Chapter IV

Luther: History as Text

A psychoanalytic reading of Osborne's Luther raises very complex questions about the relationship between history and literary text. Freudian psychoanalysis is a theory of history—a framework through which we can make sense of our pasts. Psychoanalysis reads a person's past, the pertinent question being how a person's history is mediated in language. The analysand narrativizes his past and turns it into a verbal construct. Psychoanalysis is thus concerned with the textuality of experience showing how history is structured in language.

In Luther, history is represented metaphorically through Martin’s neurosis—itself a linguistic structure. It is Martin’s neurosis that writes history—the personal and religious. This justifies a new reading of history—using the new historicists’ insights encrypted in Freudian psychoanalysis. Such a study sheds light on how history becomes text.

According to new historians, the question of the relation between literature and history is a wrong question because such a question presupposes that there is literature on the one side and history on the other. For old historicist-critics history is not textual but a series of empirically verifiable facts. They also commit the error of thinking that it is possible for our knowledge of both historical events and literary texts to be detached and objective, outside the forces of history.
New historicism is based on the recognition that history is textual and that history is a process and not a product.

What is new about new historicism in particular is its recognition that 'history is the history of the present, that history is in the making, that rather than being monumental and closed, history is radically open to transformation and re-writing.'

Hayden White, a vociferous exponent of new historicism, also is of the view that history is amenable to interminable re-writing. There can't be any definite closure. Hayden White especially tends to view history as itself a narrative, a narrated sequence marked by inexplicable gaps or ruptures. History is not anything stable, but is itself constructed through the mediation of language.

According to new historians' arguments knowledge of the past is mediated by texts or history is something textual. New historicism is emphatic on the Derridean premise that there is nothing outside of the text. It marks the textual and subtly aestheticizing nature of the study of history and the historicity of texts. Our knowledge of the past is determined by particular narrative configuration—we tell stories about the past—or in other words, history is to be read as a symbolic structure or extended metaphor. The historian changes events with the symbolic significance of a comprehensive plot-structure.

What old historians usually forget is that history is accessible only by way of language. This happens in psychoanalysis also where it is
the narrated account and not the actual events in the patient's life that assumes importance. The patient's life appears as a symptom in the text of his verbal discourse. Hayden White says:

The history which is the subject of all this learning is accessible only by way of language, that our experience of history is indissoluble from our discourse about it, that this discourse must be written before it can be digested as 'history' and that this experience, therefore, can be as various as the different kinds of discourse met within the history of writing itself.²

History is available as a form of writing. History must be written before it can be read.

The epistemological question is whether past really exists and whether we can know about it if it really exists. The fact is that history can only be read, and it can be read only if it is written. History can be known only insofar as it is brought within the discourse. Any kind of historical knowledge becomes a kind of narrativization. History can be present only as a form of writing. Historical interpretations are thus narrative interpretations of the subject matter. So historical discourse is interpretation and historical interpretation is narrativization.

This new theory of history as it appears in psychoanalysis and new historicism becomes comprehensible only in the backdrop of the new insights about the nature of language. Old historians treated language as an unproblematic transparent medium for representing past
events. They also thought that the conceptual part of a discourse could be dissociated from the linguistic form, i.e. a body of ‘facts’ could be extracted from it. They forgot the fact that the form and content of the discourse is the form and content of language itself.

The question of ‘reality’ in historical discourse—both in personal history as is structured in psychoanalysis and in history in general—becomes very much pertinent. In history the subject matter comes into being in the process of writing. The subject matter of history thus becomes a construct. The conceptions of language, speech, writing and textuality provide us with some insight into the nature of history and the kind of reality encrypted with in it. History does not deal with facts, but only with symbols and metaphors. Thus the historical real becomes analogous to the textual real. The question of the relation between textual real and the real outside may be viewed as follows. The reality of the text is only a verbal construct. A text shows the relation between the word and the word and not between the word and the world. This makes history analogous to literature—almost a literary discourse itself.

Literary discourse may differ from historical discourse by virtue of its primary referents, conceived as ‘imaginary’ rather than ‘real’ events, but the two kinds of discourse are more similar than different by virtue of the fact that both operate language in such a way that any clear distinction between their discursive form and their content remains impossible.3
So we are as much concerned with literature in history as with history in literature. History enters the text as an "eternal present." The text deconstructs the 'pastness' in history and makes it a present—because the past is mediated in the form of 'present' in the text. History is fiction in a timeless present. History thus becomes a text within the text. It is this theory of history that inheres in psychoanalysis.

Psychoanalysis is an interpretation or hermeneutic activity which aims at unravelling the history behind distorted personal texts. Here the historicization of the subject is brought about through the reconstruction of his past, thereby weaving a meaningful pattern out of memory. "That is why we are 're-writing' history all the time, retroactively giving the elements their symbolic weight by including them in new textures. It is this elaboration which decides retroactively what they 'will have been'."⁴ Through the verbal discourse on the analyst's couch the analysand writes out the history of his life. Broadly speaking, psychoanalysis is a theory of history which brings out the proper signification behind historical events. Even to perceive that the historical event in question exists, one must give the account psychoanalytically. As Lacan puts it in the "Function and Field of Speech and Language,"

what we teach the subject to recognize as his unconscious is his history—that is to say, we help him to perfect the present historization of the facts that have already
determined a certain number of the historical 'turning points' in his existence.⁵

Psychoanalysis dismantles the present by reading a past meaning behind every speech act that blossoms out in the analyst's couch. John Forrester points this out in *seductions of psychoanalysis*.

Psychoanalysis in its guise as an archaeology of the living past—the past as it lives in the patient, in monuments, in archival documents, semantic evolution, in tradition, in traces, as a famous passage in Lacan puts—poses serious questions to any historical pretence that goes beyond Augustine's 'present time of past things'.⁶

In the text of the patient's discourse, the past lies pregnant with a deferred meaning to be deciphered and de-coded in the present.

Psychoanalysis is a theory of history because it develops a grid through which certain periods of a person's life are given an extraordinary place in the perspective of the present. For Freud, psychoanalysis is a historical re-construction, the history of the subject itself. In such a re-constructed history, events take on the meaning retroactively. We construct a meaning by reading the past in a particular way. Psychoanalysis proves in unambiguous terms that the changes in the years after childhood occur only within boundaries or laws set in childhood. History gets written on the margin of the analytic discourse. Through psychoanalysis a person comes to terms with his own history.
Psychoanalysis attempts to read the text of a patient's life backwards. Even transference is a process through which the past of the patient is exorcised. Through transference the analysand redirects his repressed libidinal energy onto the analyst. The analyst becomes a present signifier who is invested with past meanings. Transference brings out the unconscious conflicts that underlie the patient's history in an inter-subjective situation. The analyst reads the analysand's revelations as the reader reads a text.

We have to make use of the above insights in the study of history as it presents itself in Osborne's Luther. The study proposes to highlight the fact that a literary text is bound up with other discourses and is part of a history that is still in the process of being written. This necessitates a study of the history in Luther as textually structured in the form of Luther's neurosis.

Luther is a dramatic portraiture of the intricate forces at work in the making of an individual and the shaping of history. It is with this aim that Osborne scans the panoramic history as well as the mindscape of an individual. The dual tasks undertaken by Osborne are underscored by Martin Banham. He writes:

Luther is a commentary upon and an interpretation of the life of the German reformer and demands from the playwright not only the creation of a flesh and blood hero, but also an ability to bring to the stage an historical panorama that is both coherent and accurate. In detail he
may not succeed on either count, but in overall conception and impact Luther in an unquestionable success.\(^7\)

Osborne knits together the two aims into the fabric of the play with rare skill.

The question that stares us on the face in any analysis of *Luther* is whether we can call it a historical play since it resurrects a character who became a legend in his own time by giving a new twist to the political and religious history of Christendom. It should be borne in mind that Osborne wrote *Luther* at a time when plays about historical personages spiced with socio-political comments were the order of the day. Benham highlights this aspect of the play.

In Luther Osborne was faced with the insuperable problem of revealing the motivation for Luther's action whilst at the same time covering, in two and a half hours of stage time, and a fair degree of authenticity, a vast historical canvas.\(^8\)

In a bid to unravel the mysterious and inscrutable forces at work behind history Osborne re-moulds his character—a method adopted by Shakespeare in his historical plays. In his historical plays Shakespeare changes historical character into fictional ones using the rainbow colours of his creative imagination. Note Osborne's words: "In fact the historical character is almost incidental. The method is Shakespeare's or anyone else's you can think of."\(^9\)

*Luther* is not a historical play like Brecht's *Galileo* or John Whiting's *The Devils* notwithstanding the fact that Osborne takes as a
model Brecht's *Galileo* in which man as an individual and man in society are held in edgy balance. In their various ways Brecht and Whiting recapture the spirit of the time which they represent so that past becomes a living presence in their plays and we are transported to another setting. As Ronad Hayman puts it,

> in their different ways Brecht and Whiting devote a great deal of time and energy to recreating a solid historical actuality, and whether the details are accurate or not, the stage is steeped in period atmosphere and filled with a wide angle view of people doing business, practising their religion, eating, suffering, doubting, fighting. . . . Luther emerges as a rebel against everything including history.  

Osborne fails to recapture the historical milieu in which his hero acted out his life. The historical time is not brought back 'alive and kicking'. The historical environment is given as seen from the central figure's point of view and not as an independent element. The element of subjectivity that juts out in the play forms an integral part of the historical as well as the temporal background. As Trussler puts it,

> In particular, the hero's environment is defined by his reactions to it, and the primary appeal is indeed emotional rather than rational. Like all Osbrone's works, Luther is intended to be a lesson in feeling. It is not primarily a historical play—and least of all is it an exercise in the dialectics of reformation theology.
In a historical drama, the playwright usually builds up the background by showing the protagonist in relationship with other people. But Osborne’s *Luther* is a failure on this score. The other people in the play are very much shadowy. They are not individualised and exist only by virtue of their antagonism to the central figure. In his fight against Cajetan and Johan Von Eck, Luther is like a Don Quixote tilting at the windmills. The only exceptions to this are Hans Luther and Tetzel who are introduced as foils to Luther.

John Osborne also scurries over public events and historical facts with unseemly haste and expends much less energy on public events than on “the particular man in the unconscious.” The mighty historical facts are left hazy and inconclusive. Osborne narrows down Luther’s conflict with Church authorities to his primary concern with sin and justification. The failure to scan the entire gamut of socio-religious forces would make it appear as if the tidal wave of reformation has been unleashed by the sale of indulgences only. Other contributory factors have been entirely left out in a bid for dramatic compression. Luther at the Diet of Worms, pales into a private theologian, not a public disputer. Proper dramatic emphasis has not been given to Martin’s relation with public events. The social realities of sixteenth-century England escape Osborne’s attention. Osborne’s use of language is also anachronistic where the Pope speaks the cockney language of a layman.
Osborne glosses over not only historical events, but social and political as well. The peasants’ revolt, a political and social upheaval inspired by Luther’s rebellion against his religious superiors, is only symbolically presented in the play with the help of expressionistic devices. The factors that made such an insurgency inevitable or the course it took are hardly mentioned.

Osborne has not only ‘humanised’ his Luther but also ‘minimised’ him. The crotchety, constipated Luther of Osborne dwindles into a pale shadow before the Luther in historical accounts who strode the world like a Colossus. There is nothing to remind us of the ‘David of religious revolution’ who could shape the thoughts of his contemporaries by his fiery oratory. Osborne’s Luther is an ‘anally obsessed neurotic’ always at war with himself.

But one almost itches to ask the question; why does Osborne go to the past at all? Why does he deal with a historical figure instead of a contemporary one? Does he want to contribute an image of the past, which is the historian’s contribution to the future? Osborne makes use of Luther to explore the timeless problem of history. His prime concern is to explicate the genesis of history. He attempts to textualise history—to see history in personal terms couched in the eternal present that is also a deferred past. Osborne’s Luther is not the historical Luther and the problem which the play deals with is a timeless one. As Erikson puts it, “Man is not organised like an archaeological mound in layers; as he grows he makes past part of all future and every experience as he
experienced it, part of the present environment."¹² Luther's anguished dilemma is that of every neurotic at odds with society which fails to understand or be sympathetic to him. Neville Denny takes it as the eternal tragedy that confronts every intellectual.

The dramatic, neurotic Luther is also asking how he can justify himself, how he can feel that there is any point to his life as a monk. At the deepest level of all, the question being posed by the play concerns the justification of the existence of the poet and intellectual in society, where a kind of schizophrenia must be produced as a result of his absorption into an 'establishment', a power elite that his very nature as an artist should compel him to a recognition of the alienation of.¹³

Osborne attempts to read history backwards—giving thereby a present signification to past events. Brecht also had tried to do the very same thing which made Herbert Lindenberger remark that modern historical dramatists have been shameless in reading the present into the past. The interpretation of history for bringing a parallel between the past and the present has emerged as a sub genre in the historical drama, as is seen in the plays of Arthur Miller. These dramatists give alternate reading of the past.¹⁴

_Luther_ becomes a rebel against history by giving an alternate reading of the past. The play thematises the post-modern concern with the radically indeterminate and unstable nature of textuality and
subjectivity. Writing history here is the art of "deflowering signs." Historical facts within the play are linguistically mediated versions of brute 'events' and "facts are events to which we have given meaning."¹⁵ Osborne's Luther embodies an eternal problem—a philosophical crux—that defies time. Every age has its Luther. But the question is how to explore them.

Why does Osborne select Luther from the galaxy of historical figures for dramatic portraiture? Osborne always flirted with the idea of an angry young man fulminating against the society. Almost all his dramatic heroes are neurotics at odds with the society. Anger as neurosis is the main theme of Osborne's drama. He inaugurated the literature of anger with the creation of the malcontent Jimmy in Look Back in Anger fuming and fretting against the society. Luther also afforded him a conceptual framework to continue with the rhetoric of anger. Luther spits fire at the prevailing socio-religious structure. He unleashes the tide of anger against his social superiors. Choudhary comments: "Even when Osborne uses history for comments on his times, the centre of the stage is occupied by a very articulate hero who brings in a kind of opposition to everything that is contemporary."¹⁶

Anyhow Osborne makes the individual the focal point of attention. Alan Carter makes this point very clear.

In the balance between man as an individual and man in society, the emphasis of the play is strongly on the former and we witness the development of Martin's physical
obsession, his constant self-condemnation and the unsatisfactory nature of filial relation.¹⁷

In this respect, the theatre of Osborne is antithetical to that of Brecht. Brecht is concerned with individual behaviour only insofar as it is shaped and conditioned by the various forces in the society. Hayman comments:

Brecht's theatre is utterly different from ours in its interests and intention, with its historical approach and its preoccupation with social and economic issues. The only insights into individual behaviour are in terms of the extent that it is conditioned by external pressures, political and societal. Individuality is at a low premium in this market and the whole repertoire of alienation effect is built up to prevent audiences from identifying with the character.¹⁸

Osborne's prime concern is with the man, especially what happens in the theatre of his mind. He wants to portray Luther as an ordinary human being. Carter observes that Martin's physical pains are a symbolic expression of his mental battle and an effort by Osborne to give human appearance to a figure who, in the minds of most people, is a dusty theological object of the past.¹⁹ By showing Martin's constipation, his indigestion and his excessive perspiration, Osborne shows him as an ordinary human being.
Michael Anderson also opines that the play projects the private world within Luther.

The subterranean forces in the hinterland of Luther's mind are given more importance than the outer events which convulsed the world. The play is very much influenced by the fact that Luther's peculiar relation with his father and the psychosomatic state of his bowels are presented by Osborne as issues at least as important as the religion and intellectual premises which led to his break with Rome.\(^{20}\)

In *Luther* what is personal and private in an individual is transformed into something universal. The personal and pathological in the individual serves as the unconscious of history. Neurosis, thus considered, is not a malevolent or malignant force terrorizing and subjugating the mind but a creative power that blossoms into history. This is why Neville Denny points out with great critical acumen that in *Luther* Osborne uses the imagery of his art "to criticize experience, to analyse certain dimly comprehended states of being and pass implicit judgement on them, to explore and extend our dominion over new areas of rough and unsurveyed moral terrain."\(^{21}\)

Martin's neurosis serves as a textual metaphor for history. History is structured within the text of Martin's neurosis, because it is Martin's neurosis that gives a new twist to the history of Christendom. It is the error of neurosis that ushers in the truth of history. Here error has an ontological dimension, because it is error that constitutes the
truth. "The subjective 'mistake' 'fault' 'error' 'misrecognition' arrives paradoxically before the truth in relation to which we are designating it as 'error' because this 'truth' itself becomes true only through—or, to use a Hegelian term, by mediation of the error." Martin's neurosis is represented in the play through a constellation of symptoms. These symptoms are frozen verbal residues that are inscribed on the body of the text bespeaking the truth of history. We undertake an elaborate analysis of Martin's neurosis and neurotic symptoms under the assumption that they constitute the textual figuration of history. The neurotic symptoms that Luther exhibits are signs of the language of the unconscious which work through the grammar of fears, anxieties and phobias.

One cannot fail to notice the 'repetitive structure' in Martin's neurosis. Martin's relation to God metaphorically repeats an early chapter in his life history—that is his relation to his father. His relation to God betrays a kind of infantilism that is quite marked in his relation with his father with the result that Martin's religion becomes a religion of fear. Martin's religion is only the 'deferred' meaning of his infantile life. His religion itself is the 'return of the repressed'—a repetition of the 'censored chapter' in his life. Freud dealt with the problem of religion and psychoanalysis in The Future of an Illusion, one of his most profound and brilliant books. The affective forces unleashed by religion help man to cope with outer and instinctual forces. Freud himself conceives of religion as a collective neurosis. "Thus religion, according to Freud, is a repetition of the experience of the child. . . .
Freud compares religion with the obsessional neuroses we find in children. Therefore it would be pertinent to trace the infantile roots of Martin's neurosis.

The theme of neurosis always has a rare fascination for John Osborne and his dramatic forte consists in the presentation of characters afflicted with this mental malady. George Holyoke in *A Subject of Scandal and Concern* and Phoebe Rice in *The Entertainer* are characters who show typical symptoms of neurosis. Luther, a fictional character, resurrected from the debris of history, is such a character, who, therefore, remains dark and unexplained unless laid on the couch and psychoanalysed. His aberrant behaviour in the form of neurosis and the factors—mostly unconscious—that contribute to its eruption are best explained in psychoanalytic terms since psychoanalysis is an attempt to explain psychopathology in psychogenic terms. It should also be borne in mind that Freud has developed a terminology and conceptual structure to describe and explain neurosis.

Freud's study of neurosis is a cause and result study explaining psychic events in terms of antecedent causes. According to the law of psychic determinism also every psychic event has a pre-existing cause. This is the reason why childhood experiences have such a vital role to play in the aetiology of neurosis. Psychoanalytic theory also underlines the importance of childhood in a person's psycho-social Odyssey. A person's psychic life is only the history of mental processes preserved
within the mind from infancy onwards. Childhood forms of things are never lost but take their place as permanent building blocks in a final structure. 'Present' is only the 'presentness' of the past. Therefore every aspect of the child's development, physical or emotional, is seen not only at its face value, but for the symbolic part it plays in a person's psyche. Erikson sums it up thus: "Psychoanalysis has tended to subordinate the later stages of life to those of childhood. It has lifted to the rank of cosmology the undeniable fact that man's adulthood contains a persistent childishness."24

So it is with Martin; the impact of childhood experiences on a budding self is nowhere better seen than in the case of Martin. Childhood cast its dark and ominous shadows on his entire psychic life. The dictum "child is the father of man" is completely true in the case of Martin. Even historians and biographers are unanimous in their opinion that Martin's childhood was a saga of suffering from which sprouted his later neurosis.25 Let us look at the 'brute facts' of history. Durrant writes:

Once, says Martin, his father beat him so assiduously that for a long time they were open enemies. On another occasion, for stealing a nut, his mother thrashed him till the blood flowed. Martin later thought that 'the severe and harsh life I led with them was the reason that afterward I took refuge in the cloister and became a monk.'26
This is corroborated by Martin's own exploration of his dark and dismal past through retrogressive fantasy making.

The presence of a very dominant and oppressive father and the peculiar nature of Martin's relation with him are the anchor-points from which the theory of neurosis has to take off. Hans Luther, Martin's father, is introduced as a "stocky man wired throughout with a miner's muscle, lower middle class, on his way to become a primitive capitalist; bewildered, full of pride and resentment" (Luther 14). His brusque, abrasive manners and domineering nature make him a formidable father figure. He was rugged, irascible and prone to violent fits of anger. Behind the calm and impassive exterior, he was a man of volcanic passions. He is an adept in using barbed words tinged with sardonic humour. Note his words to Martin Hans: "Poor old Lucas is sitting there with a glass as empty as a nun's womb..." (L 36). It is no wonder that Martin has failed to forge a meaningful relationship with such a sinister father-figure. When we meet him in the opening act Hans is boiling with anger and resentment disenchanted with Martin's choice of the monastic career. Note the words of Hans: "But what am I losing? I am losing a son; mark: a son" (L 13).

The meeting between father and son, and their verbal skirmishes explode into dramatic significance as we are given a peep into the dark and infantile roots of Martin's present, deviant behaviour. The blusterous Hans exults in his own physical strength. Hans: "Your old man's strong enough. But then that's because we've got to be, people
like Lucas and me" (L 35). The interactions with such a father can't but emasculate Martin's mental reserves. Niloufer Harben hits the nail on the head when he writes: "Hans is an oppressive father-figure, affronting the dignity of the child, undermining his self-concept and presiding as a dominant factor in Martin's adult psyche. . . . Osborne dramatises the archetypal father-son conflict."27

Being ambitious, hard and thrifty, Hans had left his farm to become a miner. Martin's predicament worsened as the field over which his father's anxieties, hopes and focus were dispersed became very much narrowed to Martin, who was destined to carry all the parent's ambition. His father had already charted out his life to Martin and any deviation from it, however negligible, was sure to exasperate him.

As fate would have it, Martin was ushered into a home where the rod was the presiding deity and both of his parents were industrious and enthusiastic caners. His parents subjected him to severe corporal punishment in a bid to stimulate his moral conscience. Martin himself burrows into his dismal past and exhumes dark episodes of physical and mental persecution occasioned by parental brutality. Hans is not ready to spoil the child by sparing the rod. There is a grunt of satisfaction in his words. Hans: "... and I beat you fairly often, and pretty hard. Sometimes, I suppose" (L 43). Erikson gives us a hint about the authoritarian ways of Hans:
Some biographers state without hesitation that Luther’s father beat into him that profound fear of authority and those pervading streaks of stubbornness which allegedly caused Luther to be sickly and anxious as a boy, ‘sad’ as a youth, scrupulous to a fault in the monastery, and beset with doubts and depressions in later life.\textsuperscript{28}

The pages in his book of memory are smeared black by painful anecdotes of the cruel punishment he had from his mother. Like Jimmy Porter in \textit{Look Back in Anger} he wants to re-live the agony of childhood again deriving a kind of masochistic pleasure. Martin: “She beat me once for stealing a nut, your wife, I remember it so well, she beat me until blood came, I was so surprised to see it on my finger-tips” (\textit{L 43}). Thus the traumatic experiences at home left permanent scars on his psychic frame. He was destined to carry over to adulthood the festering sores in his mind. His mother couldn’t breed in him a sense of security which would be a fillip to positive mental development. Erikson underscores the importance of a loving mother’s tender ministrations in building up a stable ego: “on the security of that first polarization of a self and a maternal matrix are built all subsequent securities.”\textsuperscript{29}

The depressing family atmosphere left psychic knots from which Martin could not break free. He couldn’t bask in the glorious light of parental love and emotional deprivation stings him like a scorpion. Martin is very much anguished at the deprivation of love that he suffered from his father.
You disappointed me too, and not just a few times, but at sometime of everyday I ever remember hearing or seeing you, but as you say, may be that was also no different from any other boy. But I loved you the best. It was always you I wanted. I wanted your love more than anyone's and if anyone was to hold me, I wanted it to be you. (L 43)

Hayman's critical observation aptly sums up Martin's psychic state.

What Luther feels more than anything is nostalgia for childhood, with its combination of innocence and dependent love of a strong and protecting father. It is because he never experienced this love himself that he hankers after it so much and he expresses his fantasy of what it would be like in the description of Abraham and Isaac in the end of the scene with the knight.30

Martin is so disappointed in his relation with his father that he is left to conclude. "I suppose fathers and sons always disappoint each other" (L 43). Martin's relation with his father assumes alarming proportions when we remember that the conflicts in the adult life can be traced back to the psychic struggles crystallised during the period of infancy. The acute anguish that characterises Martin's present life and its relation with the past is symbolically hinted at by Osborne with the help of a startling image in the opening part of Act 1, scene 11. The torso of a naked man hangs across the cutting edge of a butcher's knife. "Below
it an enormous round cone—like the inside of a vast barrel, surrounded by darkness" (L 24). The vast dark tunnel might stand for the memory lane leading to infantile experiences.

Only a psychoanalytic probe can help dig out and explain the infantile roots of Martin's neurosis which erupts later in the play with an elaborate symptomatology. Owing to the peculiar nature of the relation with his father, Martin develops a harsh super-ego which results in an over-sensitized conscience. With great psychological acumen Erikson sums up Martin's inner development. "The overbearing nature of his parents and the severe treatment he received from them gave birth to a morbid and hypersensitized conscience. Martin took into himself the ideological structure of his parents' conscience."

Father-image is a vital strand in the psychic frame of any child and a stable 'ego' can develop only from a positive father-image. It is an inescapable law of mental dynamics that the child's ego is modelled after the image of the father embedded in the consciousness. No child can father himself. The ghost of the father always lives in the child. Hans is only voicing a great psychological truth.

It won't wash because you can't ever, however you try, you can't get away from your body because that's what you live in, and it is all you've got to die in, and you can't get away from the body of your father and mother . . . you'd like to pretend that you made yourself, that it was you who made
you—and not the body of a woman and another man. *(L41)*

Parental affection contributes much to the development of a stable ego ideal and in the unfolding of positive emotions. The child wants and cherishes the parents to the extent to which he is wanted and cherished by them. Positive emotional ties between parents and child develop into identification which gives structure and stability to the child’s emerging personality. The importance of father-son relationship in the structuring of Martin’s adult psychic frame is emphasized by Trussler.

And this is strange, for Hans’s colloquial confrontations, of which the last and the longest is with his son, serve a distinct dramatic purpose besides leavening the ritualistic tone—that of clarifying the relationship between the father and son and of stressing its importance in Martin’s development.93

Martin’s nagging thoughts about the wrested childhood with which the play is replete are a pointer to the impact of childhood and father-son relationship on Martin’s emerging psyche. Martin’s childhood was a ‘Paradise Lost’. Osborne transmutes thoughts into sensuous imagery by introducing the recurrent image of a lost child. The body of the lost child symbolizing his own past sprouts in his mind. The thought of the lost childhood nags him and a poignant sense of the missed idyllic happiness of childhood torments him. "I lost the body of
a child, a child's body, the eyes of a child; and at the first sound of my own childish voice, I lost the body of a child" (L 24). The child image recurs in the play like an 'unlaid ghost'. It appears when he ascends the steps of the castle church, Wittenberg. As Hayman aptly comments "this phrase 'the lost body of a child' runs through the play like a motif." This image may symbolize Martin's psychosexual infantilism which is woven into the emotional fabric of the play with great artistry.

According to Nioloufer Harben, this image of the lost child is pregnant with various layers of symbolic overtones. "The child is used as a powerful leitmotif in the play to suggest Martin's sense of wrested childhood, of having lost something that at root he is, under the demands and distortions of his environment." It also gives us a glimpse of the provisional infantile Government that holds him in thralldom at present.

Martin's relation with his father is to be explored further as it is the nodal point in the budding neurosis. The meeting with his father throws Martin into paroxysms of temper-tantrums. No one can miss the strong undercurrent of Oedipal conflict that comes out into the open whenever Martin is confronted with his father. Erikson draws our attention to the Oedipal nature of the conflict.

The father's prohibitory presence and the anticipation of his punishment seem to have pervaded the family milieu, which thus became a breeding ground for the most pervasive form of Oedipus complex—the ambivalent
interplay of rivalry with the father, admiration for him and fear of him which puts such a heavy burden of guilt and inferiority on all spontaneous initiative and on all fantasy.\textsuperscript{36}

One can't miss the Oedipal nature of the conflict that permeates Martin's entire psychic history. Martin's fixation to the Oedipal stage manifests itself in the form of a constellation of symptoms.\textsuperscript{37}

A full exploration of Martin's deviant behaviour reveals the fact that it is the unresolved Oedipal conflict that drives a wedge between Martin and his father at the same time creating cracks in their present relationship. The 'internalisation' of the harsh father image has sown the seeds of a firmly anchored Oedipus complex from which release is not easy. This Oedipal conflict casts its ominous shadow in all Martin's future relations. It was the ominous father image that shaped Luther's religion and his concept of God. He got the picture of an angry God from his parents. "The picture of deity which his parents transmitted to him reflected their own mood; a hard father and a strict judge, exacting a joyless virtue, demanding constant propitiation; and finally damning most of mankind to everlasting hell."\textsuperscript{38}

Writers down the ages have found in Oedipus complex a fertile source for their creative works. D. H. Lawrence's \textit{Sons and Lovers} is an example. In a sense \textit{Luther} may be taken as an Oedipal drama. Martin's psychic development has a parallel in that of Paul Morel, the central character in \textit{Sons and Lovers}. The parallel extends further as Paul Morel's father Walter Morel is also a miner. Paul's Oedipal
relation with his father is characterized by a marked degree of ambivalence, for the father is loved as well as unconsciously hated as a rival. The child also seeks to protect his father from his own unconscious aggression against him.

*Oedipus Rex* of Sophocles and *Hamlet* of Shakespeare are also monumental works in literature which derive inspiration from Oedipus complex. Oedipus shows the flowering of a child's wishful fantasy—death of the male parent to win the female counterpart. In *Hamlet*, the child's incestuous love remains repressed as in a neurosis.

The foregoing discussion leads us to the conclusion that when Martin entered the monastery at Erfurt, he was already on the threshold of neurosis. The ground had been prepared for the mental ailment by the peculiar nature of his psychosexual development. His problem was aggravated by the choice of monastic career. The new life curtailed sensory stimulation and further blocked off sexual drives. Life in the monastery had a strangulating effect on Martin, a man of normal instincts, and vigorous to the point of sensuality.

A psychoanalytic probe into Martin's monastic life leads us to the conclusion that Martin's religion itself was the finest flowering of his neurosis. His religion was nothing else but disguised sexuality. It was Freud who invited our attention to the creative aspect in neurosis. According to Freud, an artist represents his neurosis in a fictional way and sheds his sickness into the work of art. Martin's religion is only a fictional representation of his neurosis.
An analytic study of Martin’s neurosis in the latter part of our discussion leads us to the conclusion that the meaning of history is structured in the unmanifested forces within the personal unconscious. Neurosis becomes a symptom of history. This helps us to see history in a new light.

One cannot miss the Derridean insight that is implicit in such a theory of neurosis. Every event that is inscribed in the psyche is like a written word that defers its meaning. Owing to this, every inscription on the psyche comes to possess a meaning ‘belatedly’—a meaning that was not there in the beginning. Every sign on the ‘psyche is a trace’ or ghostly mark, the meaning of which is deferred to the future. The proper ‘signification’ behind the traumatic experiences at home and the impact of an authoritarian father on the budding psyche are deferred to the future. Martin’s religious chapter is the belated meaning behind the traumatic experiences at home and the Oedipal relation with his father. This is why Martin can approach God only in terms of his own father. Father-image and God image are so intertwined in the symbolic world of Martin’s neurotic symptoms that one cannot be separated from the other. Martin’s words to Katharine are an eye-opener.

You know, my father had a son, and he’d to learn a hard lesson, which is a human being is a helpless little animal, but he’s not created by his father, but by God. It’s hard to accept you’re anyone’s son, and you’re not the father of yourself. \(L 102\)
In our analysis, we have to probe the symptoms which constitute Martin's neurosis, for psychologists opine that symptoms have meaning in terms of unconscious motives and are always connected with past experiences in the life of the patient. Freud writes: "Psychoanalysis has made this its starting point, and has ascertained that the symptom itself has a meaning and is connected with experiences in the life of the patient."39 A symptom is a kind of monument. As Stephen Frosh puts it, "the crux of Freud's discovery is that neurotic symptoms as well as dreams and errors of everyday life do have meaning and the meaning of meaning has to be radically revised because they have meaning."40 The symptom is like a post-structuralist sign in which the signified (meaning) is not tied to the signifier. The symptom is a metaphor in which the body becomes the signifying element. As Lacan puts it,

Between the enigmatic signifier of a sexual trauma and the substitute term in the actual signifying chain there passes the spark that fixes in a symptom the signification inaccessible to the conscious subject—a symptom being a metaphor in which flesh or function is taken as a signifying element.41

A detailed study of the symptoms reveals the fact that the symptom as a signifier makes use of Martin's body to articulate the Oedipal conflict.

Among the constellation of symptoms exhibited by Martin obsessive acts and guilty conscience are dealt with together, because, they occur almost simultaneously in the life of a neurotic. Martin's life
in the monastery is marked by an obsessive-compulsive state characterised by excessive rumination and inner scrutiny. A morbid craving for perfection possessed him. As Thomas M. Lindsay puts it, "the slightest unconscious deviation from the minutest conventual regulation of posture or position of hands or feet was a sin which tortured him."42 This obsession with perfection resulted in complete confusion between means and ends. Erikson sums up his state thus: "However Martin wanted to be so much perfect in the observance of rules that rules oppressed him." In addition to this, his mind was overcast with an inordinate sense of guilt which dried up all his mental reserve.

These two symptoms exhibited by Martin merit detailed psychological investigation. There are passages galore in the play indicative of Martin's obsessive nature. Many a time he himself refers to his obsession with single words. Kennedy throws light on this factor: "As one of the recurrent motifs in Luther's inner conflict, Osborne dramatises, with empathy, the young monk's obsessive wrestle with words; His constant fear of the wrong word, equated with sin—'It's single word that troubles me'."44 The thought that he would commit mistakes tortures him because he equates mistakes with sexual sins. "But what if I do, just one mistake—just a word, one word—one sin" (L28). Staupitz wisely reminds him of his obsession and the unconscious motive behind it: "You are obsessed with the rule because it serves very nicely as a protection for you" (L 53). This kind of abnormal behaviour makes him a laughing stock among his fellow-
monks who lack proper insight into such kind of errant behaviour. Martin’s behaviour accords well with the picture of an obsessive-compulsive state that Freud gives:

> The patient’s mind is occupied with thoughts that do not really interest him, he feels impulses which seem foreign to him and he is impelled to perform actions which not only afford him no pleasure but from which he is powerless to desist.\(^{45}\)

This obsessional behaviour is coupled with a profound, at the same time irrational sense of guilt that his life itself becomes a torture.

The premise that an acute sense of guilt gnawed into his mind has been corroborated by historical evidence. Listen to one such account:

> Nevertheless he soon found himself in deep waters struggling against uncertainties and doubts, unhappily bearing the crippling burden of guilt, which neither sacramental consolations of the church nor the wise advice of skilled directors was able to assuage.\(^{46}\)

He begins to feel guilty over actions that he has not committed, but only thought of doing. In Martin’s case there is an omnipotence of thoughts due to which thoughts take the place of actions. He broods over and feels guilty of minor lapses. Note Bro. Weinad’s words: “Father Nathin told me he had to punish you only the day before yesterday because you were in some ridiculous state of hysteria all over some verse in proverbs or something” (L 26). Martin’s irrational sense
of guilt is so persistent that he always harps on imaginary sins. Bro. Weinad's words are again a pointer to the mental agony that accrues from thoughts about sin: "I only mean the whole convent knows you're making up sins you've never committed" (*L* 26).

Obsessive behaviour and guilty conscience demand a psychoanalytic exploration. Freud himself writes about this connection between Oedipus complex and a sense of guilt resulting from oversensitized conscience. Sense of guilt is the textual form of religion itself:

In 1913, under the title of 'Totem and Tabu' I published a study of the earliest form of religion and morality in which I expressed a suspicion that perhaps the sense of guilt of mankind as a whole, which is the ultimate source of religion and morality was acquired in the beginning through the Oedipus complex.  

So Oedipus complex is the nuclear structure behind all the symptomatic actions exhibited by Martin. A person develops obsessive acts as substitutive gratification for thwarted sexual instincts. Erikson makes this point very clear:

Psychoanalysis has emphasized and systematized the sexual search of childhood and youth, elaborating on the way sexual and aggressive drives and contents are repressed and disguised, to appear in impulsive acts and compulsive self-restraints.
These neurotics with overburdening sense of guilt go through elaborate rituals of self-punishments to expiate what they merely thought of doing. Analysis shows that a person with a firmly anchored Oedipus complex develops a very rigorous and harsh superego which frustrates instinctual trends. As Robert S. Woodworth observes, "they admit that their guilty feeling is irrational, but they can't get away from it. Their superego is fierce and relentless. In general Freud held that the superego is motivated by the aggressive tendency turned inward against the ego." When the instinctual trends are thus repressed, the libidinal elements take the form of obsessive symptoms and the aggressive elements change into a sense of guilt. The feeling of guilt in the relation between father and child is a recurrent theme in all kinds of creative literature. Jonathan Miller writes: "And it is possible to see from myth, from fable, from history, from fiction and from philosophical writings, guilt has been present in the parent-child relation since man first began to record the events of his life and his reactions to them."

Obsessive behaviour is thus the result of the conflict between impulse and prohibition. Impulse in the form of incestuous relation with one's own mother is coupled with parricide and prohibition in the form of moral conscience. The words of Staupitz about Martin's obsession with rules are truly insightful: "protection against the demands of your own instincts, that's what. You see, you think, you admire authority, and so you do, but unfortunately you can't submit to it" (L 53). Brill writes:
And when we have learnt that the obsessive rules of certain neurotics are nothing but measures of self-assurance and self-punishment created against the reinforced impulse to commit murder we can return with fresh appreciation to our previous hypothesis that every prohibition must conceal desire.51

Another symptomatic behaviour exhibited by Martin which has significatory roots in his infantile past is masochism. He derives a curious kind of pleasure from inflicting pain on himself. Among the galaxy of characters who figure in Osborne's dramatic world, Martin is not the only one who exults in his own pain. Jimmy Porter in Look Back in Anger is such a character who would be lost without self-inflicted suffering. Jimmy's self-flagellation is essentially masochistic. Helena is provoked to ask.

Helena : You don't think the world's treated you pretty badly, don't you?

Alison : Oh, don't try and take his suffering away from him—he'd be lost without it. (Look Back in Anger 54)

This masochism is rooted in Martin's neurosis, which has its genesis in a very harsh superego. The 'ego' which dreads the superego exhibits a need for self-punishment. Therefore the ego turns masochistic under the influence of the superego. The ego derives a kind of erogenous pleasure from this kind of self-punishment. As Freud puts it in Civilization and Its Discontent: "It has brought a part of the
instinct of destruction at work within itself into the service of an erotic attachment to the superego."

Freud also explains masochism as a kind of reversal formation in which the desire to inflict pain on others is replaced by a willingness to take on the role of a sufferer. This is why there is an element of theatricality in Martin’s protestation of anguish. Note his words: “I am a worm and no man, a byword and a laughing stock: crush out the worminess in me, stamp on me” (L 19).

The ambivalent emotional attitude shown by Martin to his own father and which is displaced on to all authority-figures is also the symptom of a deeply embedded neurosis. A. Carter traces the source of this ambivalence back to Martin’s relation with his own father: “The reason for martin’s ambivalent attitude towards authority is hinted by Osborne to have stemmed from the nature of his relationship with his own father.”

Martin fears and admires his father at the same time. It is a kind of love-hate relationship. Even while deeply afraid of his father, there is a deep investment in him that Martin cannot miss. Even while indicting his father for his emotional starvation in childhood, Martin can’t but eulogize his sagacity. An excerpt from his conversation with Staupitz where Martin praises his father makes this amply clear. Martin: “So he is, but he made a discovery years and years ago that took me sweat and labour to dig out of the earth myself” (L 55). Edward Glover
in *Psychoanalysis* explains the genesis of this mixed emotional attitude thus:

The child's love of and need for love from its parents is readily replaced by hate when the parents frustrate or appear to frustrate these impulses and needs. The child is then faced with the painful situation of loving and hating in rapid alternation. Sooner or later, this alternation leads to permanent mixed attitude, a simultaneous loving and hating which is called ambivalence.54

The ambivalence that he feels towards his father is displaced onto all authority figures. Later we find this attitude reflected in his relation to God and Church. God, for Martin, was only a magnified form of father. He loved but was all the same scared of God. Note his words: "When I entered the monastery, I wanted to speak to God directly, you see. Without any embarrassment, I wanted to speak to him myself, but when it came to it, I dried up—as I always have" (*L* 38). As Erikson puts it, "the theological problems which Luther tackled as a young adult, of course, reflected the peculiarly tenacious problems of the domestic relationships to his own father."55 This ambivalence is at full play in his attitude to the peasants' revolt. The peasants' revolt was inspired by the religious revolt initiated by Martin Luther. But Luther ditched them and had no qualms of conscience in advocating stern measures against them.
The ambivalent attitude shown by a neurotic always interested Freud. Freud states in unambiguous terms that the emotional ambivalence is the offshoot of Oedipus complex. Brill writes: “But the other possibility seems to me also worthy of consideration; that ambivalence, originally foreign to our emotional life, was acquired by mankind from the father-complex.”

Psychoanalysis explains ambivalence as the offshoot of Oedipus complex. In the psychic frame of a neurotic, the impulse to kill the father as a rival for his mother's affection and the wish for incestuous relation with her come in to conflict with the prohibition against the deed. The prohibition does not succeed in abolishing the impulse; its only success lies in repressing the impulse, and banishing it into the unconscious. Both the impulse and the prohibition remain. At the same time the ambivalence—desire for the father's death and at the same time fear of his death—also remain. Brill explains thus: “In their consciousness they would like nothing better than to transgress them but they are also afraid to do it; they are afraid because they would like to transgress and the fear is stronger than the pleasure.” An unsolved situation or psychic fixation results which manifests itself in the form of symptoms.

Another symptom exhibited by Martin that is rooted in the Oedipal situation is a profound sense of anxiety. There is a repetitive pattern in his anxiety. This acute sense of anxiety characterises his behaviour towards father and God. This is why Martin's religion is a
religion of fear. He conceives of God in the image of his own father—an angry God. Bro. Weinad finds it none too easy to console him: "You're a fool. You're really a fool. God isn't angry with you. It's you who are angry with him" (*L* 30). Martin is in the throes of anxiety for most of the time during his monastic career. The anticipated meeting with his father hurls him into the vortex of uncontrollable anxiety. Note Lucas's words: "The boy's probably a bit—well you know anxious about seeing you again for" (*L* 34). The connection between anxiety and perspiration has been established beyond doubt by psychological research. Bro. Weinad might have been conscious of this connection for he makes constant references to it: "You were sweating like a pig in a butcher's shop" (*L* 26). Martin's anxiety is too explicit to be missed by the ever-vigilant eyes of Hans Luther. He refers to Martin's state of panic: "You know what, Martin, I think you've always been scared—ever since you could get off your knees and walk. You've been scared for the good reason that that's what you most like to be" (*L* 44).

This sense of anxiety which is a symptom of his deeply embedded neurosis cannot be considered in isolation. It has vital connection with the feeling of guilt that eats into his mind. Freud traces the connection between anxiety and the sense of guilt resulting from the disapproval of the superego. Freud states: "Here perhaps is the place to remark that the sense of guilt is nothing but a topographical variety of anxiety and that in its later phase it coincides completely with the dread of the superego."58
Martin exhibits neurotic as well as phobic kinds of anxiety. At times he falls a prey to neurotic anxiety. Note Bro. Weinad’s words: “You always talk as if lightning were just about to strike behind you” (L 26). Phoebe Rice in The Entertainer is another character afflicted with neurotic anxiety which is the result of pent up tensions of accumulated years.

Analysis reveals the fact that Martin’s anxiety is more phobic than ‘neurotic’. Martin falls a prey to phobic anxiety in situations where he has to confront his father or father-surrogates of a negative kind. This phobic anxiety is like the infantile fear of the phallic father. He is beside himself with anxiety when he anticipates a meeting with his father in the opening scene. His phobic reaction to some kinds of noises may be due to the fear of father crystallized and displaced on certain kinds of noises. Some kinds of noises remind him of his father’s dominant voice and thereby the father himself. Note Martin’s words: “But I’m still afraid. I’m afraid and there’s an end of it . . . for instance of the noise the prior’s dog makes on a still evening when he rolls over on his side and licks his teeth” (L 24).

Another symptom that encapsulates within itself a deep signification is the physicality of Martin’s suffering. Martin’s body comes in the way of his mental serenity and happiness. This symptom explodes into meaning when we read it together with the sinister warning given by Hans in the opening act:
It won't wash because you can't ever, however you try, you can't ever get away from your body because that's what you live in, and it's all you've got to die in, and you can't get away from the body of your father and your mother, we're bodies, Martin, and so are you, and we're bound together for always. (L 41)

It seems as if Martin is showing his Oedipal aggression to his father through his body which is his parents' legacy. He is always wrestling with his recalcitrant and intransigent bowels that cause him a lot of suffering. His bowels refuse to open up and constipation torments him. Note his cry of despair: "There's a bare fist clenched to my bowels and they can't move and I have to sit sweating in my little monk's house to open them" (L 24). His bowels put him on the rack. "I wish my bowels open. I am blocked up like an old crypt" (L 29). The physicality in the play is too marked to be missed. The flesh becomes a signifying element in the play. As Simon Trussler puts it,

Just one theme makes the play and the person whole.
That is the theme of physicality—which is pursued in the mental process of an anally obsessed neurotic, who is subject to profuse sweating, chronic constipation and epileptic fits; and who also happened to be a religious reformer.60

Luther is found to transfer his mental suffering to the body so that his physical suffering has a psychological significance. In his case the
communicating doors between body and mind are always open. In these psychosomatic disorders the mind makes use of the corporal space to articulate its meaning. In many people 'affects' such as anger, fear, impatience and frustration find an outlet through the body. This gives us an insight into the nature of Martin's physical suffering. His psychological conflicts express themselves through the body. The eruption of the epileptic fit at the end of Act 1, Scene 1, which is not historically corroborated, is symptomatic of the physicality of Martin's suffering. Anna Freud makes this point very clear when she writes:

There are persons who retain throughout childhood and carry into adult life a predilection for somatic discharge of mental excitation, especially their aggressive impulses, their irritation and their disappointments into physical symptomatology.61

In Martin's case this psychosomatic factor may be related to his thwarted sexual development occasioned by a very rigorous father and a severe superego. Since aggression forms an essential component of infantile sexuality, a person whose erotic impulse is blocked or frustrated has plenty of unventilated aggression at his disposal. This aggressive energy, which forms a stress factor, settles on his bowels and manifests itself as a bodily symptom. But Otto Fenichel explains the bodily discharge of mental excitations in terms of inhibitions and anxiety. According to him disturbances of the physical functions are in part inhibitions and in part equivalents of anxiety.
Constipation, which complicates Martin’s scatological problems, offers an interesting commentary on Martin’s psychosexual development. He is not only physically but also linguistically constipated, for monologue is his favourite form of expression.

At the psycho-linguistic level, it could be shown that a person’s choice of language reflects his personality and state of mind. Language externalises one’s inner state. Therefore the wealth and bewildering variety of anal imagery and excremental terms with which the play is replete deserve special study. Martin has a penchant for the use of anal terms and excrement fires his imagination: “I am like a ripe stool in the world’s straining anus, and at any moment, we’re about to let each other go” (L 55). For Martin, going to the lavatory is a subject worthy of allegorisation. “Only last week I was lecturing on Galatians three, and I allegorised going to the lavatory” (L 52). One can understand the real import of anal terms and excremental imagery only if it is seen in terms of fixation to the anal-sadistic stage of psycho-sexual development. Regression and fixation at the anal stage are very common in obsessional neurosis. “In the obsessional neurosis, on the other hand, regression of the libido to the antecedent stage of sadistic anal organization is the most conspicuous factor and determines the form taken by the symptoms.” The corporal punishment that Martin received during infancy might have led to his libidinal fixation at the anal zone. Children were caned on the buttocks and the stimulation of the rear parts led to a kind of anal eroticism to which he regresses as indicated by the use of anal imagery. Erikson aptly comments:
We can't ignore the fact brought out by the researchers of psychoanalysis that the anal zone which is guarded and protected by the bowels can, under selective and intense treatment of special kinds, become the seat of sensitive and sensual, defiant and stubborn associations.\textsuperscript{64}

So the anal imagery has symbolic significance related to Martin's neurosis. Anal imagery is the result of the displacement of the libido involved in anal activities to language. Libidinal displacement from anal phantasies to phonation is common. This kind of language is erotic in its impact and might have carried Martin to the heights to orgiastic pleasure. Excremental language can also be traced back to infantile traumas. His excremental language is not a later excrescence but firmly rooted in the anal-fixations which itself may be traced back to infantile traumas. In fact, the production of faeces may well take on an exceptional symbolic significance because it represents the infant's ability to negotiate its relationship with the world—to withhold or to give its faecal mass. In Luther's terminology excrement is a symbol rich in meaning. Freud reads a sexual meaning in excrement. "Excremental things are all too intimately and inseparably bound up with sexual things."\textsuperscript{65}

In the anal-sadistic stage of psychosexual development the child who experiences anal eroticism attributes symbolic meaning to anal products (faeces). It is seen that important modes of social behaviour originate in the anal stage of infantile sexuality. In the rhetoric of anger
against the Church, Luther is merely transferring the symbolism implicit in the anal product to non-bodily cultural objects (faeces as weapon).

Martin appears in the play as an angry young man who explodes into a torrent of angry words against his opponents. His fusillade against the Pope is more than a strident voice of protest. Note his rhetoric of anger: "It has come to me from a latrine called Rome, that capital of the devil's own sacred empire" (L 79) or Martin "... because papal decretals are the devil's decretals" (L 79).

In the play anger is a symptom. Martin uses anger as a defence-mechanism to ward off anxiety. That is why he can never be found as anxious and angry at the same time. As Raymond Novaco writes,

at times we behave as if it is better to be angry than to be anxious. The arousal of anger functions to block feelings of vulnerability as 'getting angry' pre-empts 'becoming anxious' and externalizes the conflict by focussing on something that is non-self. ... It is often the case with an irascible individual that he prefers to be perceived as an angry agitated person than as an anxious, apprehensive one. 66

Martin's explosion into anger needs further elaboration. Often his anger is disproportionate to the situation and he is found to over-react. His fulmination against the Church is a case in point. Martin is merely displacing the pent up anger and aggression that actually belong to his infantile past. Otto Fenichel observes: "If a person reacts to an
event in an exaggerated way or with a type of affect that seems inadequate, this is a sign of displacement, the 'affect' actually belongs to some other situation which had been warded off."

The charred remains of Martin's loveless past come alive through the dreams narrated by Martin to the Brother in Act 1, Scene 1. According to Freud, dream is a symptom that speaks the language of the past. Dreams in *Luther* can be taken as incidence of the return of the repressed. They encode Martin's history. That is why the dreams merit careful analytic study. In the first dream, Martin is fighting a bear in a garden without flowers leading to a desert.

His claws kept making arms bleed as I tried to open a gate which would take me out. It was simply an open frame and I could have walked through it, but I was covered in my own blood, and I saw a naked woman riding on a goat, and the goat began to drink my blood. . . . (*L* 19, 20)

The strong Oedipal overtones in the dream are worthy of note. The 'bear' in the dream may symbolically represent his father through metonymic transfer of signification and 'naked woman riding on a goat' is suggestive of repressed libidinal cravings. These images bring to the fore the relentless battle between 'Id' and 'superego' that ravages Martin's inner world.

The second dream also contains many images which have significatory links with Martin's own infantile past.

I was among a group of people, men and women fully clothed. We lay on top of each other in neat rows about
seven or eight across. We all got up . . . and when one looked, those at the bottom were not simply flattened by the weight, they were just their clothes, neatly pressed and folded on the ground. (L 20)

The ghostly remains of an unclaimed (unredeemed) past and the ugly skeletons in his mental cupboard peep out through these images. The oppressive memories relating to the past have a strangulating effect on Martin.

Now the question as to why he turned to religion by becoming a monk assumes added importance. Was he in search of an identity that was denied to him in the mundane world outside? Anyhow there is every reason to assume that he turned to religion in search of something he missed in real life. A psychoanalytic probe goes far to convince us that Luther turned to God and religion in search of a father. Freud himself finds in religion nothing but man's search for a father. He writes:

The derivation of a need for a religion from the child's feeling of helplessness and the longing it evokes for a father seems to be incontrovertible, especially since this feeling is not simply carried on from childhood days but is kept alive perpetually by the fear of what the superior power of fate will bring.66

Father complex is the germ from which all religions have developed. Man cannot think of God in any other form but that of an exalted Father. Then what about Luther?
Luther sought in God what he could not find in Hans but to his dismay found that God was a magnified Hans. For Luther, religious authority was a father-surrogate and his attacks in which cruelty alternated with compassion represented the ambivalent feeling of love and hatred that he felt unconsciously for his own father.

Martin's image of God was an exact replica of his father-image. Note the account: "such a God could be feared but not loved, could be obeyed out of constraint but never with that happy spontaneity which Luther felt to be of the essence of Christian obedience." Martin himself voices such an idea of God: "Oh, Mary, dear Mary, all I see of Christ is a flame and raging on a rainbow. Pray to your son, and ask him to still His anger, for I can't raise my eyes to look at him" (L 30).

According to Carter, Martin's emotions towards God are determined by his emotions towards his own father. He craves for love, but at the same time fears rejection. Alan Carter aptly comments: "We see in this how Martin will have the same emotions towards God, his need for love and his fear of rejection." The negative emotions that cloud Martin's relation with his father are transferred to God and religion. This is the case of emotional transference of a negative kind. Ronald Hayman follows this line of argument: "We see how this could lead to a projection of the same combination of emotions towards God; a sense of desperate need and a sense of being singled out for special victimization."
Notes

1 Andrew Bennet and Nicholas Royle, *An Introduction to Literature, Criticism and Theory* 53.


6 *Seductions of Psychoanalysis* 9.

7 Banham 51.

8 Banham 58.


10 Hayman 46.

11 Trussler 97.

12 Erikson 9.

14 This tendency continues in the novels of Salman Rushdie, e.g.: *Midnight's Children*. “Throughout *Midnight's Children* priority is given to poetic truth over historical truth.” [Marguerite Alexander, *Flights from Realism* (New York: Routledge, 1990) 138]. In *Midnight's Children*, the reader is given an alternative history since independence. The novel is history built on the premise that the 1001 children born within the frontiers of India between midnight and 1 a.m. on 15 August 1947 were “only partially the offspring of the parents—the children of midnight were also children of the time: fathered, you understand by history” (*MNC* 118). The seeds of an alternate history are sown at that time.

“It was as though . . . history, arriving at a point of the highest significance and promise, had chosen to sow, in that instant, the seeds a future which would genuinely differ from anything the world had seen up to that time” (*MNC* 195).


17 Carter 77.
In our study of Martin's childhood and its impact on later psychic structuring we have an inspiring example in Freud's own essay "Leonardo da Vinci and a Memory of His Childhood." Freud attempts a psychobiography which traces the effect of sexuality as experienced in childhood on the adult life of a great man. Da Vinci's love of art was an idealised form of sexuality. Freud relates the biographical findings to paintings like Monalisa and Madonna and Child with St. Anne.


According to Freud, mind is a three-tiered structure consisting of 'Id', 'ego' and superego. The 'Id', the repository of libido is motivated by the pleasure principle. The 'ego', conscious and rational is motivated by reality principle. Antithetical to the 'Id' is the 'superego' which stands for moral restraint. 'Superego' is the repository of 'conscience'. The 'superego' is a severe taskmaster which represses the 'Id' and forces it back into the unconscious.

The 'superego' becomes a permanent institution in the child's mind as a result of its identification with the father-image. As a particular stage in his life, the child 'incorporates' or 'introjects' father-image with the result that his superego becomes an internal representative of external authority. A harsh father-image entails a harsh superego. As a paternal legacy Martin developed a harsh superego, which led to a conflict between sexuality (Id) and morality (superego). This led to Martin's neurosis.

Hayman 45.

According to Freud, mind is a three-tiered structure consisting of 'Id', 'ego' and superego. The 'Id', the repository of libido is motivated by the pleasure principle. The 'ego', conscious and rational is motivated by reality principle. Antithetical to the 'Id' is the 'superego' which stands for moral restraint. 'Superego' is the repository of 'conscience'. The 'superego' is a severe taskmaster which represses the 'Id' and forces it back into the unconscious.

The 'superego' becomes a permanent institution in the child's mind as a result of its identification with the father-image. As a particular stage in his life, the child 'incorporates' or 'introjects' father-image with the result that his superego becomes an internal representative of external authority. A harsh father-image entails a harsh superego. As a paternal legacy Martin developed a harsh superego, which led to a conflict between sexuality (Id) and morality (superego). This led to Martin's neurosis.

Erikson 73.

Trussler 101.

Hayman 45.

Harben 194.

Erikson 118.

Oedipus complex is the nucleus round which Freud develops the theory of neurosis. A knowledge of the pivotal role that parents,
especially the dominant one plays in the psychic life of children is imperative for the proper aetiology of neurosis. There is the lasting unconscious association of sensual freedom with the body of the mother and the lasting association of cruel prohibition with the father. From puberty onwards the individual has to liberate himself from the tentacles of Oedipus complex for the attainment of a stable and integrated ego. He has to get released from the erotic attachment to his mother and transfer it to an external love-object. The antipathy and antagonism to the father which is rooted in the infantile conflict has to be got rid of. The Oedipal conflict remains unresolved in the case of neurosis. Freud states: "In the neurotics this detachment from the parents is not accomplished at all. The son remains all his life in subjection to his father and incapable of transferring his libido to a new sexual object. In this sense Oedipus complex is regarded as the kernel of neurosis.

38 Durant 341.


40 Frosh 18.


42 Thomas M. Lindsay, *Luther and the German Reformation* (Edinburgh: Morrison and Gibb, 1925) 35.

43 Erikson 133.


48 Erikson 109.


51 Brill 861.


53 Carter 91.


55 Erikson 73.

56 Brill 927.

57 Brill 831.

58 Freud, *Civilization and its Discontents* 93.
Anxiety is an affective condition which can be categorised into 'neurotic anxiety' and 'phobic anxiety'. Neurotic anxiety is a general form of apprehensiveness, a condition of 'expectant dread' or 'anxious expectation'. It is a free-floating kind of anxiety and people who are victims of neurotic anxiety are always agitated. In contrast to 'neurotic anxiety' 'phobic anxiety' is much more circumscribed and attached to definite objects and situations.

Trussler 105.


The stages of psycho-sexual development given by Freud are oral, anal and phallic according to the bodily zone where the sexuality is centred at a particular stage. The stages culminate in the Oedipal situation when the boy takes his father as a formidable rival for his mother's affection and fears victimization by castration. In his discussion Freud points out that the mind at an advanced stage of development can regress to an early stage. This is called fixation.


Erikson 75.


69 *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, vol. 4, 437.

70 Carter 81.

71 Hayman 44.