm relationship with Kroll and learns many details about Rosmer’s state of mind, habits and disposition. She does not want to stand away from Kroll because it is Kroll who can give her a peep into the true traditions of Rosmersholm. At the same time, she does not like the fussy and strict disposition of Kroll and therefore turns towards Rosmer. From Kroll, she learns about the credulous mental disposition and impressionable nature of Rosmer as also his weaknesses, fancies and foibles. Kroll acquaints her with certain details of Rosmer’s childhood and one particular influence on Rosmer’s mind was that of Ulric Brendal whom she
already knows through her foster-father Dr. West. From various details collected about him, she draws a picture of Rosmer in her mind as the one:

The innocence of saintliness and the innocence of pathetic gullibility are equally Rosmer’s, and he is greatly vulnerable; he has no idea how pitilessly he is manipulated by others, he sees very little of what really goes on. He stands there as one whose authority is largely inherited, taken from the family name; and also whose opinions are ‘received’, taken from the stronger personalities he yields to: first Brendel who was in the early days his tutor, then Kroll to whom he had turned for advice ever since his student days.27

She learns that Rosmer has just left his traditional pastorship much against the wishes of his father. She begins to find him a more suitable person and therefore delves deep into his mind to understand him more and more. But she does not study Rosmer’s mind in isolation of his physical and social environment in which he was born, brought up and baptised. Coming closer to him, she learns a great deal about his ancestral details and finds him a stifled, suffocated and unhappy individual. She finds him living in cold, dull, austere, ghastly and self-enclosed four walls, associated with great clergymen, fine soldiers and respectable gentlemen—all in uniform. She learns that Rosmer is the last towering figure of his race which has been fountain-head of inspiration for the district for centuries, nourished in very strong traditions but an unhappy individual, married to a passive woman who has not produced any child so far nor there is any hope for her. While in the person of Kroll, Rebecca does not feel safe and secure, in the company of Rosmer, she finds herself comfortable. Therefore, she begins to treat him as a suitable model to work on the arduous task of compensating for her psychological inadequacy born out of neglect during childhood. While she considers working on Rosmer’s mind a very easy task, her appreciation of human psyche remains far from adequate. Rosmer is not a clay-model which can be worked upon at will. Rather, he is a human being with the weight of a lot of conscious and unconscious influences on his psyche. Rebecca simply ignores what Gaskell states in this context.
To become a human being is not easy. Self-knowledge and self-mastery are necessary but they may not be sufficient. For we do not start free and whole. On the contrary we are deeply divided: passion against reason, will against appetite. And while we strive to heal these contradictions, we are burdened with the guilt of the past of our own or other people's.26

Ignoring all what Gaskell states, in the presence of Rosmer, she begins to consider her self superior and equal to the task of fulfilling her life's mission. In her obsession with compensation of inadequacies, she develops false notions about her strength and boasts of her powers and skill. She tells Rosmer, after re-calling her state of mind, "I believe I could have accomplished anything, any thing in the world- at that time for I had still my fearless, free born will. I knew no scruples I stood in awe of no human tie..."(RS.p.1026). It is out of this state of mind that she views herself as capable of not only knocking down the walls of her psychological inadequacies but also carving for herself a niche, well-suited to the elemental desire for self-expansion, growth and power. Herself conditioned by the dominating will of Dr. West, Rebecca develops a will to dominate others and that is possible only when she hides her real problems and wears the mask of social superiority. Psychologically disgusted at her shabby treatment by Dr. West, she strives towards self-expansion, growth and competence and out of this striving emerges her desire to 'tame' and control every body whosoever comes in her way. Such a state of mind has been described by Adler as 'Will to Power' which is a form of over-compensation which Rebecca employs in an effort to supplant feelings of inadequacy. Adler explains that this 'will to power' has three stages-- to be aggressive, to be powerful and to be superior. Adler enjoins and recommends that once a person has achieved a reasonable measure of security, freedom and power, a paradigmatic shift must take place or come about from power and potency to altruism and service of others and it's a grievous error to remain marred in the gyre of over-compensation. In over-compensation, one remains,
self-oriented and disregardful of the others and indulges in exploitation and self-aggrandisement:

I began to see clearly in every psychological phenomenon the striving for superiority. It runs parallel to physical growth and is an intrinsic necessity of life itself. It lies at the root of all solutions of life's problems and is manifested in the way in which we meet these problems... The impetus from minus to plus never ends. The urge from below to above never ceases. Whatever premises all our philosophies and psychologists dream of self-preservation, pleasure principle, equalization—all these are but vague representations, attempts to express the great upward drive.  

This striving for superiority is innate and we are never free from it because it is life itself, "a something without which life would be unthinkable."  

But at the same time, it must be properly developed. It is a fundamental motive with its roots in the infant's realisation that it is impotent and inferior to those in its surroundings. This great upward drive is universal in nature, it is common to all, the normal and the neurotic alike. The goal of superiority can take either a negative (destructive) or positive (constructive) direction. This negative direction is seen in neurotics who strive for personal superiority e.g. self-esteem, power, personal aggrandisement—goals which are selfish. It is in this light that Rebecca begins to feel that Rosmer is the most suitable person to help her realise her life's ambition. But what is that ambition? She has no particular aim or a fixed goal. Instead, it the elemental desire for power which comes automatically and naturally to persons who climb the ladder of social superiority. Rosmer and Rosmersholm, can help her climb the ladder. Therefore, she develops a passion for him which becomes even uncontrollable. She herself tells Rosmer. "It came upon me like a storm upon the sea. It was like one of the storms we sometimes have in the north in winter time. It seizes you—and whirls you along with it whatever it will. There is no resisting it"(RS.p.1026).
Since there is no resisting of this wild uncontrollable passion, Rebecca, with her desire to march forward in freedom side by side, ever onward, ever farther, ever farther to the front contrives to possess Rosmer fully as her prized possession. But, although she is fully convinced of her potential to ensnare him in her ever-widening crochet, yet she finds Rosmer as a man who is married to Beata, although "pining and sickening in the gloom of such a marriage"(RS.p.1017). At once Rebecca develops the feeling that Beata may become a stumbling block on her road to freedom. It is out of her aggressive desire and blind determination to possess Rosmer that she begins to view Beata as dismal, insurmountable barrier between him and perfect emancipation. She, being a woman herself, understands fully well that with Beata around and in his house, her secret designs will be frustrated and therefore something should be done about Beata. It is here and here that her passion for Rosmer takes a negative twist. Come what may, she must remove that insurmountable barrier. She projects her inner desire on Rosmer when she utters, "Rosmer could grow in freedom only in the clear fresh sunshine"(RS.p.1017), meaning thereby that he must be brought out of the gloom of marriage by eliminating Beata. To this extent, she views Beata as a physical barrier, a thorn which must be pulled out. Therefore, she now concentrates on Beata and finds her to be a passive, docile, submissive and non-assuming type of traditional wife who knows nothing about emancipating ideas over which Rebecca claims full hold of. She finds Beata deeply rooted in the traditions of Rosmersholm, never complaining of anything or misery at Rosmer's hands. At once Rebecca is able to convince herself that it will not be difficult to obliterate Beata from Rosmer's mind but here again she will have to do a lot of hard-thinking. She has to calculate the risks involved, which are many and large. After all, Beata is the real life-partner of Rosmer and she has brother Rector Kroll who too lives in Rosmersholm along with his family and children. Thirdly Rosmersholm is not a cosmopolitan city where most heinous crimes remain hidden and unreported. Instead, Rosmersholm is a small place, in which even the slightest event has the potential of assuming alarming
proportions. Moreover, Rosmer's family, being at the helm of affairs, is always open to public gaze and scrutiny. Therefore, Rebecca has to plan her strategies very well.

In order that she cements her footing at Rosmersholm, she has to win love and esteem of Beata and that is not possible through aggressive postures or by creating aggressive situations between Rosmer and Beata. Instead, that is possible through casting a hypnotic spell on her, otherwise sting of feminine jealousy of Beata will not permit Rebecca at all to be in close contact with Rosmer. At the same time, Rosmer must be kept away from Beata as far as possible. Thirdly, Rosmer must be made dependent upon herself even for very small things or acts. She has to see to it that Rosmer calls for her and her only for small favours. Fourthly she has to keep Rosmer and Rector Kroll apart from each other as far as possible lest the two should indulge in conversation involving herself. Rebecca understands fully well that Kroll, being Beata's brother can't be denied free access to Rosmer's house. But, she can definitely create a wedge between them by feeding Rosmer with ideas, beliefs and dreams which are tempting for Rosmer but disgusting for Kroll. Rebecca's task is gigantic because in the face of all such barriers, she has to see that Rosmer remains glued to her and under her magnetic spell. Therefore, she has to adopt different strategies for different people under different situations.

Since Beata becomes her primary object of prey, she moves ahead with a psychological strategy. In her home, she begins to make her presence felt by doing small domestic chores for Beata, making her feel that it is a sort of regency in her name. Rebecca makes Beata feel that she is a sort of invalid and therefore needs help at every stage. At the same time, she adopts a different strategy for Rosmer. She feeds to his imagination both through personal presence and through books which she has inherited from her foster-father Dr. West but she maintains a considerable physical distance from Rosmer. With Kroll, she poses to be indifferent while she sees to it that as and
when Kroll comes, Rosmer is never left alone in his company. She takes reign of Rosmer's mind in her hands so for Rosmer has to deal with Kroll, Mortensgard and Ulric Brendel. It is a well-knit strategy which she adopts, though tiring yet the only suitable road to the realisation of her goal. She has to spend a considerable amount of energy through her efforts to walk on a tight rope of maintaining different postures. To begin with her work on Beata, she finds that Beata is a woman with weak mind who can be easily influenced and lured. Therefore the first thing which she does after entering Rosmersholm is to develop friendship with Beata. She spends time with her to make her place as her close-confidant who is too veiling to do anything and everything on her behalf. This is how, Rector Kroll describes Rebecca's initial stay in Beata's house, “Even while poor Beata was alive in her last unhappy days – it was you and you alone that managed everything” (RS.p.952). She attributes her management of Beata's domestic affairs to her love and concern for her. She tells Kroll, “When I was so fond of Beata and when, poor dear, stood so sadly in need of care and forbearance” (RS.p.952). Thus she acts as a nurse to nurse her own ambitions and designs. In fact Beata never craves for any help from any outside agency but she comes under the hypnotic spell of Rebecca so fully that she just can't resist her calls, moves or intrusions. It is as if Beata stands bewitched, fully infatuated by Rebecca. Rector Kroll aptly describes Rebecca's power, "Whom could you not bewitch – if you tried?” (RS.p.1010). She brings Beata to the point where it is Beata who begins to beg and implore her to come out there near her. Kroll sums up Rebecca's influence on Beata, "Yes when you had bewitched her to - can the feeling she came to entertain for you be called friendship? It was adoration----almost idolatry. It developed into what I shall call it... a sort of desperate passion...” (RS.p.1010). While Beata's passion for Rebecca makes her almost hysterical, no less was Rebecca's mind full of tension and doubt regarding the success of her plan. So for Beata was concerned, Rebecca herself describes her mental agony:

I wanted Beata away, by one means or another; but I never really believed that it would come to pass. As I felt my way
forward, at each step I ventured, I seemed to hear something within me cry out: No farther! Not a step farther! And yet I could not stop. I had to venture and least little bit farther. Only one hair’s-breadth more. And then one more—and always one more. And then it happened. That is the way such things come about. (RS.pp.1019-1020).

However, after having firmly saddled and established herself in Rosmer’s house now, Rebecca has to make an intense struggle to wriggle her self out of ‘two sorts of will’, which places her in a sense of insecurity. Therefore, she has to devise further and new strategies and one of those strategies is to weave a net of ‘lies and deceit.’ It is through telling gross lies and presenting before Beata a distorted version of things that she keeps her mind under her hypnotic spell. Of and on she tests the success of her strategies. She begs and proposes Beata to let her go away from Rosmersholm. In fact, this is a clever and shrewd move on her part to spread the impression that she is not interested in prolonging her stay there. The more she adopts such tactics, the better for her. She herself explains her move, “I did not want to go. I wanted to stay here where I was. But I told her that it would be best for us all—that I should go away in time. I gave her to understand that if I stayed here any longer, I could not, I could not tell—what might happen”(RS.p.1018).

On the one hand, she maintains her superior position in her desire to leave Rosmersholm, on the other, this move creates an impression in Beata’s mind that coming times are not good, any thing can happen from worse to worst and therefore, Beata has to request that Rebecca should not go. This move creates a sense of Rebecca’s indispensability for Beata as it is solely aimed at creating a psychosis of fear and uncertainty. After casting such a frightening spell on Beata’s mind, she goes to her work further and starts painting a very dull, dark and dismal picture of life before Beata. First, she so contrives that Beata reads the books which she has brought with her, books like the one on the rationale of marriage, according to the advanced ideas of the day. The idea behind is that whatever she has been telling Beata or Rosmer or discussing
with them verbally about modern emancipating ideas must be presented in black and white to Beata because it is an accepted fact in psychology that whatever one hears or listens about, gets substantiated and confirmed when one reads about such things in cold print. That way Rebecca succeeds in confusing and bamboozling the mind of Beata. Then, she feeds her with certain details of Rosmer's actions like his leaving the faith of his ancestors. Such facts she shares with Beata through very light hints because primarily it is Beata who stands as an obstacle in her way. Therefore she makes Beata feel the futility of her life, in keeping with the advanced ideas about marriage. She brings Beata to the state of mind in which she begins to conceive a fixed notion that as a childless wife, she has no right to be there and makes her imagine that it is her duty towards Rosmer to efface herself. But before bringing her round to the situation in which she really effaces herself, Rebecca well-nigh considers that Rosmersholm without Beata will not be the same. It is only when Beata is around in Rosmersholm that she can play her game safely and confidently. After Beata's effacement and disappearance from the scene, there is every possibility that the world becomes hostile with pointing and accusing fingers towards her or with rumours about the filling of vacuum caused by Beata. Therefore, she devises another scheme and that is to make Beata write a letter to Mortensgard. This is well in keeping with her single minded pursuit of the goal. In fact, Rebecca knows that Mortensgard can play a mischief at Beata's disappearance from the scene, to settle his own score against Rosmer. Therefore, she makes Beata write a letter in which she shares her anxiety and fear. The letter reveals that there are so many malicious people about there and they think of nothing but trouble and injury. Therefore, Beata begs and implores Mortensgard to be magnanimous. In the words of Mortensgard:

The deceased lady begs and implores me to be magnanimous. She knows, she says, that it was her husband that had me dismissed from my post as teacher; and she conjured me by all that's sacred not to avenge myself... The letter says that if I should hear rumours of sinful doings at Rosmersholm, I am not
to believe them; they are only spread abroad by wicked people who wish to make you unhappy (RS.p.990).

The letter, on the one hand reveals that Beata now stands on the threshold of effacement, on the other, the letter will serve the purpose of Beata’s last will, exonerating Rosmer of all his sins. Still more the letter will reveal her hysteric and hypochondriac state of mind. That way, the letter is more revealing than concealing. Despite being herself responsible for the entire change in Rosmer’s mind regarding desertion of his ancestral faith, Rebecca makes Beata write to Mortensgard that she knows nothing of the sinful intrigues at Rosmersholm. She make Beata write that she has never been wronged at Rosmersholm and if any such rumours should get afloat, Mortensgard should not report them in his newspaper ‘The Beacon’.

Rebecca is so cool and calculative that she counts in advance the useful purposes this letter is going to serve. She kills so many birds with one stone. Firstly, she knows that Mortensgard will definitely exploit such intriguing situations in ‘The Beacon’ for his personal reasons. Secondly, by possessing such a letter, he will be able to blackmail Rosmer, in case the latter does not make amends with him. Thirdly, the letter will give evidence to the explanation which Rebecca will offer for public consumption after Beata’s disappearance from the scene that Beata had lost her mental coherence. It is out of this incoherence that she wrote letters to enemies of her husband in an irresponsible way. Fourthly, this letter will bring Rosmer in close contact with Mortensgard, with whom Rebecca has fullest sympathies. It is out of these scheming machinations that when Brendel comes to Rosmersholm, she sends a letter to Mortensgard to help Brendel. And she invites Mortensgard to her home. She considers it of no significance to seek Rosmer’s permission for inviting Mortensgard as this is not the right time.

Thus Rebecca twists the smallest of occasions to suit her purpose and goes ahead with her plans. She tames the mind of Beata so fully that she
makes her realise the futility of her life, a burden both on herself as well as on Rosmer. But all this time, Rebecca never loses sight of her goal. In her own words, "It was a life and death struggle between Beata and me at that time" (RS.p.1026). But this is not the only strategy with which she moves ahead. At the same time, she sits, talks and lives with Rosmer for hours and hours apparently in happy postures. From her position as a regent in Beata house to a nurse, then as a conjuror and hypnotiser of Beata, she covers a lot many miles to reach her destination. It is in the presence of Beata that she stands very close to Rosmer. She herself describes her joy in Romser's company that it was beautiful when they sat in the twilight in the room downstairs helping each other to lay out on a new life's plans.

Their joy must have been a cause of immense suffering, anguish and pain for Beata because after writing letters in over-strung state of mind, she must have felt real sorrow whenever she found Rosmer and Rebecca together. It was a part of Rebecca's strategy to make Rosmer betray himself in one way or the other before Beata. Beata must have noticed the joy which Rosmer and Rebecca felt in each other's company and that created such an atmosphere in which:

It did not escape her that we read the same books --- that this interest of reading all the new ideas drew us together. Yet I can't understand it was so careful to spare her. As I look back it seems to me that I made it the business of my life to keep her in ignorance of all our interests... She must have gone about here--- full of morbid passion, never saying a word—watching us--- noting everything and misinterpreting everything (RS.p.994).

Thus on the one hand, Rebecca enacts the drama of nursing Beata, on the other, she creates a very nerve-breaking and nauseating atmosphere for her. She sees to it that Beata is allowed never to ask any such questions from Rosmer or from her. She throws her into the dungeon of complete helplessness and sorrow. However, Beata does develop wild frenzies of passion which she expects Rosmer to return but finding Rosmer's attitude
appalling, she begins to have consuming self-reproaches during the last few years. Rebecca reduces Beata to such a state of tortured mind that Beata is left with no alternative but to visit her brother Rector Kroll to get some relief. During the last year of her life, Beata visits her brother Rector Kroll twice to pour forth her anguish and despair. First time she comes to declare that Rosmer is on way to perversion in so much as he is leaving the faith of his ancestors. Second time, she comes a month later. The actual conversation between Kroll and Rosmer is revealing:

**Kroll:** This time she appeared outwardly calmer: but as she was going she said, they may soon expect the white horse at Rosmersholm.

**Rosmer:** Yes, yes. The white horse—she often spoke of it.

**Kroll:** An when I tried to divert her mind from such melancholic fancies she only answered, "I have not long to live; for Johannes must marry Rebecca at once (RS.p.981)."

The conversation shows that Beata had come under the grip of melancholic fancy about her future. But at the same time, Rebecca makes Rosmer wear the mask of sharing Beata's worries. In the words of Rosmer, "We both were so deeply attached to her. And both Rebec—both Miss West and I knew that we did all that was possible in her affliction" (RS.p.954). But after Beata has poured forth her blood—curdling agony before Kroll and she has reached a totally distempered brain, she develops an attitude of passive resignation and total silence, never uttering a word. Finding the situation ripe, Rebecca gives the final blow which she herself describes as, "It was I that lured—that ended in luring Beata into the paths of delusion" (RS.p.1017). But this is not the end of it. Bigger obstacles are still ahead.

So for society outside and Rosmer are concerned, Rebecca spreads several rumours about Beata's state of mind through her servant Miss Helseth and also collects information about outside opinion through her. Talking about
Mrs Rosmer’s state of insanity, she tells Helseth that Mrs. Rosmer was not in her sound state of mind when she wrote a letter to Mortensgard because, “She seemed to go distracted when she learned that she must always be childless. It was that unsettled her reason” (RS.p.1003). Very quickly, she gets an affirmation from Miss Helseth that it was a dreadful blow to her. Even to Rector Kroll, she offers such types of explanations that although, “Everything is going its quiet jog-trot way. One day is just like another. Yet of course one feels a great blank in many ways - a great sorrow and longing” (RS.p.951).

This must be kept in mind that while concentrating on Beata, Rebecca has to work on Rosmer’s mind simultaneously. It is because the success of her mission does not merely depend upon removing the insurmountable barrier in the person of Beata but vampirising on her. Rather, she has to work very hard to cast her mesmerising spell on Rosmer. But with Rosmer, she can’t employ the strategies or techniques employed in case of Beata. Concentration of her focus on Rosmer primarily springs up from her inner desire which Rosmer himself illustrates, “You thought you yourself could do something great in life and that you could use me to further your ends. I was to be a serviceable instrument to you—that you thought” (RS.p.1025). And it is for this that she schemes to use Rosmer like a glove in her hands.

In her heart of hearts, Rebecca has a lurking fear, an inferiority complex owing to her illegitimate birth and humble origin. In order to cover up that complex, she thinks Rosmer is the best person to walk to freedom side by side. Therefore, working upon Rosmer’s mind was more difficult than working upon Beata. So she employs a number of strategies simultaneously. Firstly, she transforms physical environment of Rosmer’s home with the help of fragrant flowers, wild and colourful as Rosmer is fond of having fresh growing flowers about him and they have a delightfully soothing effect on herself also. She does not care that those flowers and colours have a bewildering effect on Beata as their scent was too much for her. Secondly, she even starts the practice of
keeping doors and windows of Rosmer's home open where there has been
darkness for centuries, in order that Rosmer breathes fresh air. Thirdly she
presents herself as a bobby-dazzler and starts wearing dresses which so far
have been a taboo in Rosmersholm. She brings with her a number of books
about advanced ideas of the day, to which Rosmer was once introduced by
his childhood teacher Brendel. Now that Rosmer's father is no more and
Rosmer stands as the last descendant of the family traditions, she finds it quite
safe and convenient to scatter those books at Romser's home. To go a step
further, she even orders for a radical newspaper in his home just because she
likes to know what is going on and to keep up with the times. She reads not
only those books herself but also makes Rosmer read them and then discusses
the new ideas with him of and on, both with and without the presence of Beata.
It may be a shocking experience for Rector Kroll but then she knows that such
books, newspapers and ideas have already reached Kroll's house and school
through his children and his wife, who tends to take the side of his children.
The idea behind introduction of such literature is not so much her personal
gratification, as her avowed aim is to bring Rosmer to the path of freedom.
Therefore, her task is to see Rosmer free from all types of influences of the
past. She knows that the road to the new ideal world which she offers to
Rosmer is not smooth and straight and therefore she employs multi-pronged
techniques, like opening up a new world before him and enabling Rosmer
with abundant courage and strength to face the consequences and resistance
put forward by Rector Kroll and society. As for resistance offered by Rector
Kroll, she takes the services of Mortensgard and Ulric Brendel and also plucks
out the thorn in the person of Beata so that Kroll is forced to stay away from
Rosmer's house when his sister is no more. Therefore, by slow degrees, she is
able to entice Rosmer. It is the success of Rebecca's designs that Rosmer
utters, "A new summer has blossomed in my soul. I see with my eyes grown
young again" (RS.p.968) and "I have emancipated myself entirely and on every
side I have broken with all the dogmas of the church. Hence forth they stand
nothing to me” (RS.p.987). Rebecca transports Rosmer to a utopian place where, in the language of Rosmer him self:

I thought I might live on here, as before, quietly, serenely, happily. I wanted to read, to bury myself in all the studies that until then had been sealed books to me. I wanted to make myself thoroughly at home in the great world of truth and freedom that has been revealed to me... I took upon it as my imperative duty to spread a little light and gladness here, where Rosmer family has from generation to generation been a centre of darkness and oppression (RS.p.970).

In fact, Rebecca offers him a gigantic but rosy task, which she tells him, is not difficult to achieve. The only efforts he has to make is to cut himself completely off from his putrid past to become free both in time and circumstances. Rosmer has to learn how to live by freeing himself from every side, buoyantly and happily in the living world of today. It is only then that Rosmer is to go as a messenger of emancipation from home to home to win over the minds and wills to create noblemen around him the wider and wider circle. In order to make sure that Rosmer remains under her grip, she takes the reign of Rosmersholm in her own hands and spreads the rumours that she will be leaving Rosmersholm soon but not before, “As long as Mr. Rosmer finds that I am of any use or comfort to him--- why, so long, I suppose, I shall stay him” (RS.p.951). It is for use and comfort of Rosmer that she goes on cloaking, concealing, a multitude of things from Rosmer. All the time, she remains a seductive lady enchanting Rosmer like a fascinating mermaid. In order to proceed further, she plans to use enemy against enemy. This planning she makes out of her genuine fear that, when Rosmer stands free from all sides, Rector Kroll is not going to take it low. He will certainly come to Rosmer either to have first hand information about Rosmer’s mind or to seek Rosmer’s help to fight against what he describes as a spirit of anarchy. She understands that helpless Kroll knows that Rosmer is a great pillar whose help will go a long way in rooting out the errors that have crept into the fabric of Rosmersholm. That is why when Kroll comes, he appeals to his grand old name, fame and prestige. He tells Rosmer, “Every one knows and values your humanity and
uprightness—your delicacy of mind your unimpeachable honour. And the prestige of your former position as a clergyman still clings to you, and to crown it all, you have your grand old family name" (RS.p.960). But this appeasement of Rosmer by Kroll is too much for Rebecca who has already decided in her mind never to let Rosmer sit or talk together, alone without her physical presence. Therefore, she jumps into the conversation only to take hold of every thing. She does not permit Rosmer to reply to any of Kroll’s questions, rather takes upon herself the task of explaining Rosmer’s view point. By way of first blow to Kroll, she tells him that Mr. Rosmer has come to take a wider view of things of life than he used to freer or less one sided. Rebecca knows that in such situation when Kroll is going to use every opportunity to win over Rosmer, her physical presence during their conversation is a must. It is under sheer weight of Rebecca’s presence that Rosmer accepts neither leadership of Kroll’s party in his hands nor editorship of the newspapers representing traditional ideas. Far from this, he does not even permit Kroll to use his name in any of the articles to be published. When Kroll finds that Rosmer has gone totally apostate, he appeals to his sense of pride in his glorious ancestral pride:

Rosmers of Rosmersholm——clergymen and soldiers; government officials of high place and trust; gentlemen to the finger-tips, every one of them—a family that for nearly two centuries has held its place as the first in the district. (lays his hand on Rosmer’s shoulder.) Rosmer— you owe it to yourself and to the traditions of your race to take your share in guarding all that has hitherto been held sacred in our society (RS.p.960).

The moment Kroll seeks confirmation of his views regarding Rosmer and Rosmersholm from Rebecca, she is quick enough to snub him saying that it is all ludicrous to her. The basic idea is to thwart any attempt of Kroll to bring back Rosmer to his old state of mind. She even makes fun of Kroll. It is no coincidence that Ulric Brendel, the man who once crammed Rosmer’s head full of revolutionary ideas until Rosmer’s father shooed him away, comes to Rosmer’s house exactly at the time when Rebecca is using her utmost energy to make Rosmer resist the temptations of Kroll. In fact, the extension of
courtesies to Brendel both by Rosmer and Rebecca pricks like a needle to Kroll and that is a part of Rebecca's strategy to defeat Kroll's moves and further her own ends. No wonder, Rosmer begins to speak against his own father and describes him as a martinet both at home and in his regiment. This description of his father, he gives with a touch of bitterness. To Kroll, Brendel may be a black sheep but to Rosmer, he was once his mentor and to Rebecca, a strange being. Janet Garton aptly describes Brendel as a "carricatured alter-ego of Rosmer." How happy Rebecca is when she sees Rosmer extending a happy and hearty welcome to him. It's a big stroke of irony that Rosmer knows just nothing about Brendel's mission and yet he is willing to help him on all fronts whereas Rebecca knows fully well that Brendel is on his way to the town out of his imperious necessity. The more Rosmer becomes courteous to Brendel, the more uncomfortable Kroll stands. To add to Kroll's inconvenience and dismay, Rebecca tells Brendel that she has read several of his ideas through the books of Dr. West. Not only this, when Brendel tells that he is about to take hold of life with a strong hand, to step forth, to assert himself with all his might on the altar of emancipation in this tempestuous equinocital age, Rebecca at once offers her services to assist him in his great mission. To add to the discomfiture of Kroll, she herself runs into the house to bring bagatelles for Brendel. It is under the influence of Rebecca that, what Kroll describes as the work of corruption and ruin in the unhappy land becomes the work of emancipation for Rosmer. The conversation between Kroll and Rosmer is revealing because it takes place in the presence of Brendel who, though sits in the background:

Kroll. Oh, yes, I know. That is what both the tempters and their victims call it. But do you think there is any emancipation to be expected from the spirit that is now poisoning our social life?

Rosmer. I am not in love with the spirit that is in the ascendant, nor with either of the contending parties. I will try to bring together men from both sides—as many as I can— and to unite them as closely as possible. I will devote my life and all my energies to
this one thing—the creation of a true democracy in this country.

*Kroll.* So you don’t think we have democracy enough already! For my part it seems to me we are all in a fair way to be dragged down into the mire, where hitherto only the mob have been able to thrive.

*Rosmer.* That is just why I want to awaken the democracy to its true task (RS.pp.968-969).

In fact Rebecca has brought Rosmer to such a viewpoint that everything else becomes secondary. Moreover Rebecca sees to it that, on the one hand, Rosmer imbibes all her ideology, on the other, she does not permit or let Rosmer share that transformation of his mind with any body including Kroll. Rosmer tells Kroll that, “Because it seemed to me a matter that concerned myself alone. And beside I did not wish to give you and my other friends needless pain.” (RS.p.970). It is Rebecca’s temporary victory over Kroll when the latter says that he has nothing more to do there. Out of anger at such a turn of events, Kroll reminds Rosmer that he is not the man to endure standing alone. He is aghast to listen from Rosmer that he is not alone after all because Rebecca is always there to bear the loneliness with him.

Such close proximity and mutuality between Rosmer and Rebecca is too much for Rector Kroll and therefore it is at this stage that he throws a hint that he has begun to believe Beata’s words. Rosmer may have become upset at Kroll’s leaving his house in a huff with an accusing finger but so far Beata is concerned, further steps are required to be taken. As in the person of Ulric Brendel, Rebecca so manoeuvres that Kroll is able to see how transformed Rosmer stands. Such-like exercises, she has to take to bring Mortensgard and Kroll together so that Kroll is further down-graded. Rebecca knows fully well that Rector Kroll will definitely cause harm both to her and Rosmer. After all, Kroll has certain claims over Rosmer and Rosmersholm was his sister’s home. Therefore, she writes a letter to Mortensgard although she gives out the rumour that the letter was meant for helping Brendel. The hidden agenda behind this letter is to use Mortensgard against Kroll as Rebecca knows that
they are bitter enemies. For Kroll, Mortensgard is a man of foul antecedents – a creature that was turned out of his place as a school master on account of his immoral life, while for Rebecca, Mortensgard has a great influence over many people hereabout and for Rosmer, he is not a man he has anything to do with. Thus by writing to Mortensgard, Rebecca wants to kill so many birds. Other than using him against Kroll, she wants Rosmer to make amends with him so that the might of Rector Kroll could be resisted with double force. Moreover, it is through Mortensgard that Rebecca wants Rosmer to declare his complete emancipation publicly. She does not consider it necessary to share such of like plans with Rosmer in advance. She does not give him any hint about this. But it is only when the letter has already reached Mortensgard that she tells him about it. Rosmer has come under her domination so completely that he tells her to do whatever she thinks right as she is the mistress of her actions. And when Rector Kroll comes next day to Rosmer, she understands the gravity of the situation and therefore hides herself behind the curtains in the bedroom so that she is able to have first hand information used by Kroll and the likely impact on Rosmer. She is not yet fully sure of Rosmer's strength. Therefore, she has to be on her toes continuously. It is in this context that she contrives Mortensgard's entry at Rosmersholm when Kroll is in full agitated mood. She understands fully well that this time Kroll's anger will be a little too much, therefore she offers to go out of the room to let them talk alone. She knows that Kroll has come to acquaint Rosmer how topsy-turvy things have become and by way of introduction, he tells Rosmer how his guest of yesterday was thrashed and pitched in to the gutter in a low public house and how he pawned the coat—that belonged to Rosmer and how Mortensgard came to his rescue. Rebecca knows also that Kroll will not hesitate, now, in naming her for entering into relations with a scurrilous scribbler, as also he will definitely expand the hints which he threw about Beata. She herself listens to Kroll's accusations, "You see this apostasy of your—well--this emancipation as you call it is bound up with many other things that for your own sake you must explain to me" (RS.pp.978-979). By guessing all such accusations, she has
already prepared Rosmer mentally how to cope with the situation. The conversation with Rosmer is revealing:

Rebecca. But don’t you think it would be as well to make it up with him again?

Rosmer. I? With Mortensgard? In what way do you mean?

Rebecca. Well, you know you can’t feel absolutely secure now—after this breach with your old friends.

Rosmer. (looks at her and shakes his head). Can you really believe that Kroll or any of the others would try to take revenge on me? That they would be capable of——?

Rebecca. In the first heat of anger, dear——. No one can be sure. I think——after the way the Rector took it—— (RS.p.975).

It is against this background and projections on Rector Kroll that Rebecca prepares Rosmer for harder times ahead. She creates a fear-psychosis, anxiety and uncertainty in Rosmer’s mind so that he remains glued to her guidance. Therefore when Kroll warns Rosmer:

If your present mode of life with Miss West is to continue, it is absolutely necessary that the change of views——the unhappy backsliding—brought about by her evil influence, should be hushed up. Let me speak! Let me speak! I say, if the worst comes to the worst, in Heaven’s name think and believe whatever you like about everything under the sun. But you must keep your views to yourself. These things are purely personal matters after all. There is no need to proclaim them from the housetops (RS p.983).

Rosmer is quick enough to retort that he considers it an absolute necessity to get out of a false and equivocal position. When Kroll warns Rosmer that it will be a life and death-struggle with all his friends, Rebecca contrives the support of new friends like Mortensgard, much to the chagrin of Kroll who stands
utterly shocked. After this traumatic experience of seeing his mortal enemy in his sister's home, Kroll decides to make it a war to the knife now.

In the face of initial contempt for each other, Mortensgard tells Rosmer that he has come up to talk things over with him after Miss West has acquainted him with the change of views at Rosmersholm. He is all joy when he seeks Rosmer's permission to announce in 'The Beacon' that Rosmer has joined the party of freedom and progress to take up arms for the cause of light. It is Rebecca's complete victory when Rosmer declares before Mortensgard that he now stands where the latter has stood for many years and wants this to be announced in 'The Beacon' tomorrow. It is Rosmer's total surrender when Mortensgard dictates his own terms, that Rosmer doesn't know ins and outs of things so well as he does. Mortensgard does not want to accept Rosmer as a marked man, because if he openly declares his defection from the church, he will tie his hands at the very outset. Mortensgard declares that he has made it a rule for some times past not to support any one or any thing that is actively opposed to the church. It is very interesting that Mortensgard is willing to negotiate with Rosmer for his Christian element and not for his apostasy. Finding Rosmer too willing to join the party, in the face of such conditions, Mortensgard settles his old score against Rosmer by telling him that he is in possession of letter written by tortured Beata. This is the success of Rebecca's moves that Rosmer has no other option left before him other than seeking Mortensgard's help against Kroll. It is the success of Rebecca that Rosmer stands on the pedestal where he has to utter that he seems to have never needed her so much before. Having made Rosmer totally dependent upon her, Rebecca's task is not yet fully accomplished because Kroll's fit of anger will surely create bad blood between Rosmer and Kroll on the one hand, Kroll and Rebecca on the other. By now, she understands that Kroll has begun to read between the lines and designs of Rebecca.
In fact, the more control she exerts on circumstances, the more intricate the situations become. Now that she has made Beata disappear from the scene, knocked Kroll down and brought Rosmer under her domination, it is the turn of Beata to come back and stand as a permanent barrier between Rebecca and Rosmer. First, Beata comes back through the queries raised by her brother Rector Kroll, who begins to doubt the evil designs of Rebecca. He has already tried many times to bring Rosmer back to the path of righteousness and all his entreaties to appeal to Rosmer's conscience have failed. The physical presence of Brendel, and Mortensgard in Rosmer's home is adequate and convincing proof that Rosmer has lost control over his mind under domination of Rebecca. Therefore, Kroll becomes impatient to break the bone of Rebecca by digging deep into her past to understand and expose her true designs and motives. After all, he understands by now that Rebecca has not only indulged in the day light robbery in his sister's house but in the process of eliminating her, has herself taken her place. But Kroll's strength, Rebecca has already weighed. It is on Rosmer's front that she has to keep cautious watch as Rosmer has been acquainted with certain details of circumstances both by Kroll and Mortensgard. On the one hand, those details concern Beata's disappearance to the mill race, on the other they raise accusing fingers at Rosmer- Rebecca relationship. Still more, those details will definitely bring back Rosmer from euphoria of Rebecca's spell down to the ground of reality. The fact, that Rosmer is under the total grip of Rebecca, is not so much important as the fact that Rosmer is a human being with a conscience and social face. Therefore, Rebecca has to devise further strategies to keep Rosmer in good spirits. In fact, Rebecca has the necessary skill and strength to know well in advance what is going to happen in future and therefore does a good deal of homework for the next course of action.

Behind her new strategies, there are several factors which threaten her own existence now. One such factor is her sense of achievement. After all, all her indirect and direct moves to further her personal ends have been
successful without fail. She has been able to achieve whatever she has desired. Beata, the biggest barrier is not there, at least physically. Kroll, her biggest enemy has been knocked down. Rosmer, a pedestal on which she wanted to stand, stands firmly under her feet, but then the sense of achievement always produces a sense of ennui, fatigue and even waste. It will be pertinent to mention here that almost all philosophers, thinkers and psychologists of 'Being' like Erich Fromm, Abraham Maslow, Bertrand Russel, Adler, Jung and even Huxley favour 'Being' and its enrichment as the source of happiness and creativity. All of them oppose 'achieving' to 'being' because achieving is always prone to produce a sense of vacuum.

But up till now Rebecca has been viewing everything, every action and situation in terms of individual subjectivity. She has been living in a world of her own construction, in accordance with her own schema of appreciation. Her entire striving and motivation has sprung up from her fictional goals, privately held beliefs about present and future events, which have regulated her behaviour. The concept of fictional goal is Adlerian. Larry a Hjelle and Daniel J. Ziegler beautifully describe the concept of fictional finalism. In their words:

According to Adler, each individual's quest for superiority is defined by the fictional goal that he or she has adopted. He also believed that the individual's fictional goal of superiority is self-determined; it is formed by the person's own creative power, therefore making it individually unique. Thus, as a subjectively held ideal, the fictional goal of superiority has great significance. When an individual's fictional goal is known, all subsequent actions make sense and his or her life-style takes on added meaning.  

According to Adler, behaviour is clearly a reflection of individual's subjective perception of reality in accordance his or her social interest. But the miles which Rebecca has covered through her wily designs are too many to bring her back to the point where she had thought of building a niche for herself. She is now pushed not just from behind by external or internal causes but from the
front, in striving for personal fulfillment and freedom. In Adler's theory, human life is a dynamic striving for perfection, life can't be conceived without ongoing movement. Human beings are always moving towards personally significant life goals. And these life goals are largely self-selected, strongly suggesting that people have the capacity to determine their own actions and their own destinies in the constant quest for perfection and freedom.

In the larger context of her schemes which have apparently made her taste the fruit of success, all her subjective evaluations and perceptions are going to be tested according to her social relatedness. After all there has to be some body with whom she is able to share her joy. On the one hand, there is no one around before whom she can pour out her heart, on the other, Rosmer too, is going to seek certain explanations from her for the questions raised by Kroll with reference to Beata and also about her antecedents. The only logical step which she has before her now is to eat the fruit of her plans. But, is it so easy? Is Rosmer, her desired object really free in spirit and circumstance. The disturbing questions raised by Kroll, Mortensgard and public beating of Brendel --- all have to be seen, and analysed and answered. Rebecca knows that Rosmer has to be supplied with convincing arguments to rebut those questions. Finding Rosmer in a state of gnawing doubts about Beata's end, Rebecca does not let Rosmer develop a feeling of loneliness and tells him that both she and he have been prepared for what must happen some time. Rosmer's restlessness begins when he tells Rebecca:

I knew well enough that sooner or later our beautiful, pure friendship might be misinterpreted and sordid. Not by Kroll—I could never have believed such a thing of him — but by all those other people with the coarse souls and the ignoble eyes. Oh, yes— I had reason enough for keeping our alliance so jealously concealed. It was a dangerous secret (RS.p.993).

Rebecca's first piece of advice to him is that he should not care what all those people think because her relationship with him is pure and blameless. She
even offers to stand by him with all her force to face social accusations. This offer is a source of solace to Rosmer but at the same time he can not understand how he will explain Kroll’s terrible accusation. To bring Rosmer out of his abyss in which Beata seems to be alive again in the ghastly sort of way, she even uses bullying tactics. She snubs Rosmer and tells him not to speak of Beata any more because he was just beginning to shake off the hold Beata had upon him, even in the grave. It is because of doubt over Beata’s insanity that Rosmer insists on, “where are we to look for the determining cause that drove her morbid spirit over the border line of madness?” (RS.p.993). Rebecca simply brushes aside Rosmer’s questioning as futile. She advises him not to brood over the problems one can not solve and even indulges in self-reproach, that she should never have come to Rosmersholm at all. On Rosmer’s question that Beata might have shared her agony with her or might have put her on the alert, Rebecca stands startled and retorts, that she would have not stayed a day longer if Beata had. Thinking that the crushing blow of Beata’s death, through which Rosmer has lost the luxury of soul is transporting Rosmer back to the old world, she makes a vain attempt to bring Rosmer back to the world of euphoria created by her after so much of hard-labour. She reminds him:

How beautiful it was when we sat in the twilight, in the room downstairs, helping each other to lay out our new life plans! You were to set resolutely to work in the world-the living world of today, as you said. You were to go as a messenger of emancipation from home to home; to win over minds and wills; to create noble-men around you in wider and wider circles. Noble-men (RS.p.995).

The idea behind transporting Rosmer back to her hypnotic spell is to prepare him mentally for the future shocks. She describes Rosmer’s obsession with Beata’s death as miserable figment of the brain. But when Rosmer does not come out of his horrible fears, about the thought of the dead and when he declares that he has no choice to leave his thoughts behind, Rebecca offers him a solution which she thinks is a possible way out under the existing
circumstances. That solution centers around the fact that, with changing times, they must change, they must also re-define their relationship in the light of new circumstances. Although she offers a new definition yet she knows that it is going to be a temporary arrangement. The conversation between Rebecca and Romser is revealing:

Rebecca. (behind his chair). By entering into new relations.
Rosmer (surprised, looks up). New relations?
Rebecca. Yes, new relations to the outside world. Live, work, act. Don’t sit here brooding and groping among insoluble enigmas.
Rosmer. (rises). New relations? (Walks across the floor, stops at the door and then comes back.) One question occurs to me. Has it not occurred to you, too Rebecca?
Rebecca. (drawing breath with difficulty). Let me- hear – what it is?
Rosmer. What form do you think our relations will take after to­day
Rebecca. I believe our friendship will endure-come what may (RS.p.996).

But such a solution is neither feasible nor practicable, Rebecca her self understands. It is because it will definitely give a convincing proof to Kroll and society, but it will definitely bring Rosmer out of his obsessive grief. She doesn’t foresee that Rosmer will be quick enough to accept the offer of new relationship. Taking up the cue from Rebecca, Rosmer offers his own solution to shake off gnawing memories of unhappy past and that is by opposing to it a new living reality. At this solution, Rebecca becomes speechless and then cries out of joy over herself being at Beata’s place. The joy is the morbid elation at the success of her mission. The conversation between Rosmer and Rebecca is worth quoting:

Rosmer. Then she will be out of the saga-completely for ever and ever.
Rebecca. (softly, trembling). Do you believe that, Rosmer?
Rosmer. It must be so! It must! I cannot-I will not go through life with a dead body on my back. Help me to cast it
off, Rebecca. And let us stifle all memories in freedom, in joy, in passion. You shall be to me the only wife I have ever had.

Rebecca. (with self-command). Never speak of this again. I will never be your wife (RS.pp.997-998).

The solution may be of some help to Rosmer in casting off the ghost of Beata as Rosmer is still not very sure of Rebecca’s crucial moves, he is still not in possession of clear picture of Beata’s end, but this solution is of no value to Rebecca because by now, she has come to realise that ghost of Beata is more powerful than living Beata. That is why, on the one hand she stands aghast at taking the place of Beata, on the other, she cries out of joy. Finding that her own proposal has boomeranged on her, she at once rejects the solution. Sigmund Freud’s question is noteworthy in this context, “How could it come about that the adventuress with the ‘fearless free will’, who forged her way ruthlessly to her desired goal, should now refuse to pluck the fruit of success when it is offered to her.” Not only this, she even indulges in threats to retreat from the proposal that she will go away from Rosmersholm if Rosmer persists in this and later on explains the logic of rejecting the proposal. She says that she has rejected the proposal both for her sake as well as for the sake of Rosmer.

Things have come to such a pass, only three alternatives are left before Rebecca. First of all, either she leaves Rosmersholm once and for all after telling Rosmer that it is all over or she offers to become his wife but then she will have to go the way Beata went. The choice between these alternatives is really crucial. In choosing any of the alternatives, Rebecca is not free or self-assertive like her former self. The alternative of choosing to become Rosmer’s wife, to take Beata’s place is very difficult and complex. In her heart, she knows that to take the place of Beata requires self-denying, self-consuming and self-negating personality which she does not have. Secondly, with Rosmer, who has become a victim of gnawing doubts and depression, she can’t stick to, for long. After all she has seen and experienced the aggressiveness of her
foster-father. Thirdly, Rosmer is not the man, she understands by now, who will be able to satisfy her passionate desires, particularly under the circumstances created by Kroll. In James Walter McFarlane’s view, Rosmer is an “under-sexed person.” Fourthly, she knows that Kroll will definitely do something to expose her one way or the other. In that event, she will lose all her freedom and rightly so, Kroll digs deep into her amoral past and presents before her in a systematic sequence – who Rebecca is, from where has she come, with what designs and her modus operandus to accomplish her mission. She at once loses her poise. Freud’s comment is worth mentioning here, as it aptly describes her trauma at the mention of her immoral birth:

The news that Dr. West was her father is the heaviest blow that can befall her, for she was not only his adopted daughter but had been his mistress. When Kroll began to speak, she thought he was hinting at these relations, the truth of which she would probably have admitted and justified by her emancipated ideas. But this was far from Rector’s intention; he knew nothing of the love affair, with Dr. West as she knew nothing of Dr. West, being her father.

More over with Beata’s ghost around in the person of Kroll’s queries and the four walls of Rosmersholm, it is not so easy an alternative. Above all, Rebecca can’t afford to marry a man who has become a mental wreck, who now considers his relationship with her as a mutual attempt to deceive themselves. She cannot spend her whole life with Rosmer who has been dubbed as unprincipled renegade by society, who is lost in his gloomy thoughts, who has lost calm gladness of utter content, who carries a guilt in his soul, who understands now that no cause ever triumphs that has its origin in sin, who is no more ‘a happy and innocent man’ to win a lasting victory and who is too gullible to any tissue of lies and deceits. And yet the alternative of marriage does weigh heavy on her mind. That is why she makes serious and sincere efforts to bring Rosmer back from depression by various methods – the last being to send Rosmer on a long walk, so that he exhausts himself physically and go to sleep to find a solution for himself to come out of the crisis.
Rebecca may attempt to transform the look of the rooms by new curtains or flowers but she cannot change the geographical boundaries of Rosmersholm. Moreover, with guilt of Beata in her heart, she can not live or act freely. Her conscience will definitely prick her. She will have to carry the corpse of Beata on her back all the time. Not only this, when Kroll succeeds in exposing her, she will no longer be the self-assertive at Rosmersholm because both Rosmer and society will dub her a woman with sinister designs, a Duessa (to borrow a name from Spencer's *The Fairy Queen*). She will not be able to win the esteem of public, her self-regard will be at stake. Yet, there is another alternative before her and that is that she marries Rosmer and takes him along with her to some place unknown, wherein she may settle afresh. But this again is a very risky alternative. Because, whatever her place of new residence will be, she will have to spend a lot of time in searching for and establishing roots. She will have to explain to new people, new acquaintances the reasons of her coming and settling to a new place. Moreover, it has never been her habit to lie low and live an anonymous life, with low-profile attitude. Besides, Rosmer may not be able to help her with a child, as Rosmer is not a man to tolerate the cries of children any more. Rosmer without Rosmersholm, will be a common man, unknown and therefore without prestige, pelf or power. And this has never been her intention or aim. For Rosmersholm was like an already tilled, manured and seeded ground, the crop of which was ripe enough to harvest. Moreover, she came to Rosmersholm with lots of ambitions and to take her share in the new era. Still more, she has already desired so much, done so much, achieved so much at Rosmersholm that she begins to feel that she belongs to it.

Yet there is another choice before her and that is to go back to north. But going to north, again is not so easy as she has no mother, father or any other relation. Therefore, after having established her roots in Rosmersholm, she can't afford to become rootless again. By now, she knows every body at Rosmersholm and Rosmersholm, too, has come to know her. If she goes
away from Rosmersholm, the ghost of Beata may reach there even before she reaches a new place, just as the ghost of her immoral past has already reached Rosmersholm. Moreover, Rosmersholm has its own peculiarities. It is a place known for its inhabitants clinging to their dead and the dead clinging to Rosmersholm, as if they could not tear themselves away from the folks that are left. It is a place which is frequently visited by 'white horses,'36 day and night. However prepared Rebecca may be, she can't take a step even, because she has become a part of the myth of Rosmersholm. She herself utters that Rosmersholm has broken her. It is a sense of 'ennui', waste, fatigue and even futility which has overpowered Rebecca when she utters, "Broken me utterly and hopelessly – I had a free and fearless will when I came here. Now I have bent my neck under a strange law – from this day forth, I feel as if I had no courage for anything in the world" (RS.p.1024). Rebecca becomes so deeply ensnared in Rosmersholm that she becomes a part of Rosmersholm legend both by virtue of living with Rosmer for so long time and by living in the four walls of the house which has been under gloom for years. That is why she utters: "Rosmersholm has sapped my strength. My old fear less will has its wings clipped here. It is crippled! The time is past when I had courage in the world. I have lost the power of action, Rosmer" (RS.p.1027). Such a change in body and mind has come through a situation when Rebecca has crossed all her barriers. Outwardly, she projects the entire blame to Rosmer for bringing the change upon her and utters, "When I was left alone with you here and when you had become yourself again" (RS.p.1027). Rebecca finds Rosmer as a man entirely different from the man of her desires and dreams. Hans Heiberg shares her perception in that, "It is too crude to use the modern cliché that he is impotent. To Rebecca he is just that, ethically as well as physically." 37

She can't imagine and digest that all her labour has come to naught. She finds him an-over burdened man depressed and subdued, devoid of active spirit which he has been showing at different occasions, in the company of Rebecca. She is shocked at this. It is under this shock that, "Then horrible,
sense intoxicated desire – passed far, far away from me. All the whirling passions settled down into quiet and silence. Rest descended on my soul (RS.pp.1027-28). She stands inextricably bound to Rosmersholm and Rosmer because Rosmer view of life has infected her will to make her sick and enslaved to the laws that had no power over her before. But this is not the end of everything because from now onwards, all her actions have to be guided by the dominion of Rosmersholm and that dominion stands for luxury of soul, happy innocence, where as by now she has lost her innate pride in her self when she felt she could do the impossible. That pride has been piercingly punctured by Kroll. She feels crushed under the weight of a new feeling of guilt. In the words of Janet Garton:

Rebecca too conceals a deeper level of guilt than the acknowledged crime against Beata; and her guilt, like Rosmer’s, is connected with sex, though in her case it is a sin of commission rather than omission. She has, as she delicately puts it, a past. She knows from the beginning of the action that she has been the mistress of her foster-father Dr. West; through Kroll’s agency she discovers later on that her foster-father was in fact her real father, and thus is guilty not just of immoral conduct – which, with her liberated views, might not have weighed too heavily on her—but of incest.  

The question of marrying Rosmer has yet another dimension and that is how to put an end to the uncertainties of future. The only alternative left under such a heavy weight of depression and guilt is to go the way Beata went. After all, Beata was an indistinguishable part of Rosmersholm culture and dominion. Since, Rebecca has taken the place of Beata, the sense of guilt dawns on her mind. This guilt does not come so much out of repentance as much from the wrecked mind. And therefore, she feels that, since she has sinned – it is fit that she should expiate. A great realisation downs upon her that she herself has become crippled, "Why should I remain here in the world, trailing after me my own crippled life? Why brood and brood over the happiness that my past has forfeited for me. I must give up the game, Rosmer" (RS.p.1036). Raymond
Williams describes her inner agony at the emergence of guilt in her and her essential helplessness:

From this guilt there is no absolution. From this guilt Rosmer himself is not free; the very phantasy of his proposed nobility, his inherited inability to live is her (Rebecca's) silent abettor. The freedom which might have been expected when Beata is gone is simply illusory. Guilt, the inheritance of Rosmersholm has infected her will.  

But to my mind, if one, in such circumstances musters up courage to make a confession, that is no less an absolution. Rebecca, does go in for such an attempt when she makes Rosmer & Kroll sit together to own responsibility and explains to them in person her modus operandi. But she can't be alone in this realisation. It is though Rosmer that she has reached such a state of mind and therefore she has to listen to him in the end, "Well then I stand firm in our emancipated view of life, Rebecca. There is no judge over us. Therefore, we must do justice upon ourselves" (RS.p.1036). Such is the power of the past. Miss Helseth feels an inner compulsion to declare that the dead wife has taken them. The vision of Ibsen that emerges from this analysis is that one can not live by ideas alone, howsoever emancipating they may be. Superficial and half-baked ideas provide rationalisations, displacements, defense mechanisms. Existence moves in the pre-eminent domain of feelings. One may suppress emotions but sooner or later, they catch up with humans because Rebecca has violated 'order', a 'moral order' and 'spiritual order'. It was but inevitable that such a rank, perfidious violation would, engender finally crippling guilt, homicide and suicide are flip-sides of the same coins.

As for Rosmer's search for freedom goes, the tragedy with him is that he has grown under the dull, dark, dreary environment of Rosmersholm, a place associated with extreme Puritanism. It is like a grim decaying dungeon, which has not perhaps received even a slight breeze of fresh air for centuries because of it's having the status of an ivory tower. It is a place which stands for traditional morality which has become dogma due to an excessive use and
therefore, a highly restrictive and suffocating place. It is associated with clergymen, officers and govt. officials—all in uniform and their old and more recent portraits hang on its walls. The portraits stand stiff, erect and grim, creating an atmosphere of consuming gravity. It is a place where, as far as memory goes, children have never been known to cry and it runs in the family that when children grow up, they never laugh as long as they live. It is a place in which natural instincts and potentialities are never allowed to blossom under the tyranny of hereditary beliefs and ancestral traditions. It is a place where Rosmer's father exerts his severe paternal authoritarianism so that Rosmer, being the last towering symbol of all that Rosmersholm stands for, continues to hold aloft the torch of unimpeachable honour, grand old family name, gentlemanliness to the fingertips, delicacy of mind and uprightness. So stiffening and nerve-breaking are the 'mind-forged-manacles,' (to borrow a phrase from William Blake) that Rosmer terms Rosmersholm as a centre of darkness and depression from generation to generation. The attitude of Romser's father is disgustingly over-protective because his father wants to place him in the existing value system which is replete with restrictions, taboos, rigidities and inflexibilities. The moment his father notices a slight aberration or deviance from the traditional morality, he at once comes to action to remove that aberration. The case in point is that of Rosmer's childhood tutor Mr. Ulric Brandel, who introduces Rosmer to new revolutionary ideas, advanced notions in keeping with the ethos of changing times. But Rosmer's father quickly and audaciously shooes him away with the threat that he should never show his face again. Thus, even the outside influences on Rosmer are examined and monitored by his father in his house which is no better than a 'jaundiced jail'. This reminds me of Charles Dickens's creation Mr. Thomas Gradgrind who, in the novel *Hard Times*, used to treat his students not as lively tiny tots with all their colourful fancies and imaginative flights but as mere pitchers in which facts and more facts are to be poured. The result of such an education is too obvious to mention. As for Rosmersholm, it is like the munificent home of Cosimo the Medici, in which Browning's "Fra-Lippo-Lippi" was forced to draw
the skulls and bones of the catholic saints with the sole aim of painting their souls, ignoring their bodies. So crushed does Lippi feel there that he runs away from his monastery to give an outlet to his repressed emotions.

Seen in the psychological framework of Freud, Adler and even Jung, restrictive, harsh and suffocating environment exerts very taxing impact on the individual's psyche. Rosmer's father, like Rector Kroll, believes in strict adherence to centuries old Christian principles and thereby can't come out of his constructs. Himself, living in a religious cocoon, he wants his son, too, follow him in toto. He fails to appreciate that, when a child is naturally inclined towards satisfaction of his innate curiosities born out of his daily encounters with new realities. For his father, Rosmer is nothing more than a strand in the whole texture of traditional morality.

To me it appears, that suppression of one's original inclinations and potentialities is nothing but a criminal act. It is because, it doubles the feelings of insecurity and helplessness in the child. Moreover, when parents set unrealistically high goals before the child which are beyond his capacity to achieve, frustration is bound to confront the individual. Excessive weight of discipline, morality, ethics and commandments send a constant bombardment upon the psyche of a child. As he grows, he begins to feel life is futile and frail, hopeless and miserable. All exponents of humanistic psychology agree to this effect that faulty childhood rearing produces rigid attitudes, inflexible thinking, unhappy and pathological home environment over protection—pave the way for failure and frustrations and consequent deviant behaviour. A victim of such frustrations begins to react in maladaptive behaviour such as, sometimes he begins to withdraw, other times he regress from reality and makes various uses of excessive defense mechanisms. He feels detached depressed and spends time in fantasy, day-dreaming and hallucinations. His personality becomes out and out pathological and unhealthy. Persons with severe childhood frustrations and particularly those who have accumulated a number
of unresolved frustrations in their unconscious mind are sure to respond to fresh frustrations less adequately than those who have resolved their frustrations satisfactorily. More precisely, one who has taken proper care of his frustrations is better adjusted than the one who has repressed it to the unconscious. And these unconscious frustrations are characterised by feeling of inferiority, over-aggressiveness and neuroticism. Feelings of adequacy, worth and unsefulness are basic psychological needs to exist and continue normally. In order to maintain psychological harmony and integration, one has to feel adequate.

Therefore, it is but natural for Rosmer to become deviant and mal-adoptive. He can't develop social interest which means ability to cooperate in reciprocal social relationship, because Adler is of the firm conviction that development of social interest depends upon mother and father. The first casualty then becomes the most primary relationship in the person of Beata. My analysis brings me to the feeling that Rosmer's closely monitored upbringing in the sickening gloom of family environment has dried up all his bounce, creativity and imagination. He becomes a freak not in the sense Erich Fromm talks about, but in the context of what Abraham Maslow describes as the basic needs – needs relating to body and biological urges. Traditionally speaking, mankind has invented the institution of marriage for satisfaction of biological urges in a more or less controlled way. But in case of Rosmer, he has become such a freak, such an under-sexed person that he lacks the very ability to be near his wife. His own physical drive is lost and therefore he misconstrues his wife's biological urges and dubs them as wild-frenzies of passion which are simply appalling to him. Whatever explanations he may give, the reality is that he is completely unable to respond to her needs and this inability to reciprocate is the direct result of his restrictively conditioned upbringing. No where do we find, in the play, Rosmer making any attempt, to win over Beata's heart. Seen in the context of Ellida-Wangel paradigm, Rosmer turns out to be Ellida and Beata turns out to be Wangel. As Ellida shuns Wangel's attempt to be closer to her, similarly Rosmer feels shy of going near
Beata or permitting her to come near him. With the result that he ignores the claims which she naturally, socially and even biologically have over him. That way Rosmer is always on an escape route from reality. In one way, he is slightly lucky because he does not receive any bashing at the hands of Beata, as Beata is not transformed Nora or Mrs. Alving. Second casualty comes in terms of his relationship with Rector Kroll, who besides being his brother-in-law, is the champion of church-sponsored ideas and morality. Throwing aside his traditional and ancestral Pastorship, Rosmer starts ignoring him, unheeding to his advice and even taking such steps as openly cause him embarrassment and discomfiture. For example, he makes friendship with Kroll’s enemies who have brought ideological storm not only in Kroll’s school but in his family, too. Rosmer refuses to listen to any of Kroll’s requests and entreaties to come back to the path of tradition. Despite Kroll’s efforts to remind Rosmer of his centuries old ancestral traditions and his duty to preserve and propagate them, Rosmer simply declares that hence forth he has nothing to do with the dogma, he is a free man. But in his heart of heart, he is still not sure of his new position and does feel the vacuum in his heart. It is an established fact in psychology, that human psyche can’t live in a vacuum. In order to fill that vacuum, he comes across a temptress, “a swooping sea gull from North Norway,” to borrow a phrase from Hans Heiberg, in the person of Rebecca West and is infatuated by her. Her spell on him falls like that of Le Belle Dame Sans Mercy on the Knight-in-arms. So tempting, so open and so emancipating does she look in her appearance that in her, he finds, all that has been suppressed in him. In her, he finds a companion who can provide him with suitable company to cope up with the anxieties and frustrations of his unresolved conflicts. He develops such an infatuation for her that he shuts all other doors, to be in her company day and night, thereby escaping the ground realities of life.

While Rebecca enters Rosmersholm with the force of a storm, it is but natural for stifled Rosmer to become dazed in the sparkling glitter of her personality. While she seems to offer him liveliness, joy of life which he has
missed for so many years, at first he stands baffled. More than anything else, Rebecca ensnares with all her feminine charms, her loose night gowns, (a dress unheard of in Rosmersholm) appeal to his fancy. He may not be able come closer to her physically because of his inherited notions about puritanical morality, but the promise of better days is definitely there. Therefore, while in the presence of Rebecca, he begins to live in the future and therefore loses his coherence of mind and becomes mal-adoptive. In psychological parlance, such incoherence is the natural consequence of split mind. Rebecca, now becomes the be all and end-all of his life. It is simply beyond his imagination to know anything about the whereabouts of Rebecca West. Who is she? Where has she come from? Why has she come to Rosmersholm? These questions are simply beyond his imagination. Similar mental condition was that of Ellida when she confronts the stranger who has committed a murder. So dazed is he that he can't ever think that Rebecca is a woman with a secretly hidden agenda. He willingly allows her to be used as a glove in her fingers. Lacking all what Adler calls social interest, Rosmer appears to be cooperating with Rebecca in reciprocal social relationships but in reality, it is not so. To me, it appears Rebecca's feminine charms have the force of hypnotic spell on Rosmer exactly as powerful as that of the stranger on Ellida. In the presence of Rebecca, Rosmer fails to recognise the real worthlessness of Brendel's mission or Mortensgard's entry to his house. He accepts the will of Rebecca as the will of God and therefore, indulges in the various acts of omission and commission. It is an abject surrender and a totally inauthentic life in existential design. But the moment the ghost of dead Beata comes before him in the person of Kroll's accusations, his conscience begins to prick him and he indulges in soul searching for answers to Kroll's questions. The weight of guilt strikes with the force of a hammer on his soul and a realisation dawns upon him that he has lost the luxury of soul and peaceful innocence which make life marvellously sweet to live. Such are his feelings of guilt that gnawing doubts begin to eat into the very vitals of his being. Like a bird whose wings have been clipped, he makes ineffectual attempt to fly. But where will he run? Choices before him
are not many. Re-definition of his relationship with Rebecca is there but, for this choice Rosmer is not the man with robust conscience and therefore, an inappropriate man for this action. Instead, he is deeply rooted in the puritanical upbringing. There is another choice and that is like Arthur Dimmesdale of *The Scarlet Letter*, he stands on a scaffold to make a public confession of his crime or like Dr. Kraus in Margaret Wood’s story “The Day of Atonement,” goes in for atonement for by treating the ailing humanity with redoubled vigour. He can very easily call for Rector Kroll to make amends with him and pour out his heart before him regarding his conduct towards Beata and his role in her suicide. But this is possible only if he resumes the tradition and ancestral Pastorship once again to rededicate himself to the noble cause of spreading the radiance and fragrance of Christian principles. But this alternative is not going to help him because he is too late and secondly he understands the turmoil which recent advances of radicalism is causing in the society. He knows fully well that even Rector Kroll, howsoever staunch Christian he may be, can not run away from the traumatic shocks given by forces of new radicalism. The case in point is that Rector Kroll’s own family members, his son, daughter and his wife turn out to be sympathisers of Mortensgard’s paper “The Beacon.” Therefore, with the guilt of Beata on his soul and the ghost of hers on his back, he can not choose any of the alternatives. It is because things have come to such a pass that he cannot recover his happy innocence and luxury of soul which are essential ingredients of freedom. Therefore, the only alternative left before him to atone for his sin is to go to the mill race, the way Beata went. Maurice Valency brilliantly sums up Rosmer’s state of proplessness:

Bereft on his faith in God, Rosmer cannot preach his faith in man unless he is convinced of his goodness. He cannot believe that his influence on Rebecca has been good unless Rebecca proves it to him and she can prove it convincingly only by dying for him. Before he can save anyone, therefore, he has to kill someone, but of course, he cannot, in all conscience survive such an act. He, too, must die: Such are the dangers of
idealism. Whether Rosmer serves the old religion or the new, ultimately he is the slave of Galilean. 41

To me it appears, it is the most appropriate solution because if he does not do so, he will have to suffer pangs of inner agony both in public and in private and he will be no better than a living corpse. Such are the dangers when one allows others to decide crucial things for oneself. The path to freedom can never be shown by others. One has to travel, grope and search for himself. Moreover, means are more important than the ends. This is not to say that Ibsen is pontificating on some moral but this is to make it clear that freedom goes naturally with innocence and peace. Such are the new dimensions which Ibsen has added to his theme of search for freedom.

Thus the perspective on freedom that emerges from this study is that if senseless, thoughtless emancipation of its pursuit without reference to any value system, without reference to care for others leads to disaster, a repression, the opposite of emancipation a kind of living death, when lifted suddenly, without going through the meaningful process of self-understanding and self-reconstitution cracks the personality and results in disaster as well. Repression has to be lifted gradually, slowly and the contents becoming available have to be examined, sifted, re-sifted and whatever is worthwhile has to be assimilated after due catharsis in the Aristotelian or modern psychological sense of chastening it. Thus both the roads, lifting of repression suddenly and blind pursuit of emancipation lead to disaster. But such an ending of the play should not throw us into the abyss of pessimism. Rebecca has definitely risen from lower to higher love in which all her earlier self-oriented vision has vanished. Rosmer, too, rises to greater heights because, in the beginning of the play he was too afraid of the Millrace, whereas in the end he willingly drowns himself in the Millrace. To me, both Rebecca and Rosmer have attained sado-masochistic freedom in that they will be no more haunted by their nerve breaking guilt.
NOTES AND REFERENCES


2 Ibid., p.449.

3 Ibid.

4 Ibid.

5 Ibid.

6 Ibid.

7 Ibid.

8 Ibid.


24 Quoted from *The Oxford Ibsen* Vol. VI, P. 447.


28 Ronald Gaskell, p. 84.


While for F.L. Lucas, White Horse or White Horses refer to an actual superstition of impending death prevalent during Ibsen’s times. G.Wilson Knight dwells at length on the meaning of the White Horses. For him, these horses may symbolise a fusion of strength and purity. He enumerates a number of opinions of different critics. They have been associated by Murriel Bradbrook, in Ibsen: The Norwegian (1946), with the foam of the mill race, by John Northam in Ibsen’s Dramatic Method (1953), with the white shawl or scarf, concealed as a contrast to her colourful flowers. White may suggest death as in Pillars of Society. However, my study of the play reveals that white horses stand for all those customs, traditions, beliefs and even hereditary influences which an Ibsen’s protagonist is wrapped with and over which he has no control. It is beyond his power to come clear of their influence despite the brave and heroic struggle. They cling to Ibsenic hero as his shadow.

Hans Heiberg, p.240.

Janet Garton, p.110.

Raymond Williams, p.58.

Hans Heiberg, p. 247.