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THE "FINE LINE" OF OTTO RANK

BY

PHILIP J. HECHT

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A DISSERTATION SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
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ABSTRACT

Otto Rank, more than just psychologist, psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst, was a compassionate human being. The humanity reflected in his work is the subject of this dissertation and I have shown how his ideas can illuminate historical figures and fictional characters in literature and film.

Chapter one examines Rank's "fine line" in order to outline the difficult path that all must travel in life, and some of the methods that are chosen to cope with experience. To Rank, this is a balancing act between acts of creative will and choices influenced by anxiety, guilt, and fear of life and death. Rank claims that the only vital factor in life is the human factor and that human understanding is more important than intellectual knowledge, because it is emotional and cannot be programmed.

Chapter two examines the search for Rank's idea of fear as the dominant force influencing experience, love, life, and death. This is the fear of life and the fear of death that is part of our inner being and that can push us toward the elusive goal of immortality or can hold us back with some form of neurosis.

Chapter three focuses on Rank's ideas about neurosis. He approaches the subject from a very human point-of-view, noting that it is a very private affair, because each person molds his own peculiar stylistic reactions to life.

Chapter four examines Rank's thoughts about sexuality. He bases the idea of sexuality on the spiritual beginnings of primitive man rather than physical relations with the opposite sex. Views of "perversion" or sex other than heterosexual man-woman, intercourse-baby, are elaborated upon

with the idea of narcissism and a sense of guilt being involved in the process. Rank suggests that homosexuality could well be seen as a protest against standardization.

Chapter five deals with Rank's ideas of the emotions and how our feelings dominate attitudes toward life and experience. Rank believes that painful feelings such as guilt, anxiety, and hate are separating or isolating, while joyful feelings of love, hope, and pleasure are uniting and binding.

Chapter six examines Rank's ideas about the artist and the hero. Rank's theories about creativity and the search for immortality are investigated in the forging of some highly motivated personalities who often leave their imprint upon society.

Finally, chapter seven examines Rank's most important and often most controversial contribution to psychoanalysis- the "will" as the catalyst and prime mover for freedom of choice, and the force that so powerfully influences the course taken along the "fine line" in conjunction with fear, neurosis, sexuality, and the emotions which we all experience.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I have an unusual task at this point in my life, recognizing and voicing my appreciation for the many men and women whose help and understanding aided me in reaching this particular milestone. I am sure that my parents, long gone from this life, would have been surprised and delighted by the event. My wife's patience and silent approval were essential to my entire back-to-school endeavor which started at the mature age of sixty-five and has continued for sixteen years of pleasure and challenge.

Without the help and perpetual optimism of my advisor, Dr. Wilfred Dvorak, the final lap of this educational road would have been much tougher and probably longer. I also appreciate the assistance of my readers, Dr. Galen Johnson and Dr. Walter Cane and the rest of the defense committee, Dr. Robert Schwegler and Dr. Pat Viglione in completing this work. Nor can I forget the important support given me by my advisors at Rhode Island College, Dr. Annette Ducey, Dr. Thomas Howell, and especially Dr. Kenneth Lewalski, in the early stages of my work with Otto Rank and two master's theses.

It was my eldest daughter, Suzanne, who planted the seed for this degree after I finished a second masters program and was ready to call it quits. My two other children, Kathy and Paul, were also in my camp and very encouraging throughout. It has been said that all of life is a stage and that we are only actors upon it. If so, I have enjoyed playing the roles of son, husband, father, business man, and student. It has been a great adventure for me and I look forward to the new fields that I'm sure are

waiting in the wings. After all, walking the “fine line” is what life is all about.

PREFACE

This dissertation is about the ideas of Otto Rank (1884-1939).

Although Rank was an important figure in the original school of Freudian psychoanalysis, he has been largely ignored in the history of the movement. Only in the past ten years has his genius been widely recognized. Dr. D. James Lieberman, a psychiatrist and writer, recently published the first in-depth biography of Rank (1985). In *Acts of Will*, he describes how this misunderstood and misrepresented man, a figure of mystery to his fellow professionals and reading public alike, came to emphasize the importance of the mother, separation, life fear and death fear, and most of all, the "will", in forming the essence of the human personality. These concepts form the groundwork for the ego psychology and time-limited psychotherapy of today. "The time has arrived for the long postponed recognition of Rank's genius as a psychoanalytical pioneer and humanist," says Lieberman (xxx).

This dissertation has evolved from several years of reading and studying Rank's humanistic concepts and from my own extensive research employed in the writing of two masters' theses with Rank as the centerpiece. One of Rank's most interesting concepts that has explained many of life's discrepancies for me is his conviction that human actions and life in general are inconsistent with systems of pure reason. Acceptance of this view calls for a new kind of understanding of human behavior, especially its emotional side, for Rank has shown that useful and often creative expressions need to be permitted by our social forms of reason. The

irrational basis of human nature lies beyond any psychology, said Rank, and this realization has been strongly confirmed by the socio-political movements of this century. Human activity can and has broken out in violent distortions that often appear as neuroses and, culturally, as various kinds of frequently successful revolutionary movements. Rank believes that we need an irrational language with a new vocabulary, something like what modern art is trying to find for the expression of the “subconscious.” He spent much of his abbreviated lifetime exploring and researching the essential nature of man and the importance of the “artist”. To Rank, the modern artist is yesterday’s hero, challenging the monsters of old and using his courage and creative energies to overcome seemingly insurmountable obstacles. Rank’s artist cannot be stereotyped, for his artist is not simply a great painter, or poet, or musician, but the creative personality who fights against the fear of life and the fear of death by using his creative will. “The successful painter may be a thoroughly average person or a neurotic; the humble backwoodsman or a simple housewife may be an artist” (324).

The aim of this dissertation is to understand Rankian theories and his analyses of motives for human behavior in day-to-day living. I am convinced that one way to arrive at this understanding is by looking at the character development in fiction and film created by artists whose intelligence and humanness reflect many Rankian ideas. As they play out their roles, the characters expose the hidden fears of life and death that Rank gives so much importance to, and suggest how closely linked are the actions and emotions of their counterparts in the “real world” of our society. The key words of anxiety, guilt, neurosis, creativity, and will are some of the modes of escape from fear used by these fictional characters in the course of their narrative lives on page and screen. Most of the material

used to illustrate Rankian ideas in this dissertation will be found in characters created by James Joyce, William Faulkner, Henry James, and others; and in films by Vittoria DeSica, Alfred Hitchcock, Martin Scorsese, and others.

The works of Rank expressing the basic ideas for this study include *The Trauma of Birth* (1929), *Psychology and the Soul* (1931), *Art and Artist* (1932), *Will Therapy* and *Truth and Reality* (1936), and *Beyond Psychology* (published posthumously in 1941). Also used for further explication, Jessica Taft's *Otto Rank* (1958), Ernest Becker's award winning study, *The Denial of Death* (1973), Esther Menaker's *Otto Rank: A Rediscovered Legacy* (1982), and Lieberman's *Acts of Will* (1985).

The first chapter of this dissertation will provide a general overview of Otto Rank, his life and works; it will show Rank's awareness of the human condition and delineate his concepts. The same chapter will reinforce my principal objective in this paper, the exploration of his key concepts relating to man's conscious and unconscious methods for coping with life. The remaining chapters will illustrate these key terms by showing how they are reflected in the actions of characters presented in literature and film. For example, Chapter II will examine and illustrate Rank's theory that designates fear as the principal emotion which contributes to the way that choices are made: fear of experience, fear of love, and fear of life. Chapter III will explore Rank's many-faceted views of neurosis and how its effects on our manner of coping with people and events. Chapter IV will investigate Rank's complex and very human understanding of sexuality in this, our sexual era. Chapter V will delve into our emotions, our feelings of guilt, anxiety, and love from a Rankian

perspective, a view that could change our thinking about these emotions. Chapter VI will examine Rank's views on his continuing involvement with the "hero" and the "artist" in our society and their effect on the cultures of contemporary Western civilizations in order to assess his contribution to psychology and the arts. Throughout his work, Rank emphasized the importance of creativity and personality development as the keystones for a productive, meaningful life for all humans. He saw death as the price of life and self-consciousness. Then he yielded to the infinite and affirmed the inevitable: "We need illusions to live." In religion, art, philosophy, literature, myth, and politics, he found grandeur and pathos in partly successful efforts, individual and collective, to overcome the inevitable. "It is enough," Rank taught, "to live with it" (Lieberman 410).

Finally, my last chapter will examine and explain what many consider to be Rank's most important contribution to psychotherapy, his belief in the freedom of the will and the freedom of choice. In the end, Rank believed that the human capacity for psychological growth is limited only by the extent of our creative will.

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CHAPTER ONE

"THE FINE LINE"

Otto Rank and his intriguing ideas about life exemplify for me the fine line that humans must travel on their voyage through life. The emotions, work, play, and sex can be a balancing act for the average person as he or she zig zags down the line between reality and fantasy, rationality and irrationality, morality and immorality, religion, and religious fanaticism, etc. It has been noted by Rank and others that the path to genius passes close by the madhouse. A recent article by Natalie Angier appearing in the *New York Times* suggests that the link between genius and madness is real and measureable. The writer notes that three hundred years ago, English poet John Dryden wrote:

Great wits are sure to madness
near allied
And thin partitions do their bounds
divide.

For example, some of the artists in whom manic depression or severe depression has been diagnosed by some psychiatrists are Byron, Shelley, Melville, Schumann, Woolf, and Lowell. Ms. Angier goes on to say that, although creativity is obviously an essential element in many professions, the link between creativity and mental instability is more pronounced in the arts than in other fields (10/12/93).

There is also the line between right and wrong, between love and hate, between neurosis and mental health, between too much and too little. I could go on and on, because the line I am trying to define is very thin. So thin, that it is easy to step off on either side at any time, in any place.

Rank's theory of man's irrationality suggested in the preface can explain many of life's discrepancies that occur along the "fine line." Expecting rational behavior from others, for example, leads to all kinds of anticipation and disappointment. Even our own actions are often completely irrational, but, of course, we usually manage to rationalize our irrationalities away.

OTTO RANK AND THE HUMAN CONDITION

Although Otto Rank died more than fifty years ago, the universal significance of his ideas about the human condition are only now being fully understood and used to improve psychotherapy and counselling. All of his theories relating to human activity are tied to man's basic need to manage or escape the fear of life and the fear of death. Repression of death is indigenous to the human animal, the only animal, as far as we know, aware of the future. This study will try to illustrate how these primal fears are revealed in specific artistic works by way of guilt, anxiety, creativity, and the development of personality in characters created in novels and films. The roles of some of the characters in each work will be explored with new Rankian insights into their acts of commission and omission, choices that can be compared to the interpretations of life experience made by Rank in his writings and psychotherapy.

Rank was born in Vienna in 1884 and at the age of nineteen he was already directing his energies and thoughts toward psychology. He looked for a comprehensive knowledge of mankind that might explain our thinking, acting, and speaking, and believed that self-observation was a prime essential toward this goal. He attempted, by the continuous keeping of notes, to preserve his own passing moods, impressions, and feelings and

to observe the ongoing stages of his development by tracing the inner connections and external incidents associated with ensuing growth. Not only did these written words reveal Rank's natural bent as a psychologist, but, more important and far more original, was his acceptance of growth as a predictable psychological process. This idea ripened as he matured and became the basis for his strong convictions about the effect of experience on the formation of personality. The greater the number and variety of experiences enjoyed by an individual, the greater the growth of personality (Taft 4).

Rank, in the same formative period of his life, was bitterly cynical regarding women, marriage, parents, religion, and life itself. He read widely, especially the novels of Stendahl and Dostoevsky, and the plays of Wedekind and Ibsen. Darwin's *Origin of the Species* and above all, Nietzsche and Schopenhauer were his greatest sources of inspiration and insight. Rank's 1904 diary revealed his intention to pursue greatness, a goal which was never to be abandoned. Schopenhauer was the first of the three to change his outlook on the world. From Schopenhauer Rank quotes: "Only befogged as it is by the thought of humanity as the highest and only goal can the human intellect call man beautiful in contrast to animals and in regard to the best of nature." Rank also believed that his generation was nourished by his "model, leader, and guide," Friederich Nietzsche. "I virtually bathed in Nietzsche's genius, and got a charmed, weather-tight and bullet-proof skin to shield me against attacks from without as I go along my way," he wrote in his diary. Through psychoanalysis, Rank eventually came to grips with the human paradox inherent in living self-consciously, but Nietzsche first led him to the brink of self-conscious, existential ecstasy and despair. Rank stayed with

Nietzsche for many years until he began to work with Freud. At this stage, he closely examined the significance of the artist, the genius, and the hero in society and also in this same period he began to analyze dreams. The young, unschooled machinist tried to discover a connection between the phenomenon of dreaming and art and life. Rank had obviously been inspired by Freud's *Traumdeutung* and on this Freudian base created his own understanding of what the dreamer experiences and what is the dream's place in art. At the close of this period in his life, Rank was recreating Freud's dream theories with no apparent thought of differing, but he had already voiced an idea that would return to him as a fundamental difference after twenty years of living and studying with Freud: "Wishes are a phenomena of will. The dream splits the will into wishes. In a dream the wishes are the driving element; in life the will itself" (Taft 37).

THE YEARS WITH FREUD

Otto Rank was twenty-one when he met Freud at a lecture. He introduced himself by giving Freud his first psychoanalytical manuscript, *Der Kunstler (The Artist)*. Freud was so impressed by the unusual comprehension shown by this untutored young man that he persuaded Rank to attend the Gymnasium and University of Vienna and to concentrate on nonmedical core subjects such as psychology, philosophy, anthropology, mythology, etc. He finished with a doctorate in psychology. This generous and discerning gesture by Freud gave Rank the impetus he badly needed to nurture his genius and to successfully publish *Der Kunstler* with Freud's helpful criticism. His second book, *The Myth of the Birth of the Hero*, was published in 1912, the year he received his doctorate, and at the same

time Rank was busy writing his first detailed long work, *Das Inzest-Motiv in Dichtung and Sage* (The Incest Theme in Literature and Legend).

Translated into French in 1934, this work was not published in English until 1992. Rank's doctoral thesis, *Die Lohengrin Sage*, was probably the first paper on psychoanalysis in the history of the University of Vienna. During this period, while he was acting as secretary to Freud's inner circle of psychiatrists, Rank also wrote a paper on dreams that appeared in the "Psychoanalysis Yearbook" (1910) and received a remarkable endorsement from Freud himself:

Perhaps the best example of a dream interpretation is that published by Otto Rank, consisting of the analysis of two mutually related dreams of a young girl. These covered about two pages of print, while the analysis of them runs into seventy-six pages. It would need almost a whole term's lecture in order to give you a work of this magnitude (Taft 66).

Ten years later, Rank startled his associates with a new work, *The Trauma of Birth* (1920), in which his creative spontaneity was given full expression for the first time. His universality of thought was revealed in the opening sentence of the preface: "The following arguments indicate a first attempt to apply the psychoanalytical way of thinking as such, to the comprehension of the whole development of mankind, even of the actual fact of becoming human" (Rank T.B. xi). This was the mature Rank, unaware of deviation from the Freudian base, expressing his own philosophy about the meaning of birth. Later in the preface he writes:

We have come up against the final origin of the psychical unconscious in the psycho-physical, which we can now make biologically comprehensible as well. In attempting to reconstruct for the first time from analytic experiences the to-all-appearances purely physical birth trauma with its prodigious psychical consequences for the whole development of mankind, we are led to recognize in the birth trauma the ultimate biological basis of the physical (xiv).

THE QUARREL WITH FREUD AND OTHERS

Rank's associates in the tight circle around Freud were distressed and insulted by the secrecy surrounding the writing and publishing of the book. Two years after publication of *The Trauma of Birth*, Rank broke with the analytical group in which he had been an intimate and forceful member for twenty years. From this point on and until his death in 1939, Rank proceeded with his writing, teaching, and therapy separated from his friends and his beloved mentor, Sigmund Freud. Their relationship had been like father and favored son and they had complemented one another with Rank's broad background in psychology and the humanities and Freud's orthodox medical training. Rank, with Freud's insistence and approval, had pursued a broad plan of study, and his cultural approach to psychological problems became the basis of their many years of collaborative association. This connection proved to be an important factor in eventually changing the character of psychoanalysis from a narrow medical technique into a general psychology and even a world philosophy (Taft 125).

During the eight years spent in Paris after the separation from Freud, Rank wrote two books. *Art and Artist* (1932), probably his most

widely read book, deals with the affirmation of the value of the artist's personality and its development as the real focus for the creative impulse. *Psychology and The Soul* (1931) explores socially motivated interests going beyond individual psychology to the primary motivation underlying every stage of the race's development, including the intensity of the human desire for immortality.

The last five years of Rank's life were spent in New York City writing, lecturing, and practicing psychotherapy. His final book, the first and only one written in English, was *Beyond Psychology*, published posthumously in 1941, a culmination of his theorizing about the human condition. During this same period, Rank lectured, first at the New York School of Social Work, and then in response to the personal request of his friend and student Jessica Taft, at the Pennsylvania School of Social Work. In addition, other works published at this time include *Truth and Reality* (1936) in which, for the first time, the "will" a basic concept in his psychology were also written for lectures or technical publications, and were later translated into English.

Otto Rank explained the reason he broke from Freud in a paper presented to the Mental Hygiene Department of Yale University on February 28, 1929:

. . . But neither Freud, nor Jung, nor Adler sufficiently considers the as Freud sees it, nor purely racial as Jung conceives it, nor yet purely social as Adler thinks; but which is purely individual. . . . when I had a chance to look back on my own development at the time of my first contact with Freud and his theory (1905), my initial reaction was a pamphlet pointing out this lack. What I called the "artist" was something other than the man who actually paints; I

mean by that the “creative personality” and I tried to explain this creative type by using Freud’s psychology and terminology, but found that I could not do it without going beyond Freud (Taft 38).

For Rank, going beyond Freud meant recognizing that an individual’s conscious will is a basis for creativity and not body chemistry, race, or social environment. From this point on, Rank did not hesitate to teach that “will” was a central force in the therapeutic relationship. This concept finally liberated him from his Freudian past, from the biological developmental details of family history as the core of analytic procedure, and from the old psychoanalytic terminology. Not long after his presentation of this paper at Yale, Rank was invited to address the first International Congress on Mental Hygiene at Washington, D.C. where he faced, for the first time, Freudian enemies anxious to attack him. Rank met them head-on by emphasizing his human approach to psychology. He told his audience that the only vital factor in life as well as in therapy is the human factor. Human understanding rather than intellectual knowledge is more important, he claimed, because it is emotional and cannot be programmed. He was now trying to gradually overcome the intellectual ideology that worships knowledge in order to control and predict human behavior. To suggest that order and prediction are possible, Rank pointed out, would deny an individual’s will and emotional instability and ignore the large part that chance plays in the area of psychical life:

Experience has taught me that understanding and explaining do not get you anywhere unless it comes as a result of personal suffering that the scientific ideology tries to spare the individual from childhood on. I don’t believe that the individual can really develop and grow up without having a chance to go through emotional

experiences and conflicts of all kinds. My life's work has convinced me that real knowledge, insight, and human understanding only follow the emotional and actual working out of a problem, not vice versa as psychoanalysis and, for that matter, all scientific ideology maintains (150).

Rank concluded by emphasizing that the most valuable part of a meeting with people from all over the world lay in the human element, the contact with the personalities themselves and not in their written words. From this time on, Otto Rank did not belong to any school of "scientific" psychology, Freudian or otherwise.

THE RANKIAN REVIVAL

Rank died in 1939 at the age of fifty-five, but it was not until Ernest Becker, a sociology professor, won the Pulitzer Prize in 1974 with his enthusiastic revelations of Otto Rank's work and theories that Rank was rediscovered. In *The Denial of Death* (1973), Becker wrote: "You cannot merely praise much of his work, because in its stunning brilliance it is often fantastic, gratuitous, superlative; the insights seem like a gift. . . . Rank's thought always spanned several fields of knowledge." Becker noted that Rank was very diffuse, very hard to read, and so rich in content that he was almost inaccessible to the general reader (xii).

Nine years later Esther Menaker, a practicing psychoanalyst, published *Otto Rank: A Rediscovered Legacy* in which she called attention to his uniqueness as a psychologist and psychoanalyst because of his profound knowledge of culture, an asset that made him constantly aware of the social dimension in human development. At the same time, Rank's emphasis on individuation made him the forerunner of ego psychology.

And in 1985, an all-encompassing biography of Rank was written and published by another psychiatrist, E. James Lieberman. This complete work, *Acts of Will*, drew on Rank's unpublished diaries and correspondence, interviews with family members as well as former patients and students, and illuminating new material from Freud's inner circle. Lieberman wrote that it was Rank's special mission to free the trapped or downtrodden human will which could only be done with honesty, humor, humility, and a will of one's own. Finally, 1992 saw the publication of Rank's *The Incest Theme in Literature and Legend*, a work written in 1906 but never translated into English until now. This book brings together psychoanalysis and literary criticism encompassing the entire progress of Western literature from the Greeks to the twentieth century and includes discussions of folklore and the mythological traditions of non-Western cultures.

The psychology of Rank is still in the process of being discovered and sometimes reinvented by leading scholars and therapists. Irvin Yalom, a recognized authority on group and existential psychotherapy, states that knowingly or unknowingly every therapist assumes that each patient has within him the capacity to change through willful choice. The therapist, he says, using a variety of strategies and tactics, attempts to escort the patient to a crossroads where he can choose to exercise his will (156-57).

It is important to understand the way in which Rank used the term psychology. Menaker noted that he never used the term to designate a study of the mind, but rather to imply a way in which an individual or group of individuals views the world. This would include one's conception of the goals and meaning of life, of one's place in society, of the nature of one's ambitions, of one's social and ethical responsibilities, of the nature of

one's relationship to others. Menaker observed that Rank believed that Man's need to create a rational and explicable world out of his experience and to express this in words, removes him from contact with the irrational or natural aspect of his own being (Paper 1967, 68).

MAIN RANKIAN IDEAS CONCERNING FEAR AND THE SEARCH FOR IMMORTALITY

In place of the universally recognized importance of the sexual instinct in psychoanalysis, Rank emphasized the primal drive toward immortality. He believed that the "will" strives for immortality using a variety of paths, all of which hide man's fear of life and death in ingenuous and exalted fantasy. The search for immortality is now and has been from the dawn of primitive man the one way to escape from the death fear. The artist seeks out new experiences through artistic creation because his transient encounters serve only to remind him of mortality and decay. The new work becomes an attempt by the artist to find personal immortality: "To immortalize his mortal life" (Rank, A.A. 39). According to Rank, each new life experience contributes to the growth of personality, and creative impulses create new experience causing the individual personality to be in a perpetual state of flux.

The theory of the creation of personality by experience has great significance in psychiatric therapy, as noted in the previous paragraph, because it implies that the individual personality must exist outside the control of any deterministic biology or psychology. Rank also noted that the uniqueness of individuals precludes the use of standardized treatment methods by the therapist and he was the first psychoanalyst to treat each patient's personality as if it was in an ongoing process of development. He

tried to emphasize the growth of autonomy and self-realization in each individual by liberating that person's innate ability to "will" or wish for change without excessive guilt feelings. As the patient "willed" new experiences, his* personality changed accordingly and he was well on the way to normal creativity instead of repression without creation (Menaker 119).

*[Rank used the generic pronoun throughout his writings.]

Just as the analyst created new and healthier personalities for his patients by this method, the artist nurtured his personality by creating an original work of art, according to Rank. In a poem, book, or painting for example, the artist endeavors to represent a new experience that will live on and thereby circumvent his death. Another way to understand this process is to view it as a progressive, epigenetic mode of development underlying all the phenomena of life. Collectively and individually, stated Rank, life processes are in evolution and are motivated by the creative impulse. The "artist", a term used in its broadest sense, includes creative individuals in all fields- music, science, education, politics, etc., and, of course, art. Rank believed that the combined efforts of many creative individuals can change the cultural experiences of a society just as an individual's personality can be altered with each new adventure. This process makes the development of any culture a continuous, evolutionary one, stimulated and guided by the creativity of exceptional people (A.A.368).

NEUROTICISM

Rank also found, in the study of neuroticism, a keystone for many aspects of his psychology as it related to the individual. In opposition to

the driving force of the creative personality is the self-punishment or inhibition tendency of the average person. However, the extreme neurotic must punish himself more severely than the average person, because he constantly looks for ways to “buy” freedom from guilt. He does this with a continuous restriction of life because of fear. That is, he refuses the loan of life in order to escape the payment of the debt, which is death. Freudian psychology treated repression as normal self-protection as well as creative self-restriction and believed it was, in a very real sense, man’s natural substitute for instinct. Rank called this human talent “partialization”, without which life would be impossible. The “normal” or well-adjusted man partializes, bites off only what he can chew and digest of life and no more (P.S. 27).

Some men, Soren Kierkegaard’s “immediate men” and “Philistines” for example, keep their minds on the small problems of their lives- “tranquelize themselves with the trivial”- so they can live safe “normal” lives. Thus it might seem that the essence of normality is the refusal to accept the overview or the “big picture” of reality. But, as Rank tells us, reality evokes the fear of life and the fear of death. The “fine line” that stretches before us can perhaps be visualized in the context of Kierkegaard’s immediate men who walk with their heads down watching the line to avoid too much experience and too much danger. A step off the line on one side by shutting out (repressing) life can lead to neuroticism and the death the individual is trying so hard to avoid. A step to the other side can lead to creativity and to the hero and artist who repress nothing and face reality by sublimating their fears of experience while performing great deeds or creating great art as analogous to immortality.

CHAPTER II

OTTO RANK'S MAJOR HYPOTHESIS: FEAR AS THE DOMINANT FORCE AFFECTING CHOICE.

This chapter will examine several characters from stories and films which isolate and illustrate the results of Rankian fear. But first Rank's complex view of fear needs to be examined. His concept has been described brilliantly by G. Zilboorg:

For behind the sense of insecurity in the face of danger, behind the sense of discouragement and depression, there always lurks the basic fear of death, a fear which undergoes most complex elaborations and manifests itself in many indirect ways. . . .No one is free of the fear of death. . . . The anxiety neuroses, the various phobic states, even a considerable number of depressive suicidal states and many schizophrenias amply demonstrate the ever-present fear of death which becomes woven into the major conflicts of the given psychopathological conditions. . . .We may take for granted that the fear of death is always present in our mental functioning (Zilboorg 465-467).

This passage was written four years after Otto Rank died; it reveals his view of the connection of the fear of death with the fear of life as the primary motivations for human choice. There are conscious fears that we all experience from time to time during our daily rounds. Fear that can make us feel unhappy or guilty or both. Fear that can make cowards of us all. But, long ago, it was the fear of death of the soul that motivated primitive man's desperate search for immortality. In the presexual era, for example, sex meant something spiritual rather than a means of reproduction or a source of pleasure. But this spiritual significance meant that the individual might lose his immortality at the time his soul entered

the child. Our so-called neurotics manifest a corresponding, basic anxiety or fear of death because of their too blind adherence to the egoistic belief in immortality which mankind has never really given up and probably never can (Rank, P.S. 38).

The development of the soul-concept, according to Rank, presented itself as the perpetual association and rivalry of two groups of ideas: one is the notion of life after death in the same form as before; the other, the idea of return in a new form varying with cultural development. Rank conjectured that the first idea, a simple extension of life in another place, but in the same form, was undoubtedly the earlier and more primitive conception which sees death only as migration to another region.

Corresponding with this was the idea of the dead soul, generally regarded today as the most primitive of ideas on soul; here the soul only appears with death; the living man has no "soul"- needs none, so to speak- for the soul at this stage is only an expression for the altered life extended into the beyond, this being originally imagined as under the earth, in the grave.

The grave thus becomes the house of the soul- that is, that of a human being who is living on elsewhere- and Rank believed that for this reason, house and tomb are inseparably linked and only meaningful through each other. He also felt it necessary to emphasize the connection which leads from the idea of the grave as the house of the soul to the conception of the human body itself as the "housing" of the soul, because this connection is of extraordinary importance for an understanding of the whole development of art. The formula for this process, then, would be that originally, man *became soul* at his death, while later, living man *has a soul* which only parts from the body at death (A.A. 143-4).

People, from ancient clans to modern civilizations, have come to believe that the soul floats away or marches on after death to another, perhaps better, life. Rank suggested that this belief at least enables them to face forward. The idea of nothing, the meaningless abyss, makes too many people turn their backs on life, or frightens them into making sacrifices of themselves and others to some essential though not always benevolent god. The godless have to find other ways to forge ahead so that they are neither surprised by death nor demoralized by life. Rank viewed death as life's payment for itself. Life comes unasked, only to become indispensable to its bearer, who must ultimately give it back. Awareness of death is the price for awareness of life; the price goes higher as life gets better, he said.

Rank also saw death as the price of life and self-consciousness. We need illusion, he said, but we cannot keep our backs turned toward death without losing life itself- that is, the present. Freud's hysteric, who suffered from reminiscences, and Rank's neurotic, who clutches the life-lease in a death grip, are both evading the present moment, denying their

neurotic checking of the instincts is effected through fear or through will, the picture presented is one of fear-neurosis or compulsion-neurosis. With the artist, however, argued Rank, the will dominates, and applies a far-reaching control over the instincts, which are used creatively to bring about a social relief of fear. Finally, the instincts appear relatively unchecked in the so-called psychopathic subject, in whom the will affirms the impulse instead of controlling it. In this type- to which the criminal belongs- we have, contrary to appearances, to deal with weak-willed people who are subject to their instinctive impulses. But, as Rank pointed out, the neurotic who is generally regarded as weak-willed is wrongly judged, because his strong will is exercised in repressive fashion upon himself and is not apparent. Between these types are the individuals who accept themselves as they are and tend to exercise their initiative in reshaping themselves (A.A. 40,41).

The vignettes to follow show how various literary and filmic works illustrate Rankian ideas of fear being played out explicitly. I will use four examples from Joyce's *Dubliners* and one from De Sica's film "Umberto D." The short stories in James Joyce's *Dubliners* are especially fertile ground for Rankian examples of common human fears. Joyce as an Irishman in exile had two deep seated obsessions, an abiding distrust of the

and absence of creativity that Rank noted as lacking in many neurotic individuals. Each sketch or episode in the book reflects the apathy of a city that has ceased to grow. One might think of Dublin in the shape of a single individual that has become fearful of life in growth-inhibiting neuroticism. We know from Rank that dullness and lack of imagination inhibit personality growth, and the apparent paralysis and total frustration of many of Joyce's characters appear to be expressions or visible evidence of the unconscious fear of life and death controlling their actions. History discloses that Dublin had lacked any outstanding personalities or "heroes" since the defeat of Parnell and a prime requisite for a hero is creativity, as Rank emphasized. The four protagonists drawn from *Dubliners* reflect the passivity of a city without heroes. Eveline, the first and youngest of the four, is representative of the Dublin that has infected the younger generation with the same fear of experience that has shackled their elders.

FEAR OF EXPERIENCE. THE STORY OF "EVELINE"

Eveline's story exemplifies Rank's description of how negative feelings can interfere with happiness. She is a young woman with an unexpected opportunity to escape from Dublin and a life of drudgery by means of a romantic marriage. Her lover is a young man on holiday in Ireland who wants to take Eveline home to South America. At the very last moment before boarding the great ship, she freezes into a state of complete paralysis of mind and body, oblivious to her fiancé's frantic pleading. The sudden awareness of the possibility of unknown peril from a new experience immobilized Eveline. She prefers to take no action and

Rank would describe her action as a negative expression of will by a frightened child loaded with guilt.

The lonely girl had finally reasoned, after days of agonizing indecision, that to marry this handsome man was right for her. She was quite aware of the pros and cons of her present existence; the hard work and responsibility of caring for her difficult father now that her brothers were gone. Her brothers who, when they were home, had absorbed their father's drunken blows, could not protect her now. Her father's violent nature was a constant threat to her and his miserly ways made every marketing day an exercise in frustration. And Eveline's neighbors, who had looked down upon her mother, because of her final craziness, had no respect for her, either:

The pitiful vision of her mother's life laid its spell on the very quick of her being--that life of commonplace sacrifices closing in final craziness--Escape! She must escape! Frank would save her. He would give her life; perhaps love, too. But she wanted to live....She had a right to happiness. Frank would take her in his arms, fold her in his arms. He would save her (50). [And Rank would have urged her to take the big step off the fine line into life.]

Balanced against these obvious disadvantages were the benefits of guaranteed food and shelter and people she had known all her life. It was a difficult decision for Eveline to make. Rank argues that to leave home is usually a traumatic experience for most young people, no matter how unpleasant the situation may be. But something happened to Eveline between the time of acquiescence and the time for departure. An insurmountable barrier, a barrier recognized by Rank as primal fear, arose and blocked out all logic, a crippling recognition of the danger of a totally

new experience. It was the fear of life and the sudden consciousness of mortality that turned her feet to stone:

A bell clanged upon her heart. She felt him seize her hand.

---Come!

All the seas of the world tumbled about her heart. He was drawing her into them; he would drown her....She gripped with both hands at the iron railing.

---Come!

No! No! No! It was impossible. Her hands clutched the iron in frenzy. Amid the seas she sent a cry of anguish (51)!

As Rank would put it, Eveline's fear was so great and so deeply imbedded in her unconscious that she was literally paralyzed. . . . Eveline! Evvy! As Frank called to her beyond the barrier, she looked at him without recognition, with no sign of love or farewell. The fear and terror of the unknown overpowered her desire to create something new and exciting for herself, as Rank would have urged. The fear of leaving her familiar surroundings and even life itself, destroyed Eveline's search for happiness. She was unable to act despite the urgent pleading of her husband-to-be. The guilt connected to the old and binding relationship with her dead mother along with the responsibility of caring for her father's household could not be disregarded, guilt powerful enough to override any selfish action. Eveline would take her mother's place as she had promised.

Could an unworldly, young woman like Eveline ever escape her fears and guilt? I might suggest that from a Rankian point of view, Eveline's negative actions, in addition to fear of life, were based on fantasy

common to children as well as adults. For example, Rank points to the child who, when denied physical expression of sex because it is evil, turns to wish or fantasy as an expression of will. The average person has fantasies for the same reason, an expression of will to counter the obstacles raised by social conventions, by physical barriers, or by guilt and fear of life and death. The changing of these fantasies into constructive action requires the use of will, which Rank then believed becomes a creative act and the taboo content of the fantasy becomes a satisfying experience. Rank explained that the essential difference between the average person who keeps his fantasies secret from others, the neurotic who keeps them secret from himself (represses them), and the creative type who acknowledges them to himself and reveals them to the world is defined by how each individual's will perceives guilt and evil (T.R. 62).

Eveline, by a negative expression of will, rejected the possibility of a rewarding experience with Frank and sank back into unproductive fantasies. Other Dubliners kept their fantasies alive with alcohol and role playing, but unless Eveline can some day rule her life by conscious will instead of fear, or through love instead of isolation, she is doomed to remain chained to Joyce's Dublin where nothing can be lost except freedom and, of course, nothing can be won. Eveline's overpowering guilt is linked to the urge to separate from her father. The result is the maintenance of symbiotic ties to this abusive and uncaring man until he dies. Eveline's story ends as she remains riveted in place while the ship bearing her chance for a new life sails away. Where was her "fine line?" Could it have been a moral dilemma? "Right" being true to a deathbed promise and an obligation to a father for better or worse, and "wrong" a selfish choice for individual happiness?

FEAR OF LIFE: THE STORY OF FARRINGTON IN “COUNTERPARTS”.

Rank's idea of the fear of life can also be seen illustrated in “Counterparts”, another tale from *Dubliners* . The story covers a day in the life of one man, a clerk in a law office responsible for the copying by hand of legal documents. He is a big man, beaten down in mind and spirit by the economic pressures of supporting a wife and five children and an everpresent thirst for alcohol. Farrington, the clerk, is the paradigm of the Philistine, an individual whom Rank described as bereft of creativity and devoid of imagination. His peanut-sized superior berates and humiliates him at every opportunity and, on this particular day, rides him mercilessly for not finishing an important document on time. Guilt about his tardiness, added to the frustration of being forced to bow down to a physically weaker man, can only be relieved by frequent visits to the corner pub. To make matters worse, Farrington is forced to apologize in public for an off-the-cuff remark insulting his boss and resolves to spend the evening getting drunk. Pawning his watch provides funds for a night of pub-crawling with friends. In the course of the evening, he is bested at arm-wrestling by a smaller, younger man, while the possibility for an interesting flirtation goes down the drain along with his money. The combination of the day's real and imagined humiliations sends Farrington home in search of a scapegoat. He finds one in the person of his little son whom he beats with a stick for allowing the fire to go out. “Only scapegoats can relieve one of his own stark death fear- I am threatened with death- let us kill plentifully “(Becker 149).

Farrington, has no awareness of himself and no real relationships with anyone including his wife, who is totally immersed in the church as an escape from her own unhappy life. He cannot understand how or why his life has become so unbearable. How simple it was to blame someone or something else: his wife, his parents, fate, or just bad luck. Although Joyce has depicted Farrington as a cad and a loser, I think that Rank would view him in a different light. Environment and genes can certainly affect a man's actions, but they do not deny him freedom of choice. A hero will make the choices needed to create a positive experience in his effort to get above the crowd, because he is not afraid of life. In our society, this means that the hero figure creates a new social role for himself in the pursuit of individuality by breaking new ground for others to follow. Rank's hero reaches for immortality in order to escape the fear of death in the same way as does the artist creating an original work of art. Farrington was a hero in reverse, the rational man railing against the irrationality of fate, unable to comprehend the feelings and needs of his fellow humans and without the conscious will to discover any new values that might change and improve his life. His anger against boss and job, against the stripling who had bested him, and the realization of his failure as an heroic man in the eyes of his peers intensified the urge to find a scapegoat. Farrington's inability to function positively was probably based on his fear of natural forces not only threatening from without, but also from within. The fear of life and the fear of death paralyzed all freedom of choice for this man, a condition that prevails throughout the *Dubliners* collection. The author placed this protagonist in a trap from which there was no escape. His helpless son would remain a victim until he was old enough and strong enough to take charge of his own life.

He longed to execrate aloud, to bring his fist down on something violently. He felt strong enough to clear out the whole office singlehand. His body ached to do something, to rush out and revel in violence. All the indignities of his life enraged him. . . .The barometer of his emotional nature was set for a spell of riot (Joyce 103).

Irrational, misplaced anger is a common ailment in our society and unfortunately many of the targets are innocent children. Sympathy for Farrington does not excuse his actions, but permits some understanding of his dilemma. According to Rank, man cannot live without finding some purpose to his life and he must try to fill that void even when society fails to provide the necessary critical values. Farrington, afraid of the very life that held him down, was unable to find anything meaningful in Joyce's Dublin.

FEAR OF LOVE: THE STORY OF JAMES DUFFY IN "A PAINFUL CASE" .

Otto Rank wrote at length about the fear of love as a very real syndrome in 20th century society and his views can again to be seen illustrated in another story from *Dubliners*, "A Painful Case," about James Duffy, a man living alone in a Dublin suburb. James Duffy is middle-aged, physically and mentally neat, and holds a longtime position in a local bank. He has no friends nor companions, no church affiliation nor creed, and likes it that way. On occasion, Duffy writes a few lines to record an idea or to ask a question, but his only real avocation is music

and, in particular, Mozart. All in all, this man leads a rather barren life, eating and drinking moderately, occasionally attending a concert, but always alone. Aside from visiting relatives at Christmas and attending their funerals when they die. Duffy disregards the conventions regulating social life. He also believes (or so he tells himself) that under certain conditions, he would not hesitate to rob a bank; but as the circumstances have never arisen, he has passed his life without adventure and without anxiety or stress. As Rank would describe him, he is just another partializer who keeps his mind on the small problems of life. Repression is normal self-protection and, by partialization, the average well-adjusted man like a Duffy bites off no more than he can chew. He needs to partialize the world for comfortable action (W.T. 157).

James meets a married woman and her daughter at a park concert, striking up an acquaintanceship which eventually leads to frequent meetings to walk and talk. He is a moral man and rather than continuing to meet stealthily, insists on being invited to his friend's (Mrs. Sinico) home and is encouraged by the lady's husband to visit frequently. Mr. Sinico thinks that Duffy is interested in his daughter's hand, because, as the author so well phrases it, "Sinico had so completely dismissed his wife from his gallery of pleasures that it was impossible for him to suspect anyone else of taking an interest in her" (121).

As Mr. Sinico is often away and the daughter is out giving music lessons, Duffy has many opportunities to enjoy his new friend's company. They gradually began to share their thoughts and personal histories, and James, the loner, responds to her warmth and eager attention by revealing his past life as an Irish Socialist. The ongoing relationship "emotionalized his mental life." One night, Mrs. Sinico catches his hand passionately and

presses it to her cheek. The possibility of physical love suddenly looms before him bringing disillusionment with it and fear, a frequent reaction of a "partializer." Rank often noted that primitive man experienced fear of coitus and therefore enforced taboos on relations with women. Man's innate resistance to procreation, enforced by his ideological fear of woman as a threat to his immortality, as Rank explains, was the reason for the innumerable taboos imposed on his sex life. Those aboriginal taboos, especially that of the menstruating woman, clearly show that such restrictions were self-imposed in order to protect the man from his fear of sex (B.P. 223). Duffy reacts to his ancestors fears by breaking off the relationship, telling her that "every bond is a bond to sorrow." Understandably, she is noticeably shaken during their final meeting and returns his books and music by post a few days later.

Four years later, a news item catches Duffy's eye: "Death of a Lady at Sydney Parade, a Painful Case. Mrs. Emily Sinico, aged forty-three years, was killed by a train at Sydney Parade Station yesterday with suicide a possible motive (125)." According to the accompanying report, the lady had taken to drink about two years prior to the accident. Mr. Duffy's first reaction to Mrs. Sinico's death is one of revulsion and indignation. How could she do something so commonplace and vulgar, so degrading to herself and to him as well? He has no difficulty now in approving of the course he had taken four years earlier, in rationalizing the irrational. However, later that evening after a hot punch at the local public house, his thoughts change. He begins to question his motives for ending the relationship. Now that she is gone forever, he understands how lonely her life must have been, sitting night after night alone in that room. He sees human figures lying at the base of the shadowy wall of the park (Magazine

Hill in Phoenix Park) and the furtive lovers he sees fill him with despair. "He gnawed the rectitude of his life and felt that he had been outcast from life's feast. Why had he withheld life from her? Why had he sentenced her to death"(128)?

If consciousness of death is the primary repression of man, as Rank believed, rather than sexuality, then Duffy was caught on the horns of a dilemma. He had been afraid to commit himself to a close physical relationship with Mrs. Sinico, because that would have meant giving something of himself (a step toward death). In Rankian terms, the sexual act represented a double negation to him- physical death (some animals die during procreation) and the defeat of individuality. In the study of primitive anthropology, Rank found sexual taboos to have been at the center of human society since earliest times. If man is an animal, then sex is only a fulfillment of his role in the species, and he becomes a link in the chain of being. But Rank insisted that sex as a survival requirement defeats individuality and personality and shows man to be completely expendable. Duffy was afraid to step off his narrow, constrained line into the unknown dangers of a new experience, that of loving Mrs. Sinico. By withholding life from his friend to save himself from death, Duffy had unconsciously sent her to her death. So he had run away from Mrs. Sinico, away from a commitment to another human being and away from the love experience to return to his "safe" house (B.P 234).

When James first reads of Mrs. Sinico's accident and the manner of her death, he is filled with hatred and, with hate as the guiding emotion, it is easy for Duffy to justify his actions. Those feelings of degradation and revulsion, Rank taught, are manifestations of the life force of separation. This parallels Rank's belief that the recognized deep-seated relationship

between love and hate are manifestations of two opposite life forces, the tendencies toward unification and separation, respectively (likeness and difference) (Rank, W.T. 72). As the shock of Mrs. Sinico's death slowly sank into his consciousness, Duffy reviewed their pleasant hours together. He asked himself what other courses could have been chosen? He could never have lived openly with her. He had done what seemed best. How could anyone blame him? Two works by Friedrich Nietzsche, added to Duffy's library after the separation from the lady, might have provided answers to his questions. The philosopher suggested that man sublimates his fear of the openness of experience by taking on new roles requiring great expenditures of energy. Sublimation in this case would be defined as a power displacing a possible end with a new role or function that transcends the fears developed by the new experience. Sublimating his isolation to a relationship with Mrs. Sinico would have required Duffy to exert the necessary energy to make it happen, the overcoming of fear by creative will. The decision to run away from that open-ended experience with his friend was an unconscious negative choice caused by the same fears that paralyzed the other Dubliners we have already met. In this particular story, fear of experience again had unhappy results, this time leading to the death of another person, a sacrifice to Mr. Duffy's desire for life without love.

FEAR OF DEATH: THE STORY OF GABRIEL CONROY IN "THE DEAD".

Like the fear of life, Rank regarded the fear of death as one of the great driving forces in human life. As Zilboorg explains, explicating Rank:

Such constant expenditure of psychological energy on the business of preserving life would be impossible if the fear of death were not as constant. The very term “self-preservation” implies an effort against some force of disintegration, the affective aspect of this is fear, fear of death (16).

I see Rank’s major views regarding the primal fear of death lying just beneath the surface in “The Dead”, another short story from “Dubliners.” The protagonist is another inhabitant of Dublin, but one who bears little resemblance to the others already introduced. Gabriel Conroy is educated, sophisticated and financially secure. The background for the episode is an annual Christmas party given by Conroy’s two maiden aunts. The affair is attended by other close friends and relatives including Gabriel’s wife of many years, Greta. Dancing, singing , and speeches are followed by a bountiful late supper. Greta seems to be strangely affected by an old Irish ballad that expresses a plaintive air of sadness:

O, the rain falls on my heavy locks
And the dew wets my skin,
My babe lies cold

As they prepare to leave, her husband mistakes her excitement for romantic feelings for him. Hurrying through the falling snow to their hotel, the touch of his wife’s arm fills Gabriel with love and desire. The room is warm and inviting, a perfect setting to match his mounting fervor. But Greta does not return his feelings of passion. Instead, she falls on the bed in tears of remorse and tells Gabriel a story from the past.

Much to his surprise and chagrin, he discovers that as a young girl, Greta had loved a sickly youth named Michael Furey. In a vain effort to

keep her from going away to a convent, Furey spent one entire night in freezing rain under her window. One week later he was dead. The music and words of the ballad had revived Greta's old memories and her husband's tender advances had encouraged her to reveal the long repressed secret. The knowledge that someone else still remained enshrined in his wife's heart preempted the warm feelings set in motion by the party. The shock of finding another person sharing his wife's affections and the realization that these feelings were still powerful enough to blot out Gabriel's own emotions toward her was almost more than his male pride can bear. Slowly self-pity gives way to self-awareness and self-awareness uncovers a glimmer of understanding of another's heart. Gabriel realizes that Greta is a stranger, an individual who had been living with the guilt of Michael's death weighing upon her all those years. The boy had said that he would rather die than lose her, and he had. Gabriel falls asleep with thoughts of death uppermost in his mind. He had never experienced such passion for any woman, not even his wife. The choice of death rather than life without a loved one must certainly be real love, he thinks.

Unsure of the meaning of love until he became aware of the existence of conflict, Gabriel had believed that Greta was completely devoted to him, but now he realizes that he has never and will never totally possess her. His perfect wife has feet of clay, a condition that was less than the perfection needed to nourish his ego. Rank described this type of situation as the death and defeat of cosmic heroism. We feel lessened by the shortcomings of our loved objects, he said. If a woman falls short of our own particular needs in any of a thousand ways, then all the investment we have made in her is undermined. The shadow of imperfection falls over our lives and with it- death. "She lessens= I die" is Rank's equation.

We get back a reflection from our loved objects that is less than the grandeur and perfection that we need to nourish ourselves. We feel diminished by their human shortcomings. Our interiors feel empty or anguished, our lives valueless, when we see the inevitable pettiness of the world expressed through the human beings in it.

Rank's penetrating concept can be applied to Gabriel whom the author described as feeling empty and unhappy, his life diminished by Gretta's revelation (W.T. 131).

The psychiatrist Rollo May reinforces Rank's ideas about love and death asserting that the opposing element to love in Western culture is the consciousness of death. He viewed death as always in the shadow of the delight of love. There is always present the dreaded question of whether this new relationship will be destructive, as it was for James Duffy with regard to Mrs Sinico. Because, May wrote, whenever we love we give up the core of ourselves:

We are thrown from our previous state of existence into a void; and though we hope to attain a new world, a new existence, we can never be sure. Nothing looks the same, and may well never look the same again. The world is annihilated; how can we know whether it will ever be built up again? We give and give up our own center; how shall we know that we will get it back (May 101)?

We learn from Rank that the alternatives to worshipping love objects are sexual taboos. By adopting these taboos, man sacrificed pleasures of the body to the highest pleasure of all - self-perpetuation as a spiritual being. Gabriel, by respecting his wife's sensibilities, gained a spiritual awareness that transcended his emotions of jealousy and desire. The lack of passion in his affection for Gretta did not subordinate him to Michael

Furey. To the contrary, the boy's emotional fantasy was a futile gesture toward Michael's own immortality. We have deified romantic love in our poetry and popular songs, claimed Rank. We need romantic love in order to feel heroic. If we no longer have God, then we desire a cosmic heroism or another person as a love object. Sexuality can now be understood as "Another twisting and turning, groping for the meaning of one's life" (M.E. 44).

A wonderful description of romantic love can be found in Robert C. Solomon's book, *The Passions* :

Love is intimacy and trust; love is mutual respect and admiration; love is the insistence on mutual independence and autonomy, free from possessiveness but charged with desire; love is unqualified acceptance of the other's welfare and happiness as one's own. Nothing else deserves the name (338).

Much of what passes for love is not love at all; those passions of dependency and desperate bids for warmth and security - the often resentful ties that bind us without elevating us and set us against each other rather than draw us together - that is not love, says Solomon. Love is the ideal of all of us; intimacy and mutually elevating equality, complete trust and maximum esteem for both ourselves and others is what we look for. But he stresses how difficult it is to be so vulnerable and trusting, to reject those temptations to think ourselves superior rather than merely equal, to give up the successful defenses and strategies that have worked so well for us in the past. And so the solution for many of us, argues Solomon, is more often than not a purely nominal love - in fact any number of other emotions parading as love: resentment and jealous possessiveness, anger

and hatred expressing themselves indirectly but effectively through the deceptions of tenderness and pretended concern, abstract joy or depression, searching out a virtually anonymous companion, frustration looking for an outlet and guilt-seeking solace, if not absolution (339).

These variations on the theme of love can be found in all literature and are an important factor in Rank's beliefs. The stories by Joyce we have touched upon in this chapter deal with "love" as well as with guilt and separation. In *Dubliners*, all of the inhabitants were drawn in unflattering tones. With neither great men to inspire them nor heroes to emulate, they turned away from the unlimited possibilities of the twentieth century by succumbing to the fear of experience and death. Eveline, Farrington, and Duffy doomed themselves to a closed existence by their lack of creative will. Gabriel's apparent lack of passion for his wife surely stemmed from his unrealized fear of total commitment, his unconscious fear of death. Using Rank's humanistic doctrines as the basis for prognosis, I would expect Eveline to devote her life to caring for her father and home until his death. By that time, prospects for any kind of marriage will probably have passed out of reach. Farrington, too, will never be able to deal with new experience, because the fear of death as expressed by his fear of life is paralyzing. To lose his job and not be able to drink with "the boys" is his idea of death and then he will have to face the reality of his meaningless life. Duffy chooses not to commit himself to a relationship of love, because the fear of loss of self (death) is too powerful for him to overcome. Constriction of his world to a manageable size does not take into account unpredictable events. And Gabriel's inability to understand self-effacing passion is his way of avoiding the everpresent fear of life and death.

FEAR OF LIFE AND DEATH: THE OLD MAN IN THE FILM “UMBERTO D.”

As we have seen, Rank's key ideas about fear of experience, fear of life, fear of love, and fear of death are powerfully illustrated in Joyce's *Dubliners*. We need, however, to see them also illustrated in a film text, one which brings all of the Rankian ideas together in a coherent way. For, as Rank points out,

Fear is a double function, at one time a life fear, at another a death fear. From the life fear, a direct path leads to consciousness of guilt or to conscious fear which can be understood always as regret for the possibility of life that has been neglected; but on the other hand, its full expression creates death fear (W.T. 133).

All these ideas can be seen in the film “Umberto D.”, produced and directed by Vittorio De Sica in the sixties. It is the story of Umberto D, a pensioner living in Rome after having survived the war years as a civil servant. The plot revolves around a much older person than the previous characters from Dublin, but the choices made by this protagonist are motivated by the same unconscious fears as the others. However, in this case, they serve to create a sympathetic audience even though the condition of advanced age is not an excuse for clinging to that “fine line” like a tightrope walker, afraid to venture a toe on either side for fear of falling off.

The film begins with a shot of milling crowds of old men besieging a government office with calls for increased pensions. All are faced with

decreased buying power as inflation mounts. Umberto lives with only a small dog for a companion in a rented room owned by a vain, selfish woman whom he befriended during the war. She has recently found more lucrative uses for his room (afternoon assignations) and she has raised the rent to force him out. The money required is now beyond the old man's means and he already owes thousands of lira in back rent. The avaricious landlady can't wait to get rid of him, but at the same time refuses to accept anything less than the total sum. Evidently the pensioner has been living beyond his skimpy pension for a long time with no way to augment it except by borrowing from old acquaintances, selling his few remaining possessions, or outright begging as many of his compatriots have done. He has one friend of sorts, Maria, the young maid at the house. Maria is harshly treated by her mistress, but tries in her small way to be nice to Umberto D. When he sometimes pretends to be sick enough to go to the hospital where the food is good and plentiful, she takes care of the dog, Flick.

One day, Maria confesses to the old man that she is pregnant and her soldier-lover refuses to accept any responsibility and has, in fact, left town. She also knows that she will be fired as soon as her condition is noticeable and that her family will disown her. Mr. D. listens to the girl, but offers no advice. His only concern is the search for money and to this end, he pawns the last of his possessions, except for his "respectable" clothes. He also waylays past associates trying to borrow money without revealing his dire straits. Other pensioners are living in cheaper lodgings and beg on the streets to make ends meet, but Umberto has too much pride to follow their example. When he finally realizes that his landlady has defeated him, he tries, without success, to find another place that will accept dogs. The film

ends with a failed suicide attempt, leaving man and dog still together, but with nothing resolved.

It is evident that Umberto D has been a loner for a very long time. He does not seem to have any outside interests except for the dog. His hopelessness is not his lot alone and is readily visible in the faces of the other pensioners. The director has purposely presented to his audience the older generation of a defeated, war-weary country. Older people are pictured as insignificant and expendable in this society, and Umberto's protective armor- his old suit, shoes, and hat- is a symbol of worth similar to his respectable room in a respectable location. An additional coat of armor is his unrealistic pride that keeps him from making friends with others like himself or talking "straight" to more financially sound past associates.

Character armor or as Becker describes it, "our screen against despair", is adopted by all of us, by all individuals, in our struggle for freedom from anxiety. He goes on to say:

It is fateful and ironic how the lie we need in order to live dooms us to the stock market, sport cars, the success ladder in the corporation or the competition in the university. It can be our role playing, the persona or social facade we use to protect our innermost being including our clothes, speech, and mannerisms. With the advent of modern psychoanalysis it became known that the armor of character was so vital that to shed it meant to risk death and madness. The reason being that if character is a neurotic defense against despair and you shed that defense, you admit the full flood of despair, the full realization of the true human and away from. It was Freud who said that psychoanalysis cured the neurotic misery in order to introduce the patient to the common misery of life (Becker 56, 57).

The protective structure against despair on screen in "Umberto D." has been conceived by Frederick Perls as a thick ediface built up of four layers. The first two are the everyday layers, the tactics that the child learns to win approval and placate others; these correspond to glib, empty talk and role-playing layers. Many people live out their lives without getting under neath them. Perls describes the third layer as hard to penetrate; it is the "impasse" that covers our feeling of being empty and lost, exactly the feeling we try to avoid in building our character defenses. Underneath this layer is the fourth and most confusing one; the "death" or fear-of-death layer; the layer of our true and basic animal anxieties, the terror that is carried in our secret heart. Only when we explode this fourth layer, do we get to the layer of what might be called our "authentic self"; what we really are without sham or disguise, without defenses against fear (Perls, 55,56).

If every human being has freedom of choice as existential philosophy suggests, and conscious will as Rank believed, then one can accept Umberto's character armor as defenses allied to anxieties met long ago. No one can go back, but as long as he is alive, the old man still has choices. Suicide is a negative choice, but finding a cheaper room with a possible loss of pride would have been a positive one. Somewhere in the great city of Rome there must have been another place for man and dog. He could also have swallowed his pride and begged, as so many of his contemporaries were doing. Flick's cute trick of sitting up with a hat in his mouth would have insured extra coins. The pensioner might even have worked out some kind of living arrangement with the pregnant and soon to be homeless Maria, as well. But Umberto D's pride, man's worst sin according to the

ancient Greeks, added to his fear of life, precluded warm relationships with other humans. Only Flick had his love because a dog gives all and asks for nothing in return and fear of life and death often constrict personal commitments to other human beings in favor of non-threatening dumb animals.

Umberto D had been forced to live through a series of catastrophic events that affected his country as well as most of the world. Would it have been possible for him to change his personality so late in life and against such heavy odds? If one can believe in Rank's hypotheses, then the possibilities for change were always present and Umberto apparently chose a negative existence. He sold his books rather than live in a less dignified location. He kept his "pride" clothes instead of his favorite books. He turned away from other human beings instead of trying to relate to them. Rome had libraries, museums, beautiful architecture and art objects, a veritable "smorgasboard" for the mind and eye, all there to entertain him. He was physically able to pursue and develop relationships with men and women, a course that might well have led to personal or even financial reward. Maria, by comparison, was going to have her baby and was ready to face the world alone. She approached the unknown experience with great courage and without thought of giving up. She was very young, of course, and he was old, but suicides are more common with youth than with the aged. Yet there were many other old men who could and did face up to fear and who actively sought out other ways to change and improve their quality of life. Why not Umberto? Most probably because he never knew himself.

Abraham Maslow, in his essay "The Need to Know" echoes Rank when he pin-points fear as the perpetual human predicament. Man has a

great need is to know about himself and Maslow claims that Freud's greatest discovery, the one that lies at the root of psychodynamics, is that *the* great cause of much psychological illness is the fear of knowledge of oneself- of one's emotions, impulses, memories, capacities, potentialities, of one's destiny. We have discovered, he said, that fear of knowledge of oneself is very often isomorphic with, and parallel with fear of the outside world(119).

I'm sure this was a basic need for Umberto, too, but he can also be seen as the type of individual whose extreme fear of death kept him from accepting any expansion of life, so that he constantly restrained himself from partaking of some of life's pleasures such as love, companionship, or commitment to a cause. A fearful person, argues Rank, does not allow himself to taste new experiences, including pleasurable ones, because he is not willing to pay for them and such positive actions are considered to be loans. Loans require repayment and in the eyes of the fear and guilt haunted individual, the payment is made by dying: "To avoid living is a way to avoid death or, to live is to die. . . ." (W.T. 126).

The fear of experience, of life, of love, of death, and of both life and death, can be seen clearly in the lives of the characters singled out in this chapter. As Rank points out in his writings, these fears of "fictional" and "filmic" characters reflect directly on our paralleled real lives.

That man so easily loses sight of his natural self and thus distorts reality to the point of madness is deeply rooted in his fear of natural forces threatening not only from without but from within, in his own nature. Above all, these fears account for his need to build up a world and a life of his own in which he may feel secure. . . . The fear aroused by the destructive life forces which occasionally may be

turned into the active expression of new values, excludes the the ordinary man from more than vicarious participation....(B.P.15).

CHAPTER III

THE MANY FACES OF NEUROTICISM IDENTIFIED BY OTTO RANK.

In this chapter, the key word is neuroticism and we shall look at some of the more interesting types that are common to our society from a Rankian point-of-view. More characters from fiction and film will serve as illustrations of the abnormal neuroses described by Otto Rank. This subject and the therapy associated with it were always of primary interest to him. Sometimes he made it seem normal and universal and at other times he saw it as unhealthy and private. Sometimes he used the term for small problems of living, of workaday coping, and at other times as including actual psychosis. In other words, neurosis sums up all the problems of a human life. Ernest Becker's interpretation of this seeming inconsistency in Rank's thinking can be summarized as follows:

Neurosis has three interdependent aspects. It refers to people having trouble living with the truth of existence, a universal problem in the sense that everybody has some trouble living with the truth of life and pays some sort of tribute to that truth. It is private because each person fashions his own peculiar stylistic reaction to life. Neurosis is historical to a large extent because all the traditional ideologies are too thin to contain it (Becker178).

Fay B. Karpf, in her historical, comparative introduction to Rank's psychology and psychotherapy, compared his theories to the three reigning giants of the psychoanalytic movement, Freud, Jung, and Adler. The sex

difficulties in neurotic patients, which Freud stressed so much, Adler gradually came to view as only a symptomatic and symbolic expression of a more basic personality difficulty which he described as the “feeling of inferiority” and the compensatory “striving for superiority.” Inferiority feelings, which are the common lot of mankind in childhood, according to him, gives rise inevitably to the compensatory striving for superiority as the response of personality to dependancy, insecurity, and disappointment. In more extreme cases, accentuated inferiority feeling gives rise to an “inferiority complex” and to an intensified striving for power which, not being realizable in most instances, leads to “fictive arrangements” in support of place, prestige, and power. Thus the stage is set for those many-sided mechanisms of evasion, compensation, and overcompensation (forms of neuroses), which Adler described and analyzed with impressive detail.

According to Adler, says Karpf, the normal person, in his striving for superiority, is directed along constructive social lines through the cultivation of social feeling and cooperation; the neurotic is egocentric and inadequately socialized and therefore tends to come into conflict with the norms of social life. This accentuates his inferiority feeling and intensifies his striving for superiority, so that they become less and less compatible with reality. The normal person is thus forced to retreat into a fantasy world and to take refuge in imaginary compensations for his constantly increasing feeling of inferiority and his correspondingly intensified drive for power. “The will to power” becomes “the will to seem powerful” and the individual finds himself in the whirlpool of the proverbial vicious circle. Karpf compares this conception of Adler’s to Freud’s view of neurosis as due chiefly to repression and with Jung’s view of neurosis as

primarily the result of one-sided and hence unbalanced development. Their conceptions of therapy correspond: the Freudian emphasizing the freeing of repressions; the Jungian, the realignment of developmental capacities; the Adlerian, the socialization of the individual's behavior pattern (40, 41).

It is Karpf's belief that Rank's theory of dynamic therapy, in contrast to that of his peers, was designed to achieve only a change of attitude in the patient. Rank claimed that at the lowest level the benefits of the therapy rest on the acceptance of the whole personality with its entire ambivalence. Attempting the alteration of the individual who is never satisfied with himself is just what has driven him into the neurosis, the same neurosis which in itself signifies a much more revolutionary character change than any therapy could ever undertake. Rank went on to say that the conflict among opposing tendencies in the individual is not, as it first appeared to be, the cause of the neurosis, but the very basis of life, and the neurosis is only the expression of dissatisfaction with this condition of life, and in the last analysis, a refusal of life itself. Rank's realization that in psychopathology there is no problem that needs to be solved, no corrective action called for, but simply an acceptance of what is, continues to be generally overlooked (Karpf 108).

Rollo May describes his patients as the ones who express and live out the subconscious tendencies of the culture. The neurotic, or person suffering from character disorder, is characterized by the fact that the usual defenses do not work for him - a generally painful situation of which he is more or less aware. This "neurotic" is one whose problems are so severe that he cannot solve them in the normal agencies of society, such as work, education, and religion. May's patient cannot or will not adjust to

his world. May notes that this may be due to one or both of the following interrelated elements. First, certain traumatic or unfortunate experiences have occurred in his life which make him more sensitive than the average person and less able to live with and manage his anxiety. Second, he may possess greater than ordinary amount of originality and potential which push for expression and, when blocked off, make him ill (May 20).

May also sees, as did Rank before him, that the relation between the artist and the neurotic, often considered mysterious, is quite understandable from the viewpoint expressed above. Both artist and neurotic speak and live from the subconscious and unconscious depths of their society. The artist does this positively, conveying what he experiences to his fellow men while the neurotic does this negatively. Experiencing the same underlying meanings and contradictions of his culture, the neurotic is unable to form his experiences into communicable meaning for himself and his fellows (May 21).

Rank's controversial *Trauma of Birth*, first published in 1920, was the source of much anger and criticism from the other members of Freud's inner circle and really laid the groundwork for the eventual falling out between Rank and Freud. In it, Rank declared that the fundamental significance of the birth trauma as a means of expressing every neurotic anxiety is proven by the fact that it forms the starting point of the most diverse neurotic symptoms which in other cases can arise without the advent of shock. During the first world war, war neurosis ("shell shock") was observed to be the result of primal anxiety directly mobilized through shock. The obsessional neurotic, noted Rank, finally succeeds by means of the "omnipotence of thought" in getting back to the longed-for primal situation. He accomplishes this indirectly in his own way by plunging into

philosophic speculations about death and immortality as well as the “beyond” and by fearing “eternal punishment.” In this way, Rank believed, he repeats the seemingly unavoidable projection of life before birth into the future after death. This projection made by mankind for many thousands of years in the twisted bypaths of mistaken religious superstitions, and crowned by the doctrine of immortality, still continues to exist today in the widespread interest in the supernatural, and in occultism with its world of spirits (60,61).

In the remaining sections of this chapter, we will look at numerous illustrations from fiction and film to get a complete sense of Rank’s complex view of neuroticism. The first examples will be from Faulkner’s *The Sound and the Fury*, and then we will look at illustrations of Rankian neurotics as seen in the films *Taxi Driver*, *Marnie*, and *Craig’s Wife*. The characters from *The Sound and the Fury* include the members of the Compson family. These characters lend themselves particularly well to analysis in Rankian terms for their lives play out many of the elements of 20th century neuroticism. The story of the Compson family is one that takes its cue from the post-bellum history of the Old South and the advent of the new century. Old ways changed rapidly for the slave-owning aristocracy and decay set in for the weaker members of that society. Faulkner’s novel looks at this transitional period with sympathy and understanding, but does not spare the reader from looking at the faults personified by the characters whose emotional and psychological problems can be linked to Rank’s view of neurotic behavior.

If the person is average or “normal”, healthy, and happy, Rank argued, the more he can successfully repress, rationalize, and dramatize himself while deceiving others; then it follows that the suffering of the

neurotic comes from painful truth. . . . He is much nearer to the actual truth psychologically than others and it is just that from which he suffers. We could say that the essence of normality derives from the desire to refuse to accept reality. This means that there is no 'fine line' between normal and neurotic, because we all lie about ourselves and are all bound in some ways by the lies. According to Rank, then, neurosis is something we all share; it's universal. We call someone "neurotic" when the lies begins to hurt him or the people around him and he begins to think about clinical help - or others suggest it to him. Otherwise, we call the refusal of reality "normal" because there are no visible problems (Rank W.T. 195).

RANKIAN ILLUSTRATIONS OF NEUROTICISM IN WILLIAM FAULKNER'S *THE SOUND AND THE FURY*.

William Faulkner's *The Sound and the Fury* does not appear to reflect any optimism for the future of mankind. Jean-Paul Sartre wrote in 1955 that "For him (Faulkner) the future was closed. He used his extraordinary art to describe our suffocation and a world dying of old age" (93). Sartre's view suggests a spiritual similarity between Faulkner and Joyce because Joyce, too, decried the future of the Western World and created characters in *Dubliners* who were dying of inertia and lack of creativity. The Compson family in *The Sound and the Fury* belonged to the old Southern aristocracy struggling in the vacuum left by the Civil War. They have no future and the Compson line ends with the novel's completion. The Compsons were victims of a rapidly changing society without the vision and courage necessary for survival. Faulkner believed that moral courage and pride were the most important ingredients in Southern culture. Old World chivalry and honor, protection of family

name and women, were worth fighting for in the eyes of the true Southerner. He used this novel and others, such as *Absalom, Absalom*, to demonstrate the continuing dilemma of men in the modern world. When he accepted the Nobel Prize for literature in 1949, Faulkner contended that it was his duty as an artist to show the human heart in conflict with itself.

The events of *The Sound and the Fury* take place over a period of three days in 1928 from Good Friday to Easter Sunday. Nonetheless, the thoughts and actions of two generations of Compsons and their servants (former slaves) are revealed in a series of flashbacks controlled by the narrators. It all begins as a tale told by an idiot, because Benjy, now thirty-three years old and the first of the novel's four narrators, is severely retarded and speechless from birth. He has grown up with two brothers, Quentin and Jason, and a sister, Candace. Candace (Caddy) whom Benjy worships, left home in her late teens after marrying a surrogate father for her illegitimate baby. We are only permitted to see her through the eyes and minds of her three brothers. The other members of the family are Mr. and Mrs. Compson, her brother, Uncle Maury, and the black servant, Dilsey. Dilsey, along with her children and grandchildren, has been an integral part of the family for fifty years.

The flashbacks weave in and out of the narratives providing different perspectives of the past. When Benjy is the narrator, there is no past or future for he lives only in the present. Faulkner's treatment of time and space suggests the irrelevancy of our man-made system of measurement that often repeats itself. Sartre pictured the people of the novel as never looking ahead: "They face backwards as the car carries them along" (Sartre 95). Mrs. Compson lives only in the past, a totally selfish woman, the victim of hypochondria, who hides from life behind her imaginary

illness. Her only concern has been to maintain the appearance of propriety at the expense of her children and husband. She has given nothing of herself to anyone except to Jason who most resembles her. Mrs. Compson is a person who has filled her life with lies in her ceaseless effort to obliterate reality. She is a neurotic in Rank's terms who manages to live her lies without physically hurting the people around her or herself. It is also important to note here the great lesson of Freudian psychology, i.e., repression is normal self-protection and creative self-restriction - in a real sense, man's natural substitute for instinct. Therefore, in addition to being cold and selfish, Mrs. Compson is living the common neurotic existence of narrowing down the world, shutting off experience and becoming oblivious to both the terrors of the world and to her own anxieties. She sees herself as a proud southern lady who willingly accepts the devoted service and protection that are her due and relegates to Dilsey the matriarch's role of family stabilizer and moral center. Mrs. Compson is all image with no love or compassion for her children. The result of her withholding from her family the love and affection, the attention and discipline, that they need is revealed in Quentin's poignant cry before he drowns himself in the Charles River: "If I'd just had a mother so I could say Mother Mother" (190).

Mr. Compson has cared for his children in a detached and rather benevolent manner and has ruled over the remnants of the estate and his family from the dining room sideboard decanter. His philosophy reflects a deterministic point-of-view and the belief that existence is senseless and most traditional values unfounded. He is totally unaware of his daughter's desperate search for individuality and his son Quentin's "perverted anticipation of death." John T. Erwin described Mr. Compson as an

alcoholic, nihilistic, father presenting himself to Quentin as himself an emasculated son, ruined by *his* father's (General Compson) failure (20).

The flashbacks deal with the critical years from childhood into puberty for Quentin, Jason, and Caddy, and how they are affected by their environment. Quentin, the eldest son, is given a chance to attend Harvard at great sacrifice. He completes one term before committing suicide. Caddy chooses promiscuity as her mode of escape and retribution. Her illegitimate baby ended up back home to be raised by old, reliable Dilsey and to be hated as well as cheated by Jason, who, as the last of the line, watches his family disappear, one by one.

A RANKIAN SUBNORMAL BUT NOT NEUROTIC INDIVIDUAL: BENJY COMPSON.

Rank argues that coping with life and the "fine line" begins very early for most people, and this is certainly true of the children of Faulkner's dying family. Born an idiot and as a narrator living only in the present, for example, Benjy is without freedom of choice as we know it, but needs only a reminder of a past experience to trigger a happy or sad response for he has never forgotten certain smells or sounds or visual images. Long after his sister leaves home, golfers calling "caddy" on the nearby golf course evoke her memory and cause him to bellow with frustration. By means of Benjy's eyes, ears, and nose, the reader is introduced to the other children at various stages of their lives. Caddy gave him the love and empathy usually provided by a mother. Jason cared for no one except himself and was ashamed of his idiot brother. He was the one who pushed for the unjustified castration of Benjy and who eventually committed him to the state asylum. Faulkner, through this

severely handicapped individual, presents a clear, sensitive understanding of the Compsons as a family. He achieves this by making Benjy serve as a reflection of their primarily negative choices. Benjy's reaction to Caddy's loss of virginity is violent and his reaction to her leaving him forever leads to his castration and many moments of anguish and unhappiness. Similarly, Benjy reflects the selfishness of his mother and the cruelty of Jason (Faulkner 9). Benjy is forever locked into childhood and, in his own way, exemplifies Rank's example of the true neurotic who represses nothing and faces total reality with mortal fear. His fear could only be offset by an undisturbed symmetry of shape and a continuity of line. As Donald Kartiganer writes in his essay *The Fragile Thread* :

The Sound and the Fury is the four-times-told tale that opens with a date and the disorder of an idiot's mind and concludes with a "post and tree, window and doorway, and signboard, each in its ordered place." But this final order is one that has meaning only for the idiot: a sequence of objects that, when viewed from one perspective rather than another, can calm Benjy into a serene silence (23).

A RANKIAN SUICIDAL NEUROTIC: QUENTIN COMPSON.

Rank noted that it can be extremely difficult for the individual to realize that there exists a division between one's spiritual and purely human needs, and that the satisfaction or fulfillment for each has to be found in different spheres. Quentin Compson, the second narrator in *The Sound and the Fury*, ever strait-laced and obedient as a child, grows into a confused young man. His father sold off a piece of their remaining land to pay for a year at Harvard. By that time, Quentin had already decided that life was not worth living, but felt morally obligated to obey his father's wishes. Quentin's incestual affection for his sister results in an

overpowering need to protect her from parental censure as a child and from predatory males as an adult. His confusion is linked to his father's pragmatism and Caddy's own urge for self-destruction. Quentin is a paradox in existential terms: a hero some might say, because of his willful rejection of a life that seems to be without meaning - where evil could be forgotten as easily as beauty and truth as his father believed and a guilt-ridden coward who was afraid to live for the future because of his neurotic view of the past. Quentin's dilemma is analogous to Rank's hero, the artist, who attempts to justify his heroism objectively with his work of art. It is his testimonial to his absolute uniqueness and heroic transcendence. But the "artist" is still a creature and can feel more intensely than anyone else. He knows that the work is he, therefore "bad", fleeting, potentially meaningless- unless justified from outside himself (father, mother, sister) and outside itself (Rank, *Art* 42). Quentin is a potentially creative individual who chose not to create, because he has no support from outside himself to create a "work of art" in his search for meaning. Therefore, he sees his work as poor and without any chance for immortality. Sartre said: "Everything is absurd and Faulkner has created an individual to illustrate his own views of the nature of things" (91).

If Quentin is the "guilt-ridden coward" alluded to in the preceding paragraph, then suicide was a logical escape for him. Rank described guilt as arising, not through identification with a forbidding father akin to Mr. Compson, but as an effect of ego formation through separation from the mother. The child incorporates the strict mother image as part of his own ego which demands punishment out of guilt for his sadistic impulses. However, in Quentin's case, Mrs. Compson was not strict enough, leaving the care of her children to the real mother figure, Dilsey. In such a

situation, Rank believed, the child seeks to ameliorate guilt for the inevitable hostilities toward her by a discharge of aggression which is calculated to provoke punishment - a mechanism frequently encountered in the behavior problems of children, and in *The Sound and the Fury*, for Quentin the punishment is death (Rank, "Emotion & Denial" 17).

Mr. Compson's gloomy outlook and Candace's fall from grace leave Quentin without the desire or urge to seek immortality through creative living, but rather by way of death. He is a throwback to the Victorian era and southern chivalry at a time when rapid industrial progress and northern values are eroding the old mores. He tries to protect the family honor and his own values by keeping Caddy pure. "The affection of brother for sister and sister for brother becomes the archetype of love; and with Caddy and Quentin, the incestuous potential of that love clearly surfaces." Quentin shied away from incestuous love and instead came to love not the body of his sister, nor even some concept of Compson honor, but death itself. In the end, he gave himself not to Caddy, but to the river (David Minter, *Making of the Sound and the Fury* 130). When Caddy became promiscuous, Quentin was overwhelmed with guilt and a sense of impotence. He has failed to protect her virginity and failed to deal effectively with her lover, Dalton Ames. He has also failed to kill her and himself to save her purity or to run away together with Benjy as Caddy had suggested. He has failed to act.

The terrible guilt feelings of the depressed person are existential, that is, they represent the failure to live one's own life, to fulfill one's own potential because of the twisting and turning to be good in the eyes of the other. Better guilt than the terrible burden of freedom (Becker 213).

The depressed person as distinguished from the creative man of will is not the voluntary seeker of truth, but the forced, unhappy finder of it, according to Rank. "When the adult gives up hope in his ability to cope and sees himself incapable of either fleeing or fighting, he is 'reduced' to a state of depression." The task of a constructive therapy is to lead a Quentin Compson, who already suffers from the loss of his illusions, to the voluntary acceptance of himself and his own responsibilities (Rank, W.T. 45). But the depressed and neurotic Quentin needs not only outer illusions such as art, religion, and love can supply, but inner illusions that derive from a secure sense of power, and of being able to count on the powers of others. Becker supports Rank on the subject of neurosis noting that to be able to find significance, importance, and pleasure in the limited daily world of human reality is precisely what the neurotic cannot do. "He does not trust the human-created world of ideologies and meanings and fears that human life may not be more than a meaningless interlude in a vicious drama of flesh and bones that we call evolution" (Becker 189).

Quentin tries to convince his father that he is Caddy's lover, but Mr. Compson refuses to believe him saying: "You wanted to sublimate a piece of natural human folly into a horror and then exorcise it with truth" (Faulkner 195). Quentin also confesses that he is thinking of suicide and that a man of courage does not have to stay alive and see evil done if he has the courage to die. His father's response is that every man is the arbiter of his own virtues. Mr. Compson, a failure in his own right, fails his son the few times that real issues are at stake. Suicide for Quentin, is the only way to escape the unknown pitfalls of the future and at the same time eliminate his overpowering guilt and allow him to become a hero at last. Quentin

cope by refusing life (life fear) and choosing his fantasized “clean flame of death” to avoid the acceptance of decay (death fear). In the final analysis, he typifies an anti-hero in the Rankian sense, a victim of neurosis unable to broaden his heroics from their crippling narrowness. Quentin discovered a deep psychological impotence in himself. He was unable to play either the heroic role of a seducer or of an avenger which would have been appropriate to his fantasy of himself as a gallant, chivalric lover. Most of all, he feared ultimate failure in the role of despairing lover and the prospect of the moment when Caddy’s corruption would no longer matter to him. Perhaps the author’s view of time as expressed by Mr. Compson, left no possibility of a future in Quentin’s mind:

Time is the *reductio absurdum* of all human experience and it can fit your individual needs no better than mine or my father’s. No battle is ever won, they are not even fought. The field only reveals to man his own folly and despair, and victory is an illusion of philosophers and fools (Faulkner 95).

RANKIAN MOTHER/DAUGHTER LOVE/HATE RELATIONSHIP: CADDY COMPSON

Juliet Mitchell describes Rank’s idea of the mother/daughter/love/hate relationship as follows:

The fact is, there is no bottom to a child’s boundless love and demand for love, there is no satisfaction possible and the inevitable frustration can cause violent feelings. . . .The very primacy and intensity of this relationship (with the mother) makes it liable to contain hate as well as love- the girl, unlike the boy, cannot make a separation of these emotions and transfer the hatred to a rivalrous

father, because she must soon come to take this same father as her love object (Mitchell 1974, 57).

This Rankian pattern is played out again strongly in *The Sound and the Fury* in the Compson family. Proud, strong-willed, the recognized leader of her siblings, Caddy's only failing as a Compson is to be a girl. She loved Quentin, Benjy, and her father and is rejected by her mother. To Jason, she is always the enemy and later on, the whore. The virginity that represented the family honor to Quentin is of no value to Caddy. Her fight for freedom and individuality against the bonds of sex, southern culture, and an unloving mother takes the form of promiscuous sexual behavior. Benjy idolizes her and Quentin and Jason turn toward their sister trying to find in her some way of meeting the needs ignored or thwarted by their parents. She becomes the focal point for their discontent amid the decay and dissolution of a world at twilight. As David Minter points out, "Treasuring some concept of family honor that his parents seemed to have forfeited, Quentin seeks to turn his wonderful sister into a fair, unravished, and unravishable maiden" (125).

By attacking the family honor, Caddy tried to avert the predetermined role that the future seemed to hold in store. Rank would say that she is avoiding life in the sense that to give love to a man would have meant a dangerous commitment. Casual sex could protect her from this danger and, at the same time, prove to her mother that she, Caddy, can live without love. The fear of death pushes her from man to man, her only chance for immortality a protected "home" for her baby (with Dilsey and her parents). Rank might also see her as a "hero" with the courage to cast off her illusions, accept herself and her responsibilities, and use

creative will to break away to a new life. On the other hand, Faulkner, speaking with friends about the development of the novel, insisted that it began with the luminous image of Caddy Compson and with the situation on the day of Damuddy's death. As Caddy was envisioned in the pastoral landscape at the branch and later peering in at the funeral after climbing the tree, she became for him an image of the ideal beauty so often imagined in poetry. To him she was the beautiful one, she was his heart's darling. That's what he wrote the book about . . . to try to tell, try to draw the picture of Caddy.

However, Minter suggests that Faulkner created Caddy in the figure of the sister he had always wanted but never had, and a mother (for Benjy) and a lover (clearly forbidden). "He created a heroine who corresponds perfectly to her world; like it, she was born of regression and evasion, and like it, she transcends them"(Minter 135). Unlike her brothers, Caddy establishes her independence and achieves freedom. But her flight cut all ties, making it impossible to help Quentin, comfort Benjy, or protect her daughter. And the hard won freedom sweeps her into dishonor and shame. Caddy fits Rank's description of the heroic individual who tries to free herself from the traditional moral code and to build ethical ideas for herself which are not only normal for her own personality, but also include the guarantee of creative action and the possibility of happiness. This process begins with the setting up of one's own moral norms and becomes a powerful and important attempt to transform compulsion into freedom (Rank, W.T. 55).

RANKIAN "NORMAL" NEUROTIC: JASON COMPSON

So far, we have seen in *The Sound and the Fury* illustrations of Rankian ideas of the sub-normal, the suicidal, and mother daughter love hate relationships. Not surprisingly, there is in *The Sound and the Fury* also an illustration of the “normal” neurotic - the character of Jason Compson. Of all the Compsons, Jason Compson IV is the most ordinary and least noticeably neurotic. He has no use for his family or his fellow man and consequently he has no friends. Jason constantly seeks to complete his self-image (ego) at the expense of others without paying for it; he gives nothing of himself to anyone. Otto Rank believed that guilt to a man like Jason was a double threat, one side constantly taking without giving back and the other accumulating an ever-growing debt to life. No matter how hard Jason tries to alleviate his guilt, as long as his inner division remains, one part is always unsatisfied. In holding back the ego (in this case self-maintenance), he has to blame himself for missing life (conscious fear). If he lets go, Jason becomes guilty of losing life (death fear) (Rank, W.T.147).

Even during his childhood, Jason is stingy, fearful, and vindictive. He grows to manhood hated by Caddy and disliked by Quentin and Dilsey. He never has a kind word for anyone and rationalizes his duplicity and hypocritical behavior as necessary for survival. Only his mother loves and trusts him, and he victimizes her at every opportunity. Jason's narrative displays utter contempt for his family and mankind in general. He exists solely for himself, and his thoughts and actions deny any allegiance or love for others. Jason suffers from an inversion of normal emotion, or emotional impoverishment. Since he has no friends, and his weekend sexual partner was just that, a prostitute, there is nothing of himself that needs be given. To some, he might be considered a psychotic paranoid, but

Rank describes this type of neuroticism as parsimony. The neurotic exercises emotional restraint on the same grounds that he inhibits every other expression of life, because one can defeat one's self by fear of facing others or renounce one's self by inverted emotional expression. The painful headaches that frequently plague Jason correspond to the saving of life strength by a repression of life, a parsimonious sickness to avoid payment to death (W.T.148).

The question comes to mind as to why Faulkner created such a miserable character? Eric J. Sundquist ("The Myth of the Sound and the Fury") describes Jason as the novel's most brilliantly drawn character suggesting that the same motives which later led Faulkner to put Caddy in the arms of a Nazi, also led him to release his distaste for the family he had created, by means of Jason's restrained rage. Though he is conniving and corrupt, and though Faulkner and others have routinely spoken of him as a classic villain, Sundquist feels that Jason no doubt expresses every honest reader's response to the Compson family: "Blood, I says, governors and generals. Its a damn good thing we never had any kings and presidents; we'd all be down there at Jackson chasing butterflies." Without the edge of intimate hatred his narrative affords the novel, it would drift even further into psychological chaos and dramatic incoherence (Sundquist 128).

Jason's rage does not suddenly appear when he reaches adulthood. His obsessions grow from childhood betrayal just as surely as Caddy's and Quentin's. Jason's neuroticism makes the reality surrounding him a part of his ego which clarifies his painful relation to it. As Rank explains it, he was bound up in kind of a magic unity with the wholeness of life around him much more than the adjusted person who can be satisfied with the role of a part within the whole. This neurotic type has taken into himself

potentially the whole of reality. He used his rage and scape-goating patterns to assuage his guilt and fear without risking his self image. Rank called this the "self-willed over-evaluation of self" whereby the neurotic tries to cheat nature. He won't pay the price that nature wants of him: to age, fall ill or be injured, and die. Instead of living experience he ideates it; instead of arranging it in action he works it all out in his head (Rank, W.T.151).

At the conclusion of the novel, Jason is dealt a heavy blow by his niece (Caddy's daughter) when she steals his money and runs away with a "carnie". He is left with little chance to realize his dream of wealth and independence and sees in himself the "opposed forces of his destiny and his will drawing swiftly together" (Faulkner 323). Jason is realistically approaching the knowledge that his choices in the next few hours (he was pursuing the young girl) would irrevocably affect his life, and the fear of making a mistake would affect his choices. The fear of life and the fear of death were pre-empting the possibility of experiencing a more creative life. He will be the last Compson.

RANKIAN PSYCHOPATH: *THE TAXI DRIVER*.

From Jason Compson to Travis Bickle is a journey in time covering changes in genre, culture, and personalities. As noted earlier, Rank believed that the more normal and happy a person is, the easier it is for him to successfully repress, rationalize, and dramatize himself and reality. The severely repressed neurotic is much nearer the actual truth psychologically, the falsity of reality, and that is the direct cause of his suffering. Jason can be placed in between these two types, perhaps more closely identifiable with Farrington whom we met in "Counterparts". Rage

against fate and the need for a scapegoat drove both men into neurotic behavior. Travis Bickle, the *Taxi Driver* in a film directed by Martin Scorsese in 1976, is representative of a more subtle and more dangerous type of neurotic. Robert De Niro, as the driver, is portrayed as a quiet, serious individual, a Vietnam veteran, who lives in his own private fantasy world until it begins to choke and depress him. He is a loner without any social connections whose only entertainment consists of porn movies, but seemingly no more eccentric than many other men living quietly among us. Vincent Canby, in his review of the movie, describes the screenplay as virtually a case history of a young man who displays all the classic symptoms of a first-class psychotic, though the people he meets find him only somewhat eccentric. He makes friends with a pretty campaign worker, but wonders why she is shocked when he takes her to the porn films he likes so much. His mind is full of crossed wires and short circuits, says Canby (Times 1976). The "street scum" that he sees night after night and a failed relationship with the young woman, move him to an abnormal reaction. Travis buys an assortment of lethal weapons and, armed to the teeth, plans to assassinate a presidential candidate. Foiled in the attempt, the taxi driver decides to go after the "garbage" (hookers, hustlers, pimps) and to "rescue" a pre-teen prostitute (Jodie Foster). The resulting mayhem brings the psychotic killer fleeting notoriety as a local hero before he resumes his former lifestyle. With this psychotic action, he has assuaged his sense of insignificance by magically transforming the world so that he may be distracted from his concerns of death, guilt, and meaninglessness. In a sense, using Rank's definitions, Travis' neurosis allowed him to take control of his destiny for a brief moment in time- to transform the whole

of life's significance into the simplified meaning emanating from his self-created world.

The difference between a Travis Bickle and a Jason Compson lies in the degree of creative neuroticism each possesses. Rank believes that creative types of personalities that can and do create their neuroses, move to a psychological achievement just as much as other persons do. The stronger ego of Travis drove him into violence to try to change his world. Jason spent his creative impulses on the strengthening of his repressions to such an extent that he finally became completely incapable of any action toward changing his life (Rank, T.R 4).

RANKIAN REPRESSIVE NEUROTICISM: *MARNIE*.

Yet another example of a Rankian neurotic personality can be seen in the Alfred Hitchcock production, *Marnie* (1964). Like the world of the *Taxi Driver*, Marnie's (Tippi Hedren) world is completely dictated by her neurotic fixations. Flashbacks suggest the possibility of a traumatic childhood experience too horrible to tolerate. Marnie is a kleptomaniac who moves from job to job changing identities and embezzling money as she goes. The young woman spends the money on her two obsessions, a horse and her mother. Her confusion of identity is highlighted at the very beginning of the film in which she methodically dyes her hair, exchanges ID's, switches clothes, and emerges with a new persona, one of many. Marnie suffers sudden mental and physical distress from the color red, thunder storms, and being touched by a man. References to "free association", "frigidity", and "sexual aberrations", are part of the Freudian based script. "Men are filthy pigs" and "women are stupid and weak" are lines given to Marnie to reveal her feelings about men and her own self-

image. A clue to her neurotic behavior is a scene which takes place during a visit to her mother, a bitter, critical woman who shows no appreciation and minimal affection for her doting daughter. Marnie lays her head on mother's lap as a child might do only to be rejected and replaced by a neighbor's child. Marnie's deviations go undetected for an unspecified period of time until, in applying for a job in her newest guise, she is reconized by her employer (Sean Connery) as the woman who has embezzled funds from a friend. Connery decides to hire her rather than inform the police in order to study her as an unusual specimen. Before long, he becomes obsessed with Marnie and forces her to marry him. On their wedding night, Connery is repulsed by his frigid wife, and a few nights later, in his frustration, rapes her. This act gives Marnie the upper hand- she makes him agree never to touch her again. In the film's final scene, Hitchcock gives his viewers the answers to Marnie's schizophrenic behavior by replaying an early childhood episode of attempted rape and murder that was too awful for her to accept as reality.

Travis, Marnie, and Jason illustrate some of the Rankian neurotic traits that are common to our society. One hides his symptoms from the world; one presents them for all to see; one reveals his personality with negative emotions. The taxi driver stayed on life's sidelines without overtly revealing his psychopathology until it broke forth in his adventure as an avenging angel. The personal life history of Marnie caused her to shrink back from an early, numbing experience that brought on greater than normal life-and-death repressions and anxieties. The last Compson was filled with rage against the injustices wreaked upon him by his decadent family and the vagaries of his fear-laden destiny, All three tried

to cope with the problems of living in their own particular fashion and, in a sense, succeeded.

RANKIAN COMPULSIVE/OBSESSIONAL NEUROSIS: HARRIET CRAIG.

There remains one more Rankian neurotic figure to illustrate and complete the complex Rankian view of neuroticism – and it can be seen in Harriet Craig from the film “Craig’s Wife” (1936). Rank understood the type of phobia (OCD) as a more sensational form of neurosis. It is the result of too much fetishization, he said, too much narrowing down of the world for action. As a result, the person gets stuck in the narrowness. It is one thing to wash one’s hands three times a day; it is another to wash them until the hands bleed and one is in the bathroom all day. Here we see what is at stake in all human repression, cautioned Rank, the fear of life and death. Carried to such an extreme, it is as though the person says to himself “If I do anything at all . . . I will die” (Rank, W.T.180).

Preceding *Marnie* by twenty years, *Craig’s Wife*, directed by Dorothy Arzner, brought to the screen what was then considered the ultimate woman’s picture. Although written in 1935, the film’s message is still appropriate today: marriage should be for love, not for financial reasons. Harriet Craig married her husband so that she could have a beautiful home: once she had her home, she found her husband merely a necessary nuisance. The heroine is obsessed with the house and all of its beautiful furnishings. Everything must be in perfect order at all times. She had seen her own mother dispossessed when her husband, Mrs. Craig’s father, abandons her for another woman. Harriet has long ago determined that such a thing would never happen to her, she would never give up her

house. We see that this house is the center and real love of Harriet by the unnatural attention she pays to its care. She also alienates her relatives and neighbors by her fastidiousness regarding her inanimate possessions. Mrs. Craig's long-suffering husband Walter (as he is viewed by the other residents of the house) is protective and submissive to his controlling wife. Harriet is not exactly dishonest in her marriage, but she has cleverly contrived a kind of independence and authority over Walter that includes a meager ration of sexual favors.

The plot of Mrs. Craig (played to perfection by Rosalind Russell) concerns a very sick sister living in another city and a mysterious murder of friends of Walter's. Harriet Craig leaves the home she loves at the start of the film to visit her sister. In her absence, the servants relax, because their mistress can't belabor them about keeping everything in the house spotless and in its proper place. The scandalous murders take place while Mrs. Craig is away. She returns with her young niece and thoughtlessly involves Mr. Craig in the crime. In her usual selfish manner, Harriet antagonizes her husband, her niece, and everyone else that crosses her path. The ensuing plot has Harriet interfering disastrously with the niece's love affair and spurning her husband's intimate attentions. One by one, the people close to Mrs. Craig see her clearly for what she is and abandon her. Finally, Walter deserts her and, in the final scene, Harriet Craig stands alone in her cold, beautiful house reading a telegram advising of her sister's death.

The anxiety expressed by Mrs. Craig in her fanatical concern with the house and its immaculate condition at all times, borders on a common affliction affecting millions of Americans. The victims of this sickness known as OCD (obsessive-compulsion-disorder) attempt to cope with their

anxiety by associating it with obsessions or through compulsive behaviors defined as rituals that get out of control. I believe that Harriet Craig's compulsion to have her home in perfect order all the time was close to a ritual performed by many otherwise normal women whose tidiness exceeds the need for clean living conditions. When this compulsion becomes an obsession that cannot be understood or controlled and begins to interfere with normal activities and performance and even the loss of a mate, professional help can often make a difference.

Jessie Taft, who was very closely associated with Rank for many years as a biographer and translator of his later works, was also an outstanding interpreter of his position in the field of social work. She offers the following insight:

If one were to select the particular attitude which finally led Rank to a new comprehension of the therapeutic task on which he had worked in association with Freud for so many years, one might well select his complete respect for the personality of the neurotic patient, combined with the absence of medical presupposition which freed him from the tendency to regard the neurosis as illness (Rank, W.T. xi).

This brief analysis of a few unhappy characters from fiction and film should give us some idea of the scope and the many facets of neurosis Rank explored in his work. It is also important to note that Rank dealt with his neurotic patients by showing respect for their ongoing personalities; he did not try to treat them medically (with drugs), for he accepted their behavior as part of their efforts to walk that "fine line" that so powerfully binds us all.

CHAPTER IV

RANK'S UNDERSTANDING OF SEXUALITY IN THE SEXUAL ERA.

This chapter will take a long Rankian look at different aspects of sexuality today with a special focus on the pros and cons of “perversion.”

As we have seen, Rank found fear and neuroticism as critical to an understanding of human psychology. But, like Freud, he also was intrigued by the role sexuality played in the human psyche as well. Of course, Freud, the Goliath of psychoanalysis, built his psychoanalytical theories on the belief that sexuality, because it is expressed in a biological act, is an instinctual and therefore universal part of human nature. But his David took the form of Otto Rank, whose extensive cultural research led him to another conclusion in his creative history, *Psychology and the Soul*: “Primitive man’s attitude during the presexual era, that is, the era of the soul, clearly indicates that sexuality meant something spiritual and not something as realistic as physical relations with the opposite sex ” (P.S. 37). The entire perspective of psychological thought changes when the implications of this point are taken into account. Sexuality, then, is not mainly a biological fact of human existence and the driving force for human motivation, as Freud assumed. But, rather, sexuality becomes a relatively minor factor in comparison to the fear of life and death as the basis for human choices.

Ira Progoff, psychotherapist, writer, and lecturer referring to *Psychology and the Soul*, notes that the sexual act has always been

associated with immortality and with the salvation of man's soul from dissipation during the sexual era. Here we have the theoretical key to the emotional complications that have seemed to be inherent in man's sexual activities since the earliest times. However, as Freud based much of his theory on sexual resistance with its attendant anxieties as the source of the "neurotic" forms of individual and social behavior, Progoff calls attention to Rank's fundamental argument - that the inner meaning and "cause" of this behavior was not sexual, but spiritual, because its root lay in the old beliefs of the spiritual era upon which the ideologies of the sexual era had been superimposed (Progoff 220).

Rank also suggests that sexuality had been more restricted in primitive life than in antiquity or modern times. Even primitives, whom ethnologists regard as nonreligious, maintained firm social organizations and close regulation of sex. If cultures as primitive as these enforced sexual restrictions, then, said Rank, it is no wonder that the hypothesis of original promiscuity has not been substantiated by recorded history. This hypothesis accepts the evolutionary thought of the nineteenth century and its comparison of man with animals. But Rank found that a closer study of the animal world, and of higher apes in particular, shows that many animals are monogamous, or that they are at least more restrictive in sexual relations than the term promiscuity would imply. Even contemporary experience, he said, can teach us that promiscuity yields no greater individual happiness than did the rigid sexual tabus of primitive cultures. Sex and reproduction were viewed separately by primitive man, because he believed that reproduction was mediated not by sexual intercourse, but by entrance of the soul of the dead into the body of the woman, who then effected rebirth and immortality of the soul. Therefore,

Rank claims that sexual tabus were not restrictions, but expressions of man's inherent belief in his individual immortality; and it was in this way that primitive sexual regulation differed from our own (P.S. 34).

Rank notes, too, that complete identification of sex and reproduction, which the Jewish-Christian doctrine turned into a religious dogma, modern science has interpreted causally. He finds that this causal interpretation expanded into the faulty psychoanalytical conclusion that sex plays the primary psychological role in our lives because of its biological primacy. Yet, Rank also observes that the place of sex in human history follows neither from its original biological role in reproduction nor from its ultimate psychological role in love, but from its spiritual role which substituted procreative for individual immortality (P.S. 35).

RANKIAN IDEAS ABOUT "PERVERSION" AS A "DIRTY" WORD: A CROSS-SECTION OF MODERN VIEWS ON HOMOSEXUALITY AS DISEASE OR CHOICE.

Rank wrote a penetrating paper on the subject of perversion as a development of neurosis. Presented in the prestigious *International Journal of Psychoanalysis* in 1923, Rank suggests that in the case of homosexuality, for example, persons who have not yet developed a complete perversion could still be in a condition of neurosis that is treatable by psychoanalysis. However, relief of the neurotic conflict can open the way to a comfortable choice for the patient in either direction, homosexuality or heterosexuality. Later on in his professional life, Rank comments that homosexuality is a vague term that can be applied to many neurotic symptoms.

Perhaps deviant behavior is a more acceptable term for a growing

portion of our population who claim their right to sexual preference. But are teens now choosing homosexuality to be “different”, to go with the latest fad, or to express their distrust of the establishment? There have always been homosexuals in civilized society; overt or underground. There also exists in this genre another “fine line,” the line between “straight” and “gay” that some men and women often travel as they look for love and meaning in their lives. With women, it could be the need for tenderness, womanly understanding, and comfortable affection. For men, it could be the absence of fear of women and their vaginas, and the anxiety provoking necessity to prove oneself as a “man.” Still another factor could be the ease of communication as “man to man.”[“If only a woman could be more like a man!”]

The question about teenagers and fads was inspired by a recent revelation from a friend. Four young girls, classmates of a daughter and all high school seniors, claim to be lesbians. There could well be many more in the class of this particular all girl school. Is it “oneupmanship”, an elite class distinction, boy jealousy/hate, or a flamboyant choice of life style? Or is it really biological? Perhaps the answer to this disturbing event (to me) can be found in the following excerpts from a recent issue of *The Journal of Psychohistory* in which Charles W. Socarides, a psychiatrist, discusses sexual politics and homosexuality:

There is an *epidemic* form of homosexuality, which is more than the usual incidence, which generally occurs in social crises or in declining cultures when license and boundless permissiveness dulls ceaseless anxiety, universal hostility, and devisiveness. Supporting the claims of the homosexuals and regarding homosexuality as a normal variant of sexual activity of homosexuality. To do this is to give support to the devisive elements in the community . . . (317).

License and boundless permissiveness, ceaseless anxiety, universal hostility and deviousness can all be found in the home and schools of many of our children today. Could these factors trigger rebellion and affect customary sexual fantasies? It is an interesting and distinct possibility.

Socrides notes that a significant portion of society today believes that homosexuality is a normal form of sexual behavior different from but equal to that of heterosexuality. He contends that this threat of revolutionary change in our sexual mores and customs has been brought about by a singular act of considerable magnitude: the removal of homosexuality from the category of aberrancy by the American Psychiatric Association (December 1973) (307). Socrides considers this act to be a "fateful consequence" of our disregard for psychoanalytical knowledge of human sexual behavior. The concept of "disadvantage" was introduced as a reason for declaring homosexuality a "non-disorder" by the A.P.A. Socrides strongly objects to the view that the obligatory type of homosexual is at "no social disadvantage," claiming that it is a denial of the realities that surround us. He believes that society governs the behavior of its members from birth to death through its laws, mores, and other institutions and a human being is born with responses that make up his mammalian heritage (a product of evolution). This same human is then introduced into a web of social institutions, a product of cumulative tradition, which constitutes his cultural heritage. The two, mammalian and cultural heritages, asserts Socrides, lead man to his sexual pattern, heterosexuality, which has a biological and social usefulness. It creates the family unit and allows men and women to live together under conditions where there is likely to be the least amount of fear, rage, and hate. It

furthermore regulates this relationship through a series of laws, penalties, and rewards (315).

This key word, homosexuality, is one that raises many different kinds of feelings in the heterosexual population, from revulsion to total acceptance. In between, one can find pity, admiration, curiosity, guilt, fear, and distrust. Natalie Angier, in another article in the *New York Times* on the subject of the bias against gay people, calls attention to the many straight Americans who still feel queasy about homosexuality. She says that they do not approve of the behavior, they do not like to think or hear about it, and they get upset upon learning that a relative or friend is gay. The type of bigotry that homophobia most closely resembles, reports Angiers, is sexism. People are much likelier to feel animosity toward gay men than toward lesbians, one of the reasons being a distaste for any trace of effeminate behavior in men. Beyond its similarities to other species of intolerance, Angiers asserts, homophobia is unique in that it is linked to feelings about sex, and in much of Western religion, sex is dirty, nasty, and best avoided if procreation is not the goal. "And AIDS has exacerbated the uneasiness about sexuality, crystallizing the link between pleasure and punishment" (E 4).

RANK AND THE FILM *BASIC INSTINCT*

The 1992 film, *Basic Instinct*, created a stir from the reviewers and the audience in direct relation to their homophobic feelings about sex as Angiers described it above, and was protested by gay groups during production. It is essentially a murder mystery complete with dead bodies, and plenty of heterosexual sex with bisexual and lesbian overtones. The

film also includes male and female frontal nudity, obscenity, extreme violence, sexual encounters, and references to masturbation, voyeurism, and bondage. The writer, (Jack Eszterhas) made every effort to insert an obscene innuendo at every opportunity with titillating results.

The three women in the cast are bisexual which sort of proves the point that was made by Sandor Rado (who is reviewed further along in this chapter), that the “normal” individual may sometimes, under ordinary conditions, give in to a desire for “sexual variations” because of the latter’s pleasure value. The principal female character, Sharon Stone, is a writer of murder mysteries whose plots are seemingly being copied by a murderer or murderess or, we are teased to believe, is in fact acting out her stories. Ms. Stone plays every scene with tantalizing seductiveness while at the same time uses the same ploy to humiliate and put down her adversaries. Her female lover vies for her attention with Michael Douglas, as the detective and male protagonist. By the time the film is over, the audience is almost sure of the killer’s identity, but not totally convinced. The *New York Times* reviewer, Janet Maslin, suggests that the film was much too bizarre and singular to be construed as homophobic, but that the bisexuality helps to undermine any possibility of real closeness between the men and women in the story. She went on to say that the essential part of the film was to reveal the latent hostility between the sexes. “The possibility of physical violence is what gives sex its greatest element of danger in this era of AIDS escapism” (C8, 1992).

A patient once asked Rank a question about homosexuality and the answer was particularly apt for the women in *Basic Instinct*, in my opinion. He said: “It is a vague term applied to many symptoms. So to speak, it doesn’t exist. It is love for one’s self as seen in the persona of another like

oneself whom one admires strongly built up on narcissism. It is an ego symptom and not a sex symptom” (Lieberman 270). The attraction between the principal characters in *Basic Instinct* seems to be based on Rank’s informal remarks as noted by Lieberman - mostly on ego and narcissism.

Douglas is a reformed drug and alcohol abuser who allows himself to become romantically involved with a suspected murderess (Stone). The lesbian, Roxy, loves Stone and hates Douglas, but at the same time enjoys watching her lover’s sexual encounters with men. The third woman, Dr. Garner, is a police psychologist who has had affairs with both Douglas and Stone. Since we are not permitted the luxury of examining the childhood of the film characters, it is difficult to target the root psychological causes for their actions as adults, if they indeed exist. But the suggestion by Rank that perversions themselves represent a condensed mechanism of satisfaction which has been put together out of the most varied, concealed childhood backgrounds, must be considered. The so-called perversions merely constitute various ways in which gratification of libido can be attained. In Rankian words: “By means of displacement and condensation, secondary elaboration and particularly by representation through opposites, often enough the content of this libido-gratification has been able to find a suitable outlet only in the perversion in question” (Rank, P.N. 276).

Rank wrote about these ideas ago in “Perversion and Neurosis,” (1923). At that time, all deviant sexual activities (deviant from the normally recognized heterosexual act) were considered as perversions by the medical fraternity. Today, opinion is still divided as to whether abnormal sexual practices are a form of neurosis or ordinary variations on

the theme of sex for the human animal. However, Rank differentiates between perversions and neuroses. He believes that perversions reveal uninhibited satisfaction without being disturbed by a sense of guilt; they are even actually founded on a repudiation of guilt, this being evidently the necessary preliminary condition for maintaining a narcissistic libidosatisfaction (Rank P.N. 288).

In *Basic Instinct* , there seems to be no sense of guilt attached to anything that Sharon Stone does. Is she just a modern “free spirit” with no inhibitions whatsoever? Or is she perverted in the sense outlined by Rank? And if she is indeed a sadistic killer, then the absence of guilt is to be expected. As noted in the last paragraph, Rank had said that perversions reveal uninhibited satisfaction without being disturbed by any sense of guilt and nowhere in the film does Stone show the slightest remorse about any of her actions. Rank also reminds us in his essay that in sadism, we may be dealing with a destructive instinct directed toward the outer world by a powerful ego. Roxy, Sharon Stone’s lover, is not perverted as a lesbian, according to Rank, but as a voyeur (coprophiliac), probably the largest group encompassing perversions in our society. But Roxy is as neurotic as they come. She tries to kill Douglas and loses her own life in the attempt. Could therapy have helped this young woman? Perhaps.

In Rank’s time, some people who thought they had sexual problems, did seek psychoanalytic advice and were considered to be neurotics or in a stage of neuroticism, i.e. the flight from incest! Perverts have completely eliminated the infantile wish for a child, argues Rank; what characterizes them, he said, is the avoidance of the sexual act, often indeed a horror of it, which may be related to the neurotic. They do, however, freely satisfy the

component-instinct in question in a narcissistic way (fellatio, pederasty). Rank calls attention to the fact that the femininity of the homosexual does not need any proof no matter whether he actually assumes a passive role in a feminine attitude towards the father, or identifies himself with the mother in an apparently active love for a youth, at the same time narcissistically clinging to one of his own stages of development. In like manner, he notes that it is sufficient to point to the root of masochism discovered by analysis in the passive feminine phantasy of being beaten; in the oral perversions, the (feminine) impregnation-symbolism is clear, he feels; in exhibitionism, the (feminine) castration complex; whereas fetishism and kleptomania more nearly approach the neurotic defense-mechanism arising from the fear of castration and could be said to have stopped at a preliminary stage of perversion-formation. Rank sees the fetishist as clinging to an idealized part of the sexual object that he lacks in place of the whole, while the kleptomaniac takes possession of an object withheld from him with a characteristic displacement from the sexual to the social province (prohibition, punishment) (Rank P.N. 285).

From Rank's *Trauma of Birth*, comes the theory that many types of perversion are based on denial of the female sex organ due to the repression of the birth trauma experienced there. The painful fixation on this function of the female genital as organ of birth, Rank states, is the basis of all neurotic disturbances of adult sex life including psychical impotence such as feminine frigidity, in all its forms. Exhibitionism, fetishism, masochism, sadism, and homosexuality seem to fit into this same conception. It is based quite obviously in the case of the man, according to Rank, on the abhorrence of the female genitals, because of its close relation to the shock of birth and the male homosexual sees in woman only the

maternal organ of birth, and hence is incapable of acknowledging it as an organ of giving pleasure. In addition, Rank uses data from analyses to confirm his belief that the homosexuals of both sexes only consciously play the part of man and woman. Unconsciously they invariably play the part of mother and child - which is directly manifest in the case of female homosexuality - and actually represent a special kind of love relationship ("the third sex")- namely, a direct continuance of the asexual but libidinal binding of the primal situation. He emphasizes the fact that homosexuality, being that perversion which apparently relates only to the differentiation of sex, really rests on the bisexuality of the embryonal condition surviving in the Unconscious (34-36).

However, most people somehow get the power to use their bodies as nature intended, notes Rank. They fulfill the species role of intercourse with their partner without being greatly threatened by it. But when the body does present a massive threat to one's self, then the role becomes a frightening chore, a possibly annihilating experience. If the body is so vulnerable, then one fears dying by participating fully in its acts. From here it is easy to view all perversion as a protest against the submergence of individuality by species standardization, Rank points out. He developed this idea all through his work, i.e., the only way in which mankind could actually control nature and rise above her was to convert sexual immortality into individual immortality:

. in essence, sexuality is a collective phenomenon which the individual at all stages of civilization wants to individualize, that is, control. This explains all (!) sexual conflicts in the individual, from the perversities above, to masturbation , to the most varied perversions and all the keeping secret of everything sexual by

individuals as an expression of a personal tendency to individualize as much as possible collective elements in it (Rank A.A. 52).

In other words, Rank believes that perversion is a protest against species sameness, against the submergence of individuality into the body. He speculated that the Oedipus complex in the classic Freudian understanding may be an attempt by the child to resist the family organization, the dutiful role of son or daughter, the absorption into the collective, by affirming his own ego. The distinctive human problem from time immemorial, Rank surmises, has been the need to spiritualize human life, to lift it onto a special immortal plane, beyond the cycles of life and death that characterize all other organisms. This is one of the reasons that sexuality has from the beginning been under taboos; it had to be lifted from the plane of physical fertilization to a spiritual one (199-200).

In addition to the apparent spiritual meaning of sex in the Golden Age of the Greeks, Rank explores the deeper meaning of Greek homosexuality by viewing it as a problem of succession and self-perpetuation:

Seen in this light, boy love, which Plato tells us, aimed perpetually at the improvement and perfection of the beloved youth, appears definitely at . . . a spiritual perfecting in the other person, who becomes transferred into the worthy successor of oneself here on earth; and that, not on the basis of the biological procreation of one's body, but in the sense of the spiritual immortality-symbolism in the pupil, the younger (Rank A.A. 54).

With this provocative hypothesis by Rank, it becomes easier to understand some of the ideal motives for homosexuality, not only of the

Greeks, but for a very special, individualized, and creative person like Michelangelo. For such a man, apparently, homosexuality had nothing to do with the sex organs of the beloved, but rather represented a struggle to create one's own rebirth in the "closest possible likeness," which, as Rank has said, is obviously to be found in one's own sex (Rank P.S. 43).

My recent essay, "The Two Worlds of Oscar Wilde", describes the nineteenth century artist as a man who fits the Rankian description of an artistic homosexual. He, too, was a very special, individualized, and creative person. During his lifetime, Wilde was reviled as a monstrous degenerate and praised for his artistic creations. He enchanted acquaintances with his lively wit and flamboyant style of dress and actions while at the same time revolting others with his perverted sexual habits and total disregard of social convention. At the very height of his career, Oscar Wilde was tried and found guilty of a charge of indecent behavior with men and was imprisoned for two years at hard labor.

Coping with life, the principle theme running through this paper, has always been a common dilemma for our society, but not everyone has the creative drive and talent to achieve Wilde's degree of financial success and fame. Otto Rank has argued that coping with life is made more difficult because man is always trying to master life's irrational forces with his own intellect. This lifelong activity, he suggests, can lead to a revolt of life forces (psychic energy) in the form of social crisis and change for the individual. With Wilde, the revolt pitted the artist against the Victorian code of morals then prevailing in England, with disastrous results. That he was a homosexual was known to only a few of his close friends. He played the role of actor and playwright with an audacious flair, titillating and mocking the ultra-conservative upper-class London society with his

dramatic plays. The other role Wilde played was connected to his lively sexual appetite for young men as lovers and prostitutes. Some were just one night stands, but others were more serious affairs lasting months or even years.

Applying Rankian ideas to some homosexuals and to Oscar Wilde in particular, I suggest that Wilde's "intellectual excitement" and emotions may have been extravagantly expressed by his sexuality in the form of pleasurable sensations, but it was also possible that his sexual life was a means of saving emotional expenditure or, just a way of attaining the end orgasm on a primitive level instead of an emotional one. Rank considers the human emotional life to be the center and real sphere of psychology, because it determines the relation to one's fellowmen and, at the same time, to reality. Reflecting on Rank's conviction that it is the urge for immortality that drives all men and women, not just as a reflex from death anxiety, but a reaching out by one's whole being toward life, I can see Oscar Wilde's search for immortality leading him toward the creativity of the artist as well as into his own form of neurosis. "The essence of normality is the refusal of reality", Rank had said, and normal neurosis is universal because everyone has trouble of some sort living with the truth of life and must make a payment to that truth (Rank W.T.195).

Wilde's payment to the truth of life is evident in the neurosis that forced him to take such a fatalistic approach to life, and in the consequences of his actions. Rank notes that in many cases of apparent homosexual conflicts, it is less a sexual perversion than an ego-problem underlying them, a problem that the individual can only deal with by personifying part of his own ego in another person. If the artist values his source of inspiration in direct proportion to its connection with his artistic

personality and ideology, then he will find his truest ideal to an even greater degree in his own sex, which is physically and intellectually closer to him (Rank A.A. 52).

Was Oscar Wilde more neurotic than some other homosexuals according to what can be inferred from Rank's observations on the subject of neurosis? Assuredly he was neurotic if one believes in the universality of the term. Wilde's neuroticism took the form of his fatalistic approach to existence and the guilt he carried within as he faced the realities of life. It also took the form of homosexual conflicts as an ego problem connected to finding his truest ideal in another man (Hecht, "Oscar Wilde" 13).

Many other conclusions have been drawn to explain homosexuality since the ideas of Rank were published. Here are some from an intense, long-term psychoanalytic study of male homosexuals made by members of the Society of Medical Psychoanalysts and published in 1962. The leader of this group was Irving Bieber, best known for his controversial view of homosexuality as an illness that could be treated or prevented through psychotherapy - a view that has since been discredited by the American Psychiatric Association in a controversial decision. Dr. Bieber remained steadfast, however, telling an interviewer that "a homosexual is a person whose heterosexual function is crippled, like the legs of a polio victim." He died in 1991 without recanting his beliefs (*N.Y. Times*, 9/28/91).

One member of the study group, Sandor Rado, disregards Freud's theory of human bisexuality and attributes homosexuality to the following factors:

Hidden but incapacitating fears of the opposite sex which result in a homosexual adaptation, which through symbolic processes is in fantasy a heterosexual one, or in which problems of rivalry with

isophilic partners who represent father are solved (*Homosexuality* , 1962, 10).

Rado believes that this stems from the fact that, in humans, the sex drive is no longer a mechanism related exclusively to procreative purposes and has become autonomously pleasure driving. The “healthy” individual, therefore, may even under ordinary circumstances yield to a desire for “variations in performance because of the latter’s pleasure value.” Rado also believes that the capacity to adapt homosexually is, in some ways, a tribute to man’s biosocial resources in the face of thwarted heterosexual goal-achievement. Sexual gratification is not renounced, he states; instead, fears and inhibitions associated with heterosexuality are circumvented and sexual responsivity with pleasure and excitement to a member of the same sex develops as a pathologic alternative (303).

Harry Stack Sullivan regards homosexuality as resulting from experiences which have “erected a barrier to integration with persons of the other sex.” He finds that one of the important sources of homosexuality is in the preadolescent, since it is during this era that the child first develops an intimate relationship with a “chum” (8).

Clara Thompson, who shares Sullivan’s views, regards the term “homosexual” as “a waste basket to which all friendly and hostile feelings toward members of one’s sex are applied.” She considers homosexuality not as a specific entity having characteristic determinants, but only as a symptom of a character problem (9).

W. V. Silverberg’s concept of “true” homosexuality coincides with Freud’s in that it can be regarded as an outcome of the Oedipus complex. He views homosexuality as an unconscious maneuver to separate the parents

and bind the father symbolically in the homosexual relationship, thereby making him unavailable to the mother. He agrees with Freud in giving psychogenetic importance to an unconscious view of women as genitally castrated (11).

According to the statistical outcome of the survey, the therapeutic results provide reason for an optimistic outlook (for psychoanalysis). They find that many homosexuals became exclusively heterosexual in psychoanalytical treatment. In their judgement, a heterosexual shift is possible for all homosexuals who are strongly motivated to change. They, as a group, assume that heterosexuality is the biologic norm and that, unless interfered with, all individuals are heterosexual. Homosexuals do not bypass heterosexual development phases and all remain potentially heterosexual. The book concludes with the statement that they have learned a great deal about male homosexuality, but realize that there is much more to learn and hope that their work will stimulate others (318-319).

In 1988 Michael Ruse, a Canadian historian and philosopher, became involved in the subject of homosexuality. The prologue of a book, *Homosexuality, A Philosophical Inquiry*, sets the stage for the work:

Homosexuality- same gender sex- needs no introduction. From pre-Christian times, it has troubled, terrified- and inspired- the western mind and culture. Sodom and Gomorrah, the cities of the plain, were supposedly destroyed because of it; Paul warned the early Christians against it; leading scholars of the Church wrote eloquently opposing; English Kings were assassinated on suspicion of it; and countless common people have been victimized, blackmailed, and persecuted because of it. Yet at the same time it has been the channel for some of humankind's most moving stories of love and affection, and the spark for poetry, painting and sculpture - a fountain of that which we would most readily call good

and worthwhile. Some of our greatest civilizations have allowed, even encouraged, an overt homosexual component (ix).

How do people feel about homosexual behavior, asks Ruse? Can they in some sense relate to it, whether or not they want to do it themselves and whether or not they have homosexual inclinations? The answer surely is that some people can - homosexuals themselves and some heterosexuals. Many others cannot - they find it totally alien and disgusting. Therefore, Ruse suggests that for some people in our society, homosexuality is not a perversion and for some it is. Some other societies have seen homosexuality totally as a perversion. Some have not seen it as a perversion at all.

Then Ruse asks the question, "is homosexuality bad sexuality?" He answers by arguing that, faced with the divided opinion in our society about the perverted nature of homosexuality (inclination and behavior), neither side is absolutely right and neither side is absolutely wrong. If one agrees that homosexuality is not immoral, then we should be able to persuade people not to regard homosexuals and their habits with loathing. We should be able to encourage people not to confuse their disgust at perversion with moral indignation. Ruse compares the promiscuous homosexual with a confirmed smoker or an alcoholic. Because of AIDS, the homosexual who cannot stay away from baths and bars is either incredibly stupid or mentally ill. Conceptually and in principle, the heterosexual who deliberately puts himself or herself at risk is also either stupid or sick (234).

Ruse concludes a lengthy discussion of the legal aspects of homosexuality in America and Europe with the thought that, although

justice requires us not to discriminate against homosexuals, justice forbids us to discriminate in their favor. If, in employment, we treat homosexuals like normal people, he says, then perhaps to our surprise we shall find that they are normal people (267).

The writer agrees that Ruse is certainly correct in that homosexuals are entitled to be treated fairly and without discrimination in all areas of our society, but whether or not the term "normal" is appropriate is up for grabs. Rank's final words at the close of his paper on "Perversion and Neurosis" are still thought provoking:

In condemning the "perversions" and still penalizing them more or less, Society expresses a true estimate of the social opposition which they represent, but which is bound only to increase by threats of punishment. But the way in which perverts themselves react to such threats shows plainly that their sense of guilt, successfully thrown off by a bold regression, comes back to them again from reality in the form of social condemnation (Rank P.N. 292).

At the start of this paragraph, it was noted that Freud had built his psychoanalytical theories on the belief that sexuality, because it is expressed in a biological act, is an instinctual and therefore universal part of human nature. But Rank has a different and broader theory - that sexuality is not the main biological fact of human existence - that in truth, it is a relatively minor factor in comparison to his hypothesis of fear of life and death as underlying all choices including sexual preference.

RANK AND THE T.V. PRODUCTION: TALES OF THE CITY

Sexuality may seem to be the main biological fact of human existence especially if one had the opportunity to watch a new mini-series that

appeared on PBS the week of January 11th, 1994. It dramatically illustrates Rank's creative theory that such is not the case. Adapted from a book by Armistead Maupin, "Tales of the City" is about the intersecting lives of several men and women living in a small apartment house in San Francisco in the seventies. The sex is explicit. A man and a woman in bed. A man and a man in bed. Men kissing men - women kissing women, and even men kissing women. Sexual deviance in all its variations is more explicitly displayed than can normally be witnessed on prime time regular programming. But it was not offensive (to me) because none of the characters are evil, it was completely without violence, and because sex is not really their primary goal. Underneath, they are all looking for the same thing. The homosexuals, the bisexuals, the heterosexuals are all looking for someone to share their lives romantically and with trust and commitment. Someone to be comfortable with in a loving way; someone to "buy a christmas tree with;" an joint attachment with a life. The young homosexual man is gentle and warm. The handsome "straight" man is guileless in his constant pursuit of one night stands in the same way as are the gay men in their bars and bath houses. The young bisexual woman tries to renew an old love affair with the same disappointing result. The happiness and or contentment they are all seeking eludes them. The quick fix (orgasm) is not what any of the characters in "Tales of the City" are really looking for. They are looking for the old values that used to be the major thrust of our culture; long lasting relationships, raising and caring for a family; a partnership based on trust. Being gay or straight is neither the key nor the obstacle to a meaningful life, if I understand what Rank is saying.

The Op-Ed page of the *N.Y. Times* had an article about this T.V. program by Frank Rich (A 24, 1/13/94). He remarks that the people in Maupin's San Francisco are not perfect, but they are tolerant. The men and women listen to one another and, if they disagree, they battle with well-chosen words, no matter how angry they are, rather than with fists, knives, or guns. Gay and straight men share dating tips. Parents and adult children agree to disagree. A most unusual commentary about highly erotic and controversial subjects. A soap opera, yes, but a realistic view of man's inconsistencies and weaknesses.

Man's inconsistencies and weaknesses including sexual choices can certainly be linked to Rank's basic deduction that by channeling his natural biological urge to serve the needs of his ego, man from time immemorial has tried to avoid his role as the bearer of the procreative life-principle of which his Self is but an ephemeral manifestation, and:

In reversing this natural state of affairs man turned sexual intercourse, which is shown by the behavior of animals to be a battle of nature, into a mere source of pleasure. Be that as it may, man's innate resistance to procreation, enforced by his ideological fear of woman as a threat to his immortality, betrayed itself in innumerable tabus imposed on his sex life and that of the woman. This genuine fear of sex in the individual I traced in the *Trauma of Birth* to the shock the child experiences in parturition, and on that basis interpreted the shrinking from the female genital organ as a shrinking from the symbol of mortality. The womb as the place of birth likewise symbolizes death (Rank B.P. 224).

Could not the argument be made even today that sexual deviance is directly related to Rank's hypotheses?

CHAPTER V

RANK HYPOTHESIZES THE EMOTIONS

The emotions are vital to the understanding of Rankian psychology. In this chapter, I will examine the feelings of guilt, anxiety, and love as they influence the choices humans make as they walk the “fine line.” A play, *Long Day’s Journey into Night*, and a novel, *Portrait of a Lady*, will serve as grist for the Rankian mill. Rank’s regard for the importance of emotions in our lives is emphasized in this quotation from his singular essay, “Emotion and Denial” :

However, in every case it is clear that the kind and degree of our emotions determine our relation to time and to times, namely the present, past, and future; in other words, that the feelings determine our whole attitude to life and experience (25).

Rank states that psychoanalysis has contributed very little to understanding emotions. This lack is exhibited by the mystical concept of the unconscious in which all possible feelings are mixed together as in a witch’s caldron. He goes on to explain that his concept of “affect” implies something different from the concept of “feeling”; it is rather what might be called emotional. The “affect” does not designate the feeling itself, according to Rank, but is an expression of feeling as, for example, the anger affect, the hate affect, etc. In addition and tied to it, what is

described as “affect” is a pathologically (as a sympathetic emotion) intensified feeling which forcefully demands an outlet. Thus, he reasons, anxiety, jealousy, hatred, are “affects”; love, yearning, hope, are feelings and it appeared to him that the affects were the painful, pain releasing “pathological” feelings, whereas what is designated as feeling in the real meaning of the word was of a more pleasurable nature. Rank offers this creative idea in another way; “namely, the feelings are uniting or binding, the *affects* are separating, isolating; or still better, the *affect* is a reaction to the feeling of separation, isolation” (10).

Rank tries to clarify his ideas on the emotional life by proposing a distinction in terminology. He says that the reciprocal feelings, especially in the sphere of the love life which could lead to mutual physical expression of those feelings, could be designated as *sensations*. These sensations are uniquely contrasted to the purely inner feelings which are designated as *emotions*. Rank then chooses *affect* as the term to be reserved for the expression of the feeling of separation. With such separating *affects* as anxiety, hate, anger, and annoyance, goes the admission that the uniting force is not present or has failed. In other words, he distinguishes between three kinds of manifestations of feeling, two external and one purely internal. The external ones were either uniting, pleasurable sensations or separating, painful *affects*; the internal one was what we call emotional (12).

Rank believes that if emotion was understood as a denial of the difference, that is, as an attempt to establish within oneself an identity which does not exist or does not satisfy externally, then it could be understood as one of the most remarkable characteristics of the emotional life. In the analysis of the analytic situation and of the emotional life in

general, Rank finds that the individual is inclined to do nothing so much as to hide from himself or deny his feelings. He refuses to admit to himself or to others that he cherishes this or that feeling. Rank explains that this is one of the most obvious characteristics of the emotional life, particularly of neurotically maladjusted individuals, a view that no one had previously determined. As the feeling is an attempt to establish within oneself an externally lacking identity with another, then it can be understood why one is so much ashamed of one's feelings and therefore wants to hide them, not only from the other, but even from oneself. Rank believes that this explains the feeling of shame in general or why so many neurotics feel ashamed when there is no apparent reason for it, the shame being an emotional reaction to the recognition and admission of feelings that are onesided. To put it another way, he argues, one is ashamed of having feelings at all if they are not reciprocated, the unpleasant feeling of shame again being an emotional reaction to the realization of difference, of separation (14).

Professor Solomon, author of *The Passions* whose thoughts on love were analyzed in an earlier chapter, is relevant here. He believes that, rather than being enslaved by these irrational, primitive forces, our emotions (our passions) alone provide our lives with meaning, echoing Rank. He states that our passions have too long been relegated to mere footnotes in philosophy and parentheses in psychology, as if they were intrusions and interruptions. "Our passions constitute our lives" (xvi). For example, where direct and effective action is impossible, the ideology of the emotion requires a cautious and often complex logic. The imagination is called in to scheme and conspire and strategy replaces direct action. The employee who is angry at his boss, but in desperate need of his job, finds

direct expression of his anger impossible. In our own daily lives, the many sexual harassment cases that have been brought to our attention show how the emotions of fear and hate have been hidden or repressed, for fear of retribution. When effective expression is impossible, notes Solomon, the emotion finds itself in a desperate situation; it is unable to realize a set of ideals which it has itself constituted. This gives rise to often irrational or pointless behavior in which we resort to complete fantasy in our methods for revenge. Then, Solomon claims, we use phrases like: "I didn't mean it: I didn't know what I was doing; I acted without thinking; I was emotionally upset." That is the capstone of a cop-out plea of momentary insanity (Lorena Bobbitt severed her husband's penis during such a moment?) (xvii).

Solomon also asserts that more has been written about guilt than about any other emotion, including love. He says that it forms the core of Judaeo-Christian psychology as well as theology, and that it is the cornerstone of every criminal judicial system and the shady side of every moral theory of duty and obligation. In addition, he points out that guilt is the key to a great number of psychopathological syndromes and Freud (also Rank) and most therapists since then, have given the understanding of guilt high priority in their psychological researches. Solomon describes the emotion as usually encompassing self-reproach for some misdeed, differing from shame only in its intensity and scope. What distinguishes guilt, however, is its ability to embody the sense of worth of the whole person. It includes a sense of inadequacy and despair that is rarely found in shame, declares Solomon:

The most obvious advantage of guilt is its extreme self-indulgence;

it may not be a happy self-indulgence, but happiness is not the goal of the emotions. It is maximization of self-esteem. And to prove one's own existence and revel in it, self-inflicted pain may be the most effective means. . . . Guilt allows a person to be utterly selfish, oblivious to the suffering around him and the concerns of other people. (After all, is he not suffering more than any of them)(321)?

Solomon finalizes his definition of the guilt feeling with the axiom that no man is innocent; he who confesses first and most vigorously, usually turns out to be the least guilty and consequently the most superior. Here is the genius of the Christian church, he concludes, and much of psychoanalysis, too. Guilt turns out to be the very opposite of what it seems - a self-indulgent, self-protective, ultimately amoral, and extremely powerful strategy of superiority (323). Solomon reminds us that Nietzsche, too, blamed the ascetic priest for the exploitation of the *sense of guilt* in man:

Human beings, suffering from themselves in one way or another . . . , uncertain why or wherefore, thirsting for reasons - reasons relieve - thirsting, too, for remedies and narcotics, at last take counsel with one who knows hidden things, too - and behold! they receive a hint, they receive from their sorcerer, the ascetic priest, the first hint as to the "cause" of their suffering; they must seek it in *themselves*, in some *guilt*, in a piece of the past, they must understand their suffering as *apunishment* (GM, III, 20).

Rank did not go so far as to define guilt as a form of punishment nor did he see it as a power strategy. He designates guilt as an *affect* (a painful emotion) like anxiety or fear, which represents the most general reaction to everything foreign to the ego. The great importance of the guilt-feeling, he

claims, is its position among the emotions as sort of a boundary phenomenon between the very painful *affects* which separate and the pleasurable feelings which unite and it is also related to the painful separating affects of anxiety and hate. But in its relation to gratitude and devotion which may extend to self-sacrifice, Rank argues that guilt belongs to the strongest uniting feelings we know. As the guilt-feeling occupies the boundary line between painful and pleasurable, between the severing and uniting feelings, it is also the most important representative of the relation between the inner and the outer, the Ego and the Thou, the Self and the World. For many, Rank contends, especially the neurotic types, the guilt-feeling is the only way and the only form of expression for any feelings at all; i.e., the only form in which they can even admit to having feelings which they don't understand (Emotions 17).

RANKIAN GUILT AND ANXIETY IN *LONG DAY'S JOURNEY INTO NIGHT*

The feeling of guilt that is "man's destiny" can also play a large role in how one copes with life. If, as Rank believes, guilt can separate or unite, the choices made along the "fine line" can be crucial. As an illustration of how Rankian views of guilt are reflected in human behavior, I have chosen to look at Eugene O'Neill's great play, *Long Day's Journey into Night*. Rank believes that guilt is the inescapable destiny of man. He recognizes that mythological cultures revealed strong evidence linking heroic myths with creative will and the guilt resulting from creative activity. Paradoxically, creativity also provides the opportunity to escape from guilt. It was O'Neill's creative attempt to shed the long carried guilt feelings associated with his family that underscore the play. The author led

a life studded with periods of creativity, physical and emotional illness, and pain. In this play, he tries to look objectively at his family from the subjective viewpoint of Edmund, the younger son (his counterpart) in a gut-wrenching effort to escape from the feelings of guilt associated with them. *Long Day's Journey* is a tragic play telling the story of one day, 8 a.m. to midnight, in the life of a family of four, the Tyrones.

On this day the mother, Mary Tyrone, recently returned from treatment for drug addiction, quietly relapses while husband James and his two sons, Jamie and Edmund, talk and drink. The subsequent lowering of inhibitions releases the long pent up feelings of love and hate, and the dialogue abounds with self-pity and vituperative accusations. Love and sympathy alternate with hate and insensibility. In the last act, the Tyrones battle and embrace in the alcoholic haze of the night. Edmund is portrayed as a consumptive, embryo writer, his father as a frustrated, but financially successful actor, and Jamie as a lazy, unemployed rou'e. All have deep feelings of guilt about their own thoughts and actions. Mary because she secretly blames unwanted Edmund for her illness and morphine addiction, and James Sr. because of the miserly, selfish treatment he has subjected his family to over the years. Jamie regrets his wasted years dribbled away drinking and whoring, while Edmund blames himself for his mother's condition, because her sickness after his birth brought on the drug habit. These are the apparent reasons for guilt production, but the psychological and Rankian rationale are less obvious and will form the framework of this analysis.

The relationship between Jamie and Edmund might better be understood through an excerpt in Rank's psychoanalytic study, *The Double as the Immortal Self*. "The most prominent symptom of the forms which

the Double takes is a powerful consciousness of guilt which forces the "hero" to no longer accept responsibility for certain actions of his ego, but to place it upon another ego, a double, who is either personified by the devil himself or is created by making a diabolical pact." This detached personification of instincts and desires which were once felt to be unacceptable, but which can be satisfied without responsibility in this indirect way, appears in other forms of the double theme in literature (e.g., William Wilson, Dorian Gray, etc.). The awareness of guilt emanating from various sources, claims Rank, measures on the one hand the distance between the ego-ideal and the attained reality; on the other, it is nourished by a powerful fear of death and creates strong tendencies toward self-punishment, which also imply suicide (76). The brothers are bound to each other by guilt as much as by kinship, and their mixed feelings for each other are just as much a conflict with self as with one another. Jamie, in particular, exposes the clash within himself with surprising clarity. He tells his brother that he had tried to make him a bum like himself; that he never wanted him to succeed: "Wanted you to fail. Always jealous of you. Mama's baby, Papa's pet! It was your being born that started Mama on dope. I know that's not your fault, but all the same God damn you, I can't help hating your guts!" Jamie then professes to love Edmund more than hate him, but will do his damndest to make him fail: "Can't help it. I hate myself. Got to take revenge. On everyone else. Especially you." The "double" syndrome that Rank often met in his psychiatric therapy is Jamie's use of guilt consciousness against his brother to make him the scapegoat for his self-hate.

Mary's death fear and consciousness of guilt was the basis for her drug dependency. The desire to separate herself from her family in her

search for individuality was hidden by her neurotic lack of creative will. Mary was destined to be a nun before she was swept off her feet by James Tyrone, the handsome actor, and she was never able to free herself from a moralistic ideology that deprived her of will and substituted total devotion to the family. Only the morphine could make the fear and guilt disappear and the illusionary separation occur. The fear of life that subjugated Mary leads to neurosis, and pathological neuroticism is another escape from the rawness of life, Rank claims. The rawness that caused Mary to close the door on life and retreat into the world of euphoria. The dangers that made Jamie use alcohol and prostitutes to avoid the openness of life and personal commitments. The shameful possibility of failure that kept James Tyrone in the same stylized theatrical roles year after year because they paid well - failure linked to the fear and anxiety of new experience. Edmund, who does eventually become a writer, is the only member of the family who is open to positive life experience and the emotions that go with it including the constant anxiety about his mother. The others have chosen to shut it out completely, but cannot avoid the debilitating feelings of guilt and anxiety.

The *affect* of anxiety is not Edmund's alone, but is a burden that everyone carries from cradle to grave and Rank emphasizes the close connection that feelings of anxiety share with creativity and guilt. Martin Heidegger, German philosopher and contemporary of Rank, believed that the basic anxiety of man is *about* being-in-the-world as well as anxiety *of* being-in-the-world; that is, fear of death and fear of life as well as fear of experience and fear of individuation. However, it was Rank who based his entire system of thought on the fear of life and death as central to the understanding of man, the only animal aware of both concepts (to the best of our knowledge). Therefore, persons like the Tyrones are reluctant to

move out into the unpredictability of the real world where life is dangerous. As Becker describes reality: "Life can involve a person and use up his strength and upset self-control; it can burden one with heavy and unplanned responsibilities requiring great strength to bear; life can expose one to a variety of unaccustomed contingencies and dangers including accidents or an incurable disease and then - death - the final disappearance and negation" (Becker 54).

In *The Trauma of Birth*, Otto Rank makes the observation that in addition to the disturbing nature of life's dangers, the pain induced by anxiety goes back to the anxiety experienced by every child at birth. The human being needs his entire childhood to overcome this first intensive trauma in a normal way. Rank states that every child has anxiety and, from the standpoint of a healthy adult, one could designate the childhood of individuals as their normal neurosis. In the case of certain individuals, this anxiety may continue into adult life and these neurotics remain infantile or are called infantile. Jamie Tyrone could well be an example of infantile neuroticism with his juvenile approach to life by way of alcohol and women objects. Rank describes a typical case of infantile anxiety as occurring when the child is left alone in a dark room (usually at bed-time). This situation reminds the child, who is still close to the experience of the primal trauma, of the womb situation, but with the important difference that the child is now consciously separated from the mother, whose womb is only "symbolically" replaced by the dark room or warm bed. If one accepts the anxiety effect, as Rank presents it, then it is easy to realize how every infantile expression of anxiety or fear is really a partial disposal of the birth anxiety. Equally understandably then, every pleasure has as its final aim the reestablishment of the intrauterine primal pleasure.

In this vein, Rank believes that analysis has proven anxiety to be the nucleus of every neurotic disturbance and calls attention to the common characteristic of all infantile birth theories, one that is frequently depicted in myths and fairy tales. It is the denial of the female sex organ, which clearly proves to him that anxiety is due to the repression of the birth trauma experienced there. The painful fixation on this function of the female genital as organ of birth, Rank argues, lies at the bottom of the neurotic disturbances of the adult sex life, including psychical impotence and feminine frigidity in all its forms (Rank T.B. 32).

Indeed, all forms of the neurotic development of anxiety, including phobias, conform to the same process, Rank claims. Anxiety neurosis can be traced to direct disturbances of the sexual function, since the coitus-interruptus causing it corresponds to the anxiety roused by the mother's genitals. All forms of masculine impotence - the penis being scared away from going in - and all forms of feminine anaesthesia rest in the same way on the primal fixation on the mother and on infantile anxiety as previously described. Here, Rank declares, in a condition also noted by Freud, the function of one organ is renounced in favor of another unconscious one; pleasure-function versus bearing function, wherein lies the opposition between the species (propagation) and the individual (pleasure). Furthermore, Rank also believes that all neurotic disturbances in breathing (asthma), which repeat the feeling of suffocation, relate directly to the physical reproductions of the birth trauma. Rank even claims that the extensive use of the neurotic headache (migraine) goes back to the specially painful part allotted to the head in parturition, and ultimately all attacks of convulsions noticeable in quite small children, even in the new-born, can be

regarded as a directly continued attempt to get rid of the primal birth trauma (52).

The inverse of negation and the primal birth trauma is creative will, the major escape route for humans that lies at the heart of *Long Day's Journey*. The basis of Rank's psychotherapy is that personalities are formed by life experience and creative urges and, if personalities are constantly being reshaped by living these experiences, then each personality is in a perpetual state of flux unless the door to life experiences has been closed by neuroticism. Mary Tyrone, in one of her infrequent lucid moments, gets to the heart of Rank's personality theory by saying: "The past is the present, isn't it? It's the future, too." If personalities change unceasingly with experience and creative impulse, then the past *is* the present, but unless there is the urge to create new experience, to go out and meet life head on, the future remains static as it did for Mary, Tyrone, and Jamie.

The act of creation became, for Eugene O'Neill an act of separation and individuation achieved by a sublimation of the original actions of his family, and his guilt was an inevitable result of his creativity. Rank had said that guilt results from creation and that creation itself is the opportunity for redemption from guilt, but, for an artist, the seeming paradox is the engine of production. And it was not the interpretation of past experience that lay at the center of O'Neill's work even in the case of *Long Day's Journey*. It was the strength of his creative will and his reaction to all his experiences up to and including the actual writing of this artistic triumph.

Whether or not the play relieved O'Neill's guilt is not really important. As noted before, the creative experience was vital in a

psychological sense for it allowed him to benefit from the therapy of writing about the past and reliving the old emotions. The very experience of creating an original work of art was a step toward the immortality that he unconsciously desired. He did not escape death, but his play lives on in our culture as a contribution to society's ongoing evolutionary process. Esther Menaker suggests that the uniqueness of Rank was his blending of psychology and social awareness.

"The optimistic content of this philosophy which ascribes to individuals the creativity with which to transcend their inevitable tragic fate provides meaningfulness for human life" (Menaker 139).

The Tyrone family is a microcosm of twentieth century society to which some of Rank's universal theories have been applied. The escape mechanism from neurosis seems to be creative will and when the will operates creatively it is guilt producing, the paradox noted earlier. And the ability to see guilt in relation to the processes of separation and individuation as these are expressed in the function of will, is a major Rankian contribution. The example here would be Edmund, who is really the only true survivor in the play, because he had the inner strength and the intensity of feeling to break away from the family (separation). His growth and development (individuation) in turn strengthened his desire to create new modes of expression. "Each new life experience contributes to the growth of personality and creative impulses create new experience" (Rank T.R. 83).

RANKIAN *AFFECTS* AND FEELINGS AS SOURCES OF PAIN AND PLEASURE

Because anxiety can be such an overwhelmingly painful emotion, Rank gradually freed himself from the Freudian biological pattern of thought, and abandoned his original attempt to establish his theory biologically. He directed himself, rather, to the psychological, symbolic, and cultural interpretation of the mother-child relationship as not only the basic human relationship, but also the dominant relationship pattern in all of human life, as we shall discover in *Portrait*. It is in this frame of reference that his consideration of such concepts, among others, as “anxiety”, “fear”, “relationship”, and “separation” in therapy, take on a special significance.

I am aware that the *affect* of anxiety is highly visible in our present-day obsession with psychotherapy and, as Rollo May, one of Rank’s admirer’s argues, when an individual suffers anxiety continuously over a period of time, he lays his body open to psychosomatic illness and, when a group suffers continuous anxiety with no agreement on action, its members sooner or later turn against each other. In the case of individuals, May states that we see the most obvious expressions of anxiety in the prevalence of neurosis and other emotional disturbances as diagnosed by Freud, Rank, and their followers. Anxiety is also the common denominator psychologically of ulcers, many forms of heart trouble, etc. May thinks that we are anxious because we are not sure of our roles, what principles for action to believe in. Should a man strive competitively to become successful and wealthy, or to be a good fellow liked by everyone? Should he follow the supposed teachings of the moral society with regard to sex and be monogamous or follow the new forms of sexual freedom? May

contends that this is a time, as Herman Hesse said, “when a whole generation is caught. . . between two ages, two modes of life, with the consequence that it loses all power to understand itself and has no standards, no security, no simple acquiescence”(Love and Will 33).

I suggest that May has placed his finger squarely on the most difficult problem facing the present-day generation, a whole generation caught between the morality of the sixties and the corruption of the nineties. Not just sexual habits and modes of behavior, but standards of ethics in public and private office; security of moral judgement; human values versus the pursuit of money and possessions. No wonder we have so much trouble walking the “fine line” and why it is even more difficult for some of our children who may not even be aware that such a line exists.

As Rank informs us at the start of this chapter, the type and intensity of our emotions influence our connections to the past, present, and future and our entire attitude toward life and experience. A major emotion that certainly has a significant bearing on our lives is love. But love is not only a “many splendored thing”, it has four other definitions affecting life experience:

One is *sex*, or what we call lust, libido. The second is *eros*, the drive of love to precreate or create - the urge, as the Greeks put it, toward higher forms of being and relationship. A third is *philia* , or friendship, brotherly love. The fourth is *agape*, or *caritas* as the Latins called it, the love which is devoted to the welfare of the other, the prototype of which is the love of God for man.

Rank, however, notes that love is not, as tacitly assumed, as old as mankind. No conception of it existed among primitives and hardly any among the most highly civilized peoples in Antiquity. Except for the Old

Testament in which love for God and one's parents and neighbors is rather a command of righteousness, and Plato's philosophic love-ideology, there existed no real conception of love in the pre-Christian era. The very first idea of love that Rank recognizes, Plato's, appears merely as a sentimental reflection on the part of the great moralist upon his decadent age. In theory, Plato's philosophy of the Eros implies three different meanings: the desirous love (libido); the egocentric love (narcissistic self-love), and lastly, the divine sublimated love (love for wisdom or philosophia), commonly considered "platonic" love. The philosopher's argument that only through Eros can man rise from the world of the senses into the world of ideas is the message he sent to the decaying Greek civilization. Rank argues that this ideology of love did not happen until the Christian era, when Paul, inspired by Jesus, professed the "law of love" as an active life-force. This new Christian love, Agape, was not conceived of as the opposite of Eros or platonic love, but as an entirely new attitude towards life which created a new type of man. And Rank affirms that the expansion and domination characteristic of the world of Antiquity was replaced and finally complemented by a desire for yielding and surrender manifested in the need to be loved. This yearning for surrender was not a defeatist attitude, a negative giving-up; it was a voluntary yielding in and to love, a release of outgoing emotion in the opposite direction from that of will-ful Eros (B.P. 269).

The Agape principle struggled for survival against determined misrepresentation of the ideology, according to Rank. Even in modern times, Nietzsche had ridiculed the Christian ideology of love as decadent, weak, and slavish, and Freud misrepresented it as "feminine," masochistic, or in a word, neurotic, because he, as well as Nietzsche, was only interested

in restoring the will-ful Eros of Antiquity as a means of individual therapy. While the Jew was commanded by his God to love lest he be punished - which really means "respect out of fear" - Rank believes that the Christian conception of love was based on the idea of being good through being loved. But this meant being loved by God not by man, as misinterpreted from the beginning to this day. Rank argues that the difference between the love-philosophies in Antiquity and the Christian era can be stated as the difference between coercive possessiveness versus yielding.

Correspondingly, the Jewish God was a God of punishment and revenge, whereas the Christian God was one of love and forgiveness. In a word, maintains Rank, the religion of hatred changed into the religion of love, which in turn changed the individual's attitude from will-ful wanting into a desire of being wanted, that is, loved. In this sense, the personality of man changed from the will-ful into the loving type; psychologically speaking, the will to want turned into the will to be wanted (loved)(B.P.175-76).

RANKIAN INTERPRETATIONS OF *THE PORTRAIT OF A LADY*

A woman who was unsure of the type of love she wanted is the protagonist of Henry James novel, *Isabel Archer*. She and two other characters are driven along the "fine line" by their feelings of love and anxiety. In addition, Isabel, Madame Merle, and Gilbert Osmond are good examples of how role-playing is a convenient way to protect oneself from accepting or revealing disturbing emotions and is yet another way to cope. Rank's theories will also illustrate just how these characters are influenced by their emotions into making their positive or negative choices. This novel is not a fairy tale as some critics would have it, although it does include heroes and villains slip-sliding along the "fine line". The story

includes some fine in-depth descriptions of believable characters who move rather deliberately through the many pages. The inclusion of large doses of debilitating emotions and deceptive role-playing by the principals prove to be necessary tools for Isabel, Osmond, and Merle as they try to cope with the stressful problems created for them by James. Character armor as noted before, is the first line of defense for many people against the perils of new experience and even to ward off some of the pressures of normal life. The characters in *Portrait* need to hide their innermost feelings from friends and foe alike by presenting a persona that suits their ends. However, Rank teaches us that experience is the only vital factor in our lives so, if this is true, the armor not only protects, but interferes with the characters' emotional and mental development:

Experience has taught me that understanding and explaining do not get you anywhere unless it comes as a result of personal suffering that the scientific ideology tries to spare the individual from childhood on. I don't believe that the individual can really develop and grow up without having a chance to go through emotional experiences and conflicts of all kinds. My life's work has convinced me that real knowledge, insight, and human understanding only follow the emotional and actual working out of a problem, not vice versa as psychoanalysis and, for that matter, all scientific ideology maintains (Rank B.P. 16).

The character that develops and matures as a result of personal suffering is James' heroine, Isabel Archer. At the start of the novel, he paints her as a young person of many ideas with a remarkably active imagination. It was her good fortune to possess a finer mind than most of the persons around her; to have a greater awareness of surrounding facts

and a desire to learn a bit more about the unfamiliar. Moreover, James tells us that Isabel was high on her own self-esteem and was in the habit of taking for granted, with little evidence, that she was right. On the other hand, says James, she had many delusions and her thoughts were often a tangle of vague outlines which had never been corrected by the judgement of people with authority. In matters of opinion she had always had her own way, and it had led her into a thousand ridiculous zigzags. But after a few days of passionate humility, she would hold her head up even higher than before, because she had an insatiable desire to think well of herself. James portrays Isabel's fixed determination to regard the world as a place of brightness, of free expansion, of irresistible action and that it would be a detestable thing to be afraid or ashamed. She had an infinite hope that she should never do anything wrong. That always struck her as the worst thing that could happen to her . . . "It was wrong to be mean, to be jealous, to be false, to be cruel; she had seen very little evil of the world, but she had seen women who lied and who tried to hurt each other "(104).

Early in the novel Henrietta, as the friend who knew Isabel best, delivers a sharp, accurate warning:

The peril for you is that you live too much in the world of your own dreams - you are not enough in contact with reality - with the toiling, striving, suffering, I may even say sinning world that surrounds you. You are too fastidious, you have too many graceful illusions. Your newly acquired thousands will shut you up more and more in the society of selfish . . . You think, furthermore, that you can live by pleasing others and pleasing yourself. You will find that you are mistaken. Whatever life you lead, you must put your soul into it to make any sort of success of it; and from the moment You think we can escape disagreeable duties by taking romantic views - that is your great illusion, my dear (197).

Those fateful words proved only too prophetic when Isabel makes a major decision that brings her face-to-face with reality, her marriage to Gilbert Osmond. Much older than Isabel, Osmond is a cold, humorless, Italian man-of-the-world interested primarily in Isabel's money and secondarily in her innocent beauty which would enhance his collection of artifacts. In the process of entering into this melodramatic, international marriage with Osmond, Isabel turns away from a young, romantic, lover who frightens her with his strength and eager sexuality. It has become a truism, observes Rank, that man from time immemorial has imposed his masculine way of life upon woman, both individually and collectively. Traditions, likewise, seem to agree that woman not only willingly submitted to any man-made ideology which happened to prevail, but was clever enough to assimilate it and use it to her own advantage. But Isabel is too inexperienced and too involved in her own dreams of greatness to set aside the virgin's fear of raw sex. Less obvious, Rank points out, though of greater importance, is the complementary process, namely that man, while imposing his mentality on woman, usurped some of her vital functions and thus unwittingly took on some of her genuine psychology, a lesson Isabel may never learn. Herein lies the most paradoxical of all psychological paradoxes: that man, who was molding woman according to his own sexual will, should have taken over into his ideological philosophy the love-principle so deeply rooted in woman's nature. However, Isabel, who grew up without a mother, was looking for self-identity from a nurturing mother, not a man. Such longings crystallize around the image of "home", the feeling of intimacy, of being surrounded by love and recognition which finds its source in the preoedipal bond between mother

and child. This need for a strong mother bond is the clue to Osmond's appeal to Isabel and the rejection of Goodwood. She first saw him in the warmth of his home surrounded by his "objects de arte" and holding his beautiful daughter in his arms. And with his wonderful mind, she thought, here was someone who would help find her self-identity - a mother figure to be sure.

James' character study of Isabel lays the foundation for the belief that a probable lack of parental love in Isabel's early life played a major role in her personality development. Rank suggests that, for women in particular, aggression is traditionally at odds with self-idealization and that female sexuality can be romantically spiritualized as a defense against the destructive aspects of erotic life. Rank also believes that the personality is ultimately destroyed by and through sex. In other words, the partner does not and cannot represent a complete freedom from self-consciousness and guilt; but at the same time, he represents the negation of one's distinctive personality (B.P. 234-35). Isabel justifies her rejection of Goodwood (her ardent suitor) because of the fear generated by his menacing masculinity, in favor of the laid-back, non-threatening Osmond who reinforced Isabel's pride in her uniqueness, in her search for knowledge, in her self-sacrifice for an ideal, and in her equality with a man, or so she thought. Isabel also justified the marriage because it fulfilled her need to escape the pressure of her friends' expectations that she begin a brilliant career. She was compelled by her pride and inner defenses to magnify the attractions of Osmond and to ignore the drawbacks painted by those same friends who were minimizing romantic love.

Unfortunately, Isabel's ideal turns to dust when the ugly truths finally come to light early in the marriage and she has to swallow the

anguish and pain of betrayal. The truth was concerned with the secret plan concocted by Madame Merle with Osmond, her former lover and father of their child. The objective was to find a suitable wife for Osmond (young, beautiful, and rich), and a caring step-mother for her daughter Pansy who lived with her father.

Madame Merle is a woman-of-the-world who travels about Europe visiting moneyed friends and who becomes friendly with Isabel. Merle could be described as totally a being of appearances, a perfect picture of a completely outward-looking woman surrounded by a social frame:

Her nature had been too much overlaid by custom and her angles too much rubbed away. She had become . . . too final. She was, in a word, to perfectly the social animal; she had rid herself of every remnant of that tonic wildness . . . Isabel found it difficult to think of her in any detachment or privacy, she existed only in her relations, direct or indirect, with her fellow mortals (IV, 5).

This is indeed a wonderful description of a role enhanced by character armor. Isabel admires Merle as a powerful person with great self-sufficiency, someone to imitate. A woman who reflects Isabel's own sense of lack, a precise representation of her own inner emptiness and need for things she's never had- a tenderly maternal atmosphere, another mother figure as Rank has suggested. Madame Merle has but one overriding objective in *Portrait*, to find a good mother for her unacknowledged daughter. The end justified the means for her even if it meant enticing an innocent virgin into the lair of a cold, completely narcissistic and self-serving man. James expresses Merle's philosophy of life in the following passage:

There is no such thing as an isolated man or woman; we're each of us made up of some cluster of appurtenances. What shall we call our "self?" Where does it begin? Where does it end? It overflows into everything that belongs to us- and then it flows back again. I know that a large part of myself is in the clothes I choose to wear. I've great respect for things! One's self for other people is one's expression of one's self; and one's house, one's furniture, one's garments, the books one reads, the company one keeps- these things are all expressive (253).

If anything, Merle is all armor, enclosed in a hard shell of protection from a life that has brought its share of suffering. She realizes that life consists of separation and union, *affects* and feelings, a constant flowing back and forth that Merle relates to things. Her own interpretation is revealed when she says to Isabel: "When you've lived as long as I have you'll see that every human being has his shell and that you must take the shell into account. By the shell I mean the whole envelope of circumstances including how you appear to others" (253).

Madame Merle has been able to adjust her life to one of denial. She has hidden her anxiety and her guilt inside her shell. Anxiety and guilt for the well-being of Pansy, the daughter she gave up to Osmond. She has denied her deepest emotions, except one, the love for her daughter. But she succeeds in her ultimate quest, finding a loving and generous caretaker for Pansy. In fact, Merle has profoundly influenced the direction of Isabel's life, because, even though the marriage was a personal failure for Isabel,, she will stay with Osmond in order to keep up appearances and to be available to Pansy. David Lubin in his critique of the characters in *Portrait*, describes Madame Merle as a realist who sees life as an ongoing

process when she speaks of “the whole envelope of circumstances” as being part of the human shell. This view takes on deeper meaning as it relates to Rank’s psychotherapy of the personality as an ever changing, ever growing part of the psyche (“Act of Portrayal” 107).

The personality of Isabel experiences great changes as she tries to stay on her *fine line* without slipping off into a fearful sexual trap. Isabel’s love for Osmond was the type of love defined as *eros*, the drive of love to procreate or create- the urge, as the Greeks put it, toward higher forms of being and relationship. Isabel fell in love with an ideal of otherness in her beloved Osmond who, unfortunately, is capable only of self-love and was trying to enlarge his identity by making Isabel’s beauty an expression of himself. As a living portrait in his gallery of art, she finds herself framed by social forms and displayed in her role of perpetual hostess at his frequent soirees. She is condemned to wear a mask that bears no resemblance to the inner self that she has imagined. Isabel realizes that her indestructible pride will force her to bear the burden of her unhappiness alone. She has a dread of letting the “mask” slip before others and admit that the marriage had proved a failure. Only a few years after their wedding, Isabel finds herself bound to Osmond, not by the sanctity of their vows, but by an unspoken agreement to deceive society, to perpetuate the illusion of contentment by “living together decently” in their established roles. Isabel’s “giving” love turns to ashes, but still illustrates an inverse example of the (uniqueness) of this type of love.

What is unique about Isabel’s love, and this kind of love in particular, Rank believes, is that beyond the fact of uniting, it rebounds on the ego. Not only, I love the other as my ego, as part of my ego, but the

other also makes my ego worthy of love. This unique projection and introjection of feeling rests on the fact that one can really only love the one who accepts our own self as it is, indeed will not have it otherwise than it is, and whose self we accept as it is. Rank's analysis of the love-feeling proves that in essence it rests on identification. It rests absolutely on reciprocity, i.e., has identification not merely for its presupposition, but also has its aim, the setting up of an identity. This was the ideal Isabel had envisioned for her marriage, identification with the marvelous mind of Osmond. Her love never had a chance, because there was no reciprocity and no acceptance of her own self, because Osmond had no intention of accepting Isabel as she was. He expected to mold her into the obedient mistress of his beautiful home and to use her fortune to enhance his personal life style.

Osmond, in spite of the author's best efforts, is not the villain that he appears to be. Isabel uses him as much as he deceives her. She feels she has a mission to perform to help him overcome his admitted inertia, indifference, and devotion to convention and to help him with his daughter. The idea of totally filling the role of being "the most important woman of the world" for someone, strongly appeals to Isabel, since she gauges her own value in other's eyes. She wishes to be selfless in the marriage and is prepared to do her duty to the sterility of convention which includes the "posing" as mistress of his domain. Rank would see Osmond as superficial and narcissistically selfish and unquestionably neurotic. Osmond's method for coping with life is to surround himself with controllable objects and wait for experience to come to him just as Madame Merle delivered Isabel.

Isabel made her choice for all the above reasons and more. A woman's desire to be wanted by the man to whom she wants to submit, as Rank suggests, is the strongest factor in the building-up of the woman's personality, and in that sense she is made a woman through her mate, not merely physically but also characteriologically. Yet, argues Rank, this individual development of the woman-love in relation to the man was made possible first by the Christian love-ideology, which actually formulated and thus made universally acceptable the woman-emotion of being wanted. At various times there have been different ideas, ideals, and theologies influencing and often determining the personality build-up of the woman. But, Rank believes, they all have one thing in common: they are man-made, therefore, all aim at an assimilation to man's liking. In the woman, on the other hand, they all spring from one and the same source, namely, from the desire and need to be wanted, that is, loved. Needless to repeat, this kind of love is originally a moral conception which only gradually became associated with sex in our Western society. Rank observes that it also operates as a matter of course in all educational and authoritative relationships, such as those between parents and child, teacher and pupil, between friends, and last but not least, in the mate-relationship of the two sexes.

This last relationship, claims Rank, can be the most difficult as *Portrait* has shown. Wide and deepening experience in the field of psychotherapy convinces him that the ultimate "cause" of most feminine neurosis is modern man, with his lack of masculine qualities and his inability to want his woman lovingly, instead of will-fully. In such a case, the woman may either become her own narcissistic admirer who will only yield to the strong man whom she can respect and admire, or she will

develop the opposite type of character who submits sexually to the male without surrendering her whole self, a plausible role for Isabel. Rank categorizes this type of woman, termed in modern psychology, “masochistic,” as not representing an exaggeration of her natural passivity, but rather the frustrated expression of her need to surrender, applied in a masculine fashion to herself (B.P. 270). In the same context, Rank asserts that the sexual conflict is a universal one because the body is a universal problem to a creature who must die. One always feel guilty toward the body because our body is a bind, it overshadows our freedom. Rank sees this natural guilt beginning in childhood and leading to anxiety and questions about sexual matters. The child wants to know why he feels guilt and at the same time wants his parents to justify the guilt feeling. Rank points out that the child is really asking about the ultimate mystery of life, not about the mechanics of sex. This explains, he says, why adults suffer as much from the sexual problem as the child: the “biological solution of the problem of humanity is also ungratifying and inadequate for the adult as for the child” (M.E. 44).

Rank’s provocative theory of time as yet another factor in the emotional processes besides the problem of quality and quantity begins and ends this chapter:

The whole problem of time in general seems to me to an emotional one. I refer to the daily experience of how our feeling of time changes with our general emotional attitude or, as we say, our moods, and all disturbances in the emotional life which have been described as neuroses show an essential characteristic indicating a disturbance in the sense of time (Emotion 24).

CHAPTER VI

RANK'S PSYCHOLOGY OF AN ARTIST AND A HERO

The aim of this chapter is to reveal the depth of Rank's achievement in analyzing the psychology of an artist. He wrote extensively on the subject of art as well as the artist and I will concentrate on some of his most important theories on both subjects. I will use these same theories to illustrate their importance in the lives of several famous creative personalities. In addition, I will indicate how Rank was able to link the personalities of the artist, the neurotic, and the hero together with creative will and the fear of life and death. In the beginning of *Art and Artist* he wrote:

The religion of genius and the cult of personality thus begin in the creative individual, with himself; he, so to say, appoints himself as an artist, though this is only possible if the society in which he lives has an ideology of genius, recognizes it, and values it. . . . The creative, artistic personality is thus the first work of the productive individual, and it remains fundamentally his chief work, since all his other works are partly the repeated expressions of this primal creation, partly justification by dynamism (28).

The artist (or hero), as he developed from primitive times over the ages, became a representative of the ideology of immortality. Rank's artist

was any person who not only chose to find new experience, but used his full creative energies to convert such experience into personal growth. This chapter will emphasize the importance of the artist in our society, a society sorely lacking the old, romantic heroes of myth and war. Perhaps the heroes of the sports world come closest now to filling the human need for ideals to admire and emulate. One might even say that a superior athlete is a true artist of his trade.

Rank was always interested in the development of an artist which for him included the philosopher, the poet, the musical genius, in short, all great creative personalities, whatever the medium of expression. His highly original ideas examined the motivating forces behind the personality growth of the artist and others. The importance of these theories are relevant today these many years after Rank's death in 1939 at the age of fifty-five. He viewed the artist as representing the highest stage of development on the way from real or objective civilization such as the Greek, to our present highly enriched culture that tries to replace the early fragments of reality with the subtle expressions of our innermost feelings.

Development and change in the meaning of art-forms are compared by Rank to similar changes in the idea of the soul. He suggests that religion has always drawn art along in its wake in the course of history. The urge for abstraction that owed its origin to a belief in immortality and created the notion of the soul, also created the art which served the same ends. Rank says that the best proof that the source of beauty lies in the contemporary ideal of the soul can be found in the religious art of all times and peoples. It is most noticeable in the higher cultures where the already unified idea of the soul was ideally embodied in the form of their gods. As examples, Rank regards Anubis, with his animal head, to be as much an

ideal of beauty for Egyptians as was Zeus with his leonine mane for the Greek, or the tortured body of Jesus for Christians. The concept of the beautiful that inspires works of religious art in any one period is derived from the concrete idea of the soul and appears in the shape of gods, so proving their existence (A.A. 12).

Art in the beginning, did not satisfy the artist's desire for immortality, but had to conform to the collective immortality idea of the tribe as a picture of the soul. Therefore, primitive art had to be collective to achieve its aim which Rank sees as continuation of the existence of the species. Personal creativity is anti-religious in the sense that it is always subservient to the individual desire for immortality in the creative personality and not to the collective glorification of the creator of the world. In essence, this means that religion springs from the collective belief in immortality and art from the personal consciousness of the individual. Rank's position, then, is that we have primitive art as the expression of a collective ideology which has found its religious meaning in the idea of the soul; classical art, based on a social art-concept, which has found its purest expression in the conception of beauty; and modern art which has found its clearest manifestation in the personality-cult of the artistic individuality itself (14).

Rank believes there is a fundamental dualism in the artist from which we all suffer, but that is intensified in the artist to a point that drives him with dynamic compulsion from creative work to life and from life back to new and other creativity. According to the artist's personal structure and spiritual ideology, Rank views this conflict as taking the form of a struggle between good and evil, beauty and truth or, in a more neurotic way, between the higher and the lower self. Compared with the average

professional man, the artist has a one hundred percent vocational psychology, an all-consuming commitment to his art. One could say that the artist does not practice his art, but represents it ideologically. Whereas the average man uses his vocation chiefly as a means of support and to help him feel useful to society, the artist needs his calling for spiritual existence. Therefore, the artist's profession is not his means of livelihood, but life itself, and to Rank, this explains not only the difficulties of the artist's existence, but his struggles in love and life.

There is another factor to be reckoned with as the artist struggles with life, besides the original biological duality of impulse and inhibition in man; this is the psychological factor par excellence, the individual will, which manifests itself both negatively as a controlling element, and positively as the urge to create. Rank argues that this creator-impulse is not sexuality as Freud assumed, but expresses the anti-sexual tendency in human beings which we may describe as the deliberate control of the impulsive life. He sees the creator-impulse as the life impulse made to serve the individual will. In individual development, positively willed control takes the place of negative inhibition, and it is the masterful use of the sexual impulse in the service of the individual will which diverts it into a creative-impulse. Rank also claims that the internal threatening of the individual through the sexual impulse of the species is at the root of all conflict. Side by side with this self-imposed internal check, which is taken to be what prevents or lessens the development of fear, there stands the will as a positive factor (39).

The importance of the will helps to understand the makeup of the artist. Coincidentally, Rank was able to place the neurotic and neurotic symptoms as belonging at bottom to the creative personality. Both artist

and neurotic are distinguished fundamentally from the average type of man, who accepts himself as he is, by their tendency to exercise their volition in reshaping themselves. But the neurotic goes too far in his effort to dominate the impulse life, and is either checked by fear of life from productive expression or driven compulsively by will, whereas Rank sees the productive genius type as able to master fear of living by an even more powerful fear of death, and to overcome through objective creation the tendency to neurotic blocking. Rank states that:

Only through the will-to-self-immortalization, which arises from the fear of life, can we understand the interdependence of production and suffering and the definite influence of this on positive experience. This does not preclude production being a creative development of a neurosis in objective form; and, on the other hand, a neurotic collapse may follow as a reaction after production, owing either to a sort of exhaustion or to a sense of guilt arising from the power of creative masterfulness as something arrogant (43).

These ongoing conflicts in the life of an artist are linked to one of the fundamental processes of life, Rank theorizes, the fear of life and the fear of death. The artist seems to experience the restrictions between the two poles of fear in a similar, but more intensified manner than the neurotic, but with the difference that in the neurotic, the fear of life predominates and so he represses all expression in life, while the artist can overcome this fear with his creation and is driven by the fear of death to immortalize himself. Therefore, it is fear that thwarts the neurotic both in his life and his work. Too much exposure to life experience brings on fear of death, but an excessive check on experience only creates more fear which manifests itself as fear of life (17).

The same conflicts with the fear of life and death that separate the artist from the neurotic also apply to heroes or strong leaders of men. Rank points out that man easily loses sight of his natural self and tends to distort reality to the point of madness, because of his fear of natural forces threatening from within as well as without. That is why the hero defying death can use those elemental forces in himself to obtain mankind's eternal values. Rank sees in the Western World several principles that are always operating to shape and reshape personality types. New types are often created during periods of political or religious crises that have appeared throughout the ages which demand and facilitate the emergence of a strong leader. Like previous men of action, the strong leader (or hero) shapes his goals and at the same time his personality according to the heroic tradition of leadership. In this fashion, Rank argues, he precipitates the creation of a new order and with it, a new type of man who follows the prototype of the leader (B.P. 163).

To this new type of man and hero, notes Becker in *Denial of Death*, heroism is first and foremost a reflex of the terror of death. We admire most the courage to face death; we give such valor our highest honors because we have doubts about our own bravery. So the hero has been the center of human honor and acclaim since probably the beginning of specifically human evolution, claims Becker. Even before that, our primate ancestors deferred to others who were extrapowerful and courageous and ignored those who were cowardly. "Man has elevated animal courage into a cult "(12).

It is small wonder that we have substituted our greatest athletes for the heroes who once challenged death. After all, these men and women

the child of distinguished parents, usually the son of a king, states Rank. His origin is preceded by many difficulties, such as continence, or prolonged barrenness, or other external prohibitions or obstacles. During or before the pregnancy there is a prophecy in the form of a dream or oracle cautioning against the birth of a son and usually threatening danger to the father. Rank notes that as a rule, the baby boy is surrendered to the water in a box. He is then saved by animals, or lowly people (shepherds), and is suckled by a female animal or by a humble woman. After he has grown up, he finds his distinguished parents in a highly versatile manner and takes his revenge on the father or is acknowledged by him. Finally he achieves rank and honor.

Literally or consciously the hero, who is always male, is a historical or legendary figure like Oedipus, Rank explains. The hero is heroic because he rises from obscurity to the throne. Literally, he is an innocent victim of either his parents or, ultimately, fate. While his parents have yearned for a child and abandon him only to save the father, they nevertheless do abandon him. The hero's revenge, if the parricide is even committed knowingly, is then understandable: who would not consider killing one's would-be killer? Then Rank argues that symbolically, or unconsciously, the hero is heroic not because he dares to win a throne, but because he dares to kill his father. The killing is definitely intentional, and the cause is not revenge, but frustration. The father has refused to surrender his wife, the real object of the son's efforts: "the deepest, generally unconscious root of the dislike of the son for the father, or of two brothers for each other, is related to the competition for the tender devotion and love of the mother" (57-66).

RANK AND THE ARTIST

In *Long Day's Journey*, we know that there was conflict and dislike between the brothers, Jamie and Edwin. The concept of competition for their mother's love would be another Rankian approach to the emotions dominating the play. The conflict proved to be a spur to the personality growth of Edwin who literally fought his way out of family mediocrity to become a famous writer. He eventually becomes a hero by Rank's definition in the person of Eugene O'Neill. A new order would inspire new ideologies of art (styles) which Rank thought to be the result of cultural movements. O'Neill was the product of the new order that followed World War I and brought about the "Roaring Twenties" in America. He flouted stage convention by allowing his actors to develop their own ideas for expressing passion and tragic experience. His plays reflected his pessimistic philosophy that man, robbed of his traditional faith by science, has nothing to replace it. O'Neill was also strongly influenced by Strindberg whose dramatic use of personal neurosis and early expressionism was something he could understand. O'Neill's own neuroticism closely followed the Rankian pattern that is often to be found in the shadow of creativity and his life was studded with frequent periods of emotional illness and physical pain. O'Neill won the Nobel Prize for literature with his dramas in 1936 and four Pulitzer prizes for *Beyond the Horizon* (1919), *Anna Christie* (1922), *Strange Interlude* (1928), and *Long Days Journey into Night* (1941). In all, he wrote forty-five plays and is viewed by many as one of America's most important playwrights.

Stephen Watt published a paper in 1986 that suggests a strong connection between much of O'Neill's work and the "doubling" ideas

presented in Rank's text, *The Double* . He feels that these concepts are helpful toward understanding the complex personality of Eugene O'Neill expressed through his characters. For example, Watt notes that one can be born, as Edmund Tyrone was, "afraid" and psychically divided; and he points to the fears, doubling, and complex relationship of Edmund to Mary in *Journey* . The fears of life and death also figure prominently in O'Neill's plays, claims Watt, and underlie the process of doubling, because Rank constructs binary oppositions to represent these fears, the most descriptive of which are whole/part, totality/individuality, and moving forward/moving backward. In Rank's schema, the human subject's internal conflict between generation and individuation is expressive of an "ambivalent primal fear" consisting of the fears of life and death (216).

There are a few lines in *Journey* that graphically reflect O'Neill's inner fear of life and death and the search for a "true self". They are spoken by Edmund while describing a strange event that occurred to him at sea as a young lad: "I thought I understood the secret of life- the meaning for man's being- a fulfillment beyond men's lousy, pitiful, greedy fears and hopes and dreams. I will always be a stranger who never feels at home, who does not really want and is not really wanted, who can never belong, who must always be a little in love with death" (16). Edmund's love of death also represents his fear of life, of not being wanted or loved, of never belonging, and of never finding his real self. Rank feels that such despair is a condition that stimulates creation:

But the condition of this is the conquest of the fear of life, for that fear has led to the substitution of artistic production for life, and to the eternalization of the all-too-mortal ego in a work of art (Rank A.A. 43).

The principle of development in any art mode including the playwright's stage is the conflict between a newborn ideology and an old one usually ending in the old one's defeat. Rank compared a conflict of this type as epitomizing the battle of the artist against art and the hero against evil. In order to achieve an artistic or physical triumph, the artist/hero must have the inner strength, courage, vigor, and foresight needed to grasp the impending changes before others do. More than that, he must be able to withstand a much more difficult conflict in order to escape the present ruling ideology, one that he himself has strengthened by his own growth and development. This is one reason why greatness usually occurs at the climax of the artist's life. Eugene O'Neill met this challenge in spite of a tragic personal life with immortal results. He had to carve out his own individuality first from the prevailing body of ideas before reaching out for immortality. Perhaps O'Neill's "fine line" can be discerned in the dedication of the original script of *Long Day's Journey* to his wife, Carlotta:

Dearest: I give you the original script of this play of old sorrow, written in tears and blood. A sadly inappropriate gift . . . but you will understand I mean it as a tribute to your love and tenderness which gave me the faith in love that enabled me to face my dead at last and write this play- -write it with deep pity and understanding and forgiveness for all the four haunted Tyrones . . . (1).

RANK'S HEROES, LUTHER AND BISMARCK.

Since the hero is the prototype of the creative individual, the underlying patterns of behavior expressed in the hero's life apply in principle to the life of the artist, Rank believes. The creative personality

seems to contain a “typical destiny” inherent in its nature, and thus involves it in similar kinds of situations through all the changing circumstances of history. The hero was the man who made his life his work and achieved his immortality by devoting his life to the task of converting a spiritual vision into an actuality to “make” it come true; but the artist is not capable of that, and so he comes as close as he can. He makes his work his life “by living himself out entirely in creative work” (A.A. 289,273).

There have always been heroes and artists in the course of history. However, their characteristics change according to the personality of the observer. For example, Hegel saw the hero as a world historical individual arising from or lifted above the masses in each epoch; Carlyle contended that the hero was a causality of history; Emerson believed that Great Men or heroes exist that there may be other greater heroes - the true artist has the planet for his pedestal-- (Hecht,12/23/88)

To re-discover the natural self of man, it is necessary to not only see the importance of the irrational element in human life, but to actually live it and only a few individuals in every epoch seem capable of this. They represent the heroic type- as distinct from the creative- for the original hero was the one who dared live beyond the accepted “psychology” or ideology of his time (14).

These combined views of the Hero are surprisingly close to Rank’s concept of the Hero as an individual who dares to live beyond the accepted ideology of his time. An individual who recognizes the ever-present irrational element in human life and lives by it and with it, appears infrequently in every era. He is the prototype of the rebellious man of

action who, through the revival of lost values that appear as new and irrational, preserves the eternal values of humanity. Hegel's world historical figure rising head and shoulders above the crowd provides some basis for Rank's view. Carlyle's belief in causality could also be seen as resembling Rank's heroic individual. The relationship between Emerson's Great Men and Rank's Hero is more tenuous. The existence of a Hero only as a stepping-stone to an even greater Hero does not seem to resemble Rank's outstanding individual who, by creative choice rather than example, lives beyond the prevailing attitudes of his time. On the other hand, Emerson saw the true artist as the superior person in all the world, a concept that closely ties into Rank's artist/hero theory (2). And finally, this quotation from *Denial of Death* has Rankian overtones:

If you are going to be a hero, then you must give a gift. If you are the average man, you give your heroic gift to your society, a gift that society specifies. If you are a "great man" you will fashion a peculiarly personal gift that is always to creation itself, to the ultimate meaning of life, to God. The only way out of human conflict is full renunciation, to give one's life as a gift to the highest power (173).

Martin Luther was this kind of man. He was a spiritual leader, a non-conformist, a revolutionary willing to stand alone against Emperor and Papacy. He was ready at all times to battle against anyone who tried to block him even under the penalty of death and achieved immortality by way of the Reformation. Luther's personality development is the key to his maturation as a heroic figure in Rankian terms. Rank developed three principles that are involved in the shaping of personality types in the Western World. In the first, new types are created during social and

spiritual crises of religious, political, or economic origin. Such crises have appeared over the ages in the struggle between temporal and eternal values and helped the emergence of a strong leader. Luther fits perfectly into this category as a leader emerging during a religious crisis long brewing in the Catholic Church in the 16th century. The second factor in the development of one's own true self, believes Rank, is stimulated and accomplished through love. This love principle, as Paul expressed it in his so-called "hymn to love", is different from any previous conception of love. It is a true characteristic of Christianity's inspirational psychology stated in Paul's mystical credo that we move through faith and not through insight. Luther believed in the scriptures and one can assume that he accepted this idea of love. Thus, Rank contends, the conception of personality is, in the third and last analysis, derived from the maverick or nonconformist who, in turn, shapes his outstanding personality according to the heroic tradition, although in terms of his time and culture (Hecht 12/9/88)(B.P. 163).

Stefan Zweig describes Luther as an individual who is loved by history as a man of passion, an irrational adventurer in the realm of deed and thought. "Luther, palpitating with life, full of vitality and the grosser lusts such vitality entails." Zweig pictures Luther's booming voice raging over the German land with every word "racy, pungent, and spiced." His genius was to be found in sensual vehemence rather than in his intellectual capacity, states Zweig, and he was typical of the German instinct pushing itself into the consciousness of the world. "Of all the men of genius who have lived upon this earth, Luther was perhaps the most fanatical, the most unteachable, the most intractable, and the most quarrelsome" (20,137).

Roland H. Bainton, professor of ecclesiastical history at Yale, reveals some of Luther's emotional upheavals as so intense and so persistent that

the possibility of abnormal psychology was quite conceivable. At times the intensity was so great that Luther could consider suicide and feared to pick up a carving knife because he did not trust himself. His mood swung from depression to elation, from a fit of despondency to rousing song. To a modern psychiatrist, says Bainton, such extreme fluctuations suggest manic depressions, but others have suggested a correlation between the moods and the many severe maladies that affected Luther during the course of his life (202).

Three other psychologists offer their ideas toward the analysis of the man, Luther. May tells us that one of life's many riddles is that genius and psychosis are so close to each other. Another is that creativity carries such an inexplicable guilt feeling, and a third is that so many artists and poets commit suicide, and often at the peak of their achievement. Human freedom involves our capacity to pause between stimulus and response and then to choose which direction to throw our energies. The capacity to create ourselves (our personality) based on this freedom cannot be separated from consciousness or self-awareness (*The Courage to Create* 23). Becker presents it this way:

In his great genius, man is still mocked (by the transcending majesty of nature). the road to creativity passes so close to the madhouse and often detours or ends there. The artist (a hero type) and the madman are trapped by their own fabrications; they wallow in their own anality, in their protest that they really are something special in creation (172).

And finally, these comments from Erik Erikson, training psychoanalyst and Professor of Human Development emeritus at Harvard who tries to associate the personality characteristics noted by Zweig and

Bainton with Luther's theological advancement by comparing it to certain stages in psychological maturation that every man takes. First the internalization of the father-son relationship; the accompanying crystalization of conscience; the safe establishment of an identity as a worker and a man; and the joint reaffirmation of basic trust. Erikson goes on to contend that Luther's periodic states of melancholy forced him to accept despair and disease as final and death as imminent. For this reason, Luther might have expressed his pessimism in his philosophically most untenable concepts such as the predestination of individual fate , independent of personal effort (the unfree will) ("Young Man Luther" 182-84).

From May to Becker to Erikson is a journey into the singular realm of man's irrational behavior. Luther was frequently dissatisfied with himself to the point of great anguish and melancholy. Within the framework of neuroticism, as another term for man's irrational behavior, Otto Rank's theories can be applied to Luther as a 16th century neurotic. Under the overpowering burden of guilt and anxiety, the will or the energy to make creative choices becomes counter-will or the resistance to those choices, causing the individual to suffer from the fact that he cannot accept nor endure himself and wants to change. A therapist today, by affirmative measures, must transform him from a negative person of suffering and guilt to a positive individual of will and action. Luther, by his own strength of will, rescued himself from his neurotic prison in the monastery to emerge as an active hero who represents the conscious power of will and acts (makes creative choices) because he knows only his will and not its origins and motives. These Rankian precepts seem to fit Luther's personality to a

remarkable degree, and could account for Luther's soul-wrenching pursuit of immortality. The passive man of suffering cannot act because his consciousness of self restricts his will which then manifests itself as a guilt feeling. The spiritually creative type that is Luther and that Rank calls an artist or hero, lives in constant conflict between these two possibilities. The artist/hero resolves it for himself, since he transposes the will affirmation creatively into knowledge; that is, he expresses his will verification spiritually and changes the unavoidable guilt feeling into an ethical ideal that in turn spurs him on and qualifies him for ever higher performance in terms of self-development (T.R. 34).

John F. Kennedy (Dec. 5, 1961) once voiced his opinion of a hero that I believe can be applied to Martin Luther:

. . . Credit belongs to the man . . . spends himself in a worthy cause; who, if he wins, knows the thrill of high achievement, and who, if he loses, despises those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat (Manchester 43).

The conflict between Martin Luther and the Roman Church was a war of ideologies in which no guns were fired and no prisoners taken, but it had far-reaching consequences. The conflict between Prussia and Austria, known variously as the Seven Weeks War, Sadowa, or the battle of Konggratz, was an undeclared war between Prussia and Austria that also had equally far-reaching consequences. The war was the brain-child of one man- Otto von Bismarck (1815-1898)- a German statesman who eventually became famous as the "Iron Chancellor", and it set the stage for Prussian dominance over the small independent states of northern Germany. Instead of a religious leader and hero, we have a statesman-hero who was directly

responsible for founding the German Empire after winning the Franco-Prussian War in 1871.

In physical appearance and avowed tastes, Bismarck resembled his father (a Prussian Junker land-owner), a big man with country pursuits and an enormous appetite for food and drink. Mentally and emotionally, however, he took after his mother and was sophisticated and highly bred, sometimes sensitive to the point of hysteria, with a subtle intellect and a gift of expression that put him in the highest class of German writers and orators. His biographer, Edward Crankshaw, had problems with Bismarck's personality and was unable to define it for his readers. He wondered where this extraordinary man found the sanction that allowed him to harry and deceive his own countrymen from his King down and manoeuvre them into a war against fellow Germans which was nothing but a war of national aggrandizement on behalf of people he despised? Crankshaw writes: "We face again the lack of inner coherence, the pyrotechnical display of talent that conceals a void" (179).

Another view of this complicated man's infinitely complex manner of thinking and feeling, states Crankshaw, was that once he had defined a goal, nothing was allowed to stand in his way. His pursuit of apparently conflicting ends and his skill in keeping open any number of choices until the last moment was legendary. Others spoke of his "diabolical simultaneity" and his "strategy of alternatives", but the biographer also made reference to Bismarck's possession of qualities more usually found in the creative artist, a suggestion supported by Fritz Stern, another biographer, calling in aid Keats's celebrated concept of "negative capability" as applied to great artists in general and to Shakespeare in particular: "A man is capable of being in uncertainties, mysteries, and doubts, without any

irritable reaching after fact and reason.” The conflict in Bismarck’s personality is revealed in the opening chapter of the biography when Crankshaw says:

We face again the lack of inner coherence. He protested too much and argued too much. On another level, he ate too much and paraded too much . . . his gigantic figure a caricature of 19th century militarism; to understand at once that here was a very complex man who never, with all his dazzling renown, managed to satisfy himself (4).

Bismarck’s personality conflicts are grist for the Rankian mill. One of Rank’s psychoanalytic themes focused on the “double” as a symbol of modern man’s split personality and was referred to by Stephen Watt in relation to Eugene O’Neill and his plays. In the case of the Chancellor, the “double” is the example of twinship as representing the conflict in man’s dual nature. The descriptions of the Bismarck discussed by Crankshaw and others, reveal personality traits that support my view of an obvious split personality and dual nature that is exemplified in Rank’s theories. Love of self, narcissism, as derived from a Greek legend, is paradoxical, claims Rank. It acts as a self-preservation instinct and encourages the emergence and development of a unique individuality. But the very awareness of this self suggests the possibility of a weakening in the capacity to relate to others and creates a fear of the loss of this precious self through death. Rank suggests that these universal byproducts of human consciousness are responsible for the defensive actions displayed in the projection of a “double”- a duplication or reflection of a part of self that the individual can love or reject or feel comforted by belief in its perpetuity as the immortal soul. Rank goes back to primitive man and his taboos and evasions

regarding his shadow, to show the narcissistic esteem of his ego and his tremendous fear of its being threatened by the inevitable destruction of the self. The idea of death, therefore, is denied by a duplication, or double, of the self combined in the shadow or reflected image (B.P. 84).

The theme of the double is presented in another way by Esther Menaker as she describes the term supernatural used by Rank to signify the human element that represents a need for spiritual values. It is beyond nature, not divine or opposed to human, but a part outside the purely biological and material. In this sense, biological implies eventual death, while supernatural worldview offers unlimited opportunity for creation outside nature, the concrete symbols which meet man's need for immortality. Menaker observes that these symbols are represented in art, religion, literature, psychology, philosophy, and in social institutions- all we call culture. And the individual self, by making a substantial contribution to culture or by being able to identify with some of the cultural elements, finds immortality. The culture of primitive man has this same tie in to our own; through its creation and existence in answer to an inner spiritual need, it assures the eternal survival of self (*Otto Rank* 95).

Bismarck made a substantial contribution to the political and economic world of his day and was a hero by Rank's criteria; he created a great power almost single-handed and is still honored in Germany as the "Iron Chancellor". The earlier reference to "creative artist" and "negative capability" bear out Rank's double-motif, the "Double as the Immortal Self." Because fear of life and fear of death motivate every great man's search for immortality, a hero such as Bismarck tries to express himself by a heroic life as a reflection of his other or inner self that he considers immortal. The concept of the "double" offers a realistic analysis of

Bismark the man as well as Bismarck the hero and the obvious duality of his character. The “fine lines” for this unusual man and for Eugene O’Neill and Martin Luther were strewn with hurdles and pitfalls which they were able to circumvent unwittingly in some instances and willfully in others. Bismarck’s dual personality kept him in constant jeopardy while Luther and O’Neill suffered through massive periods of guilt and self-abasement. Rank has some historic views that can be applied to these men as the chapter concludes:

Much later in the evolution of human history, the hero and the artist renounced the egoistic principle of self-preservation in one’s own image and substituted for it the perpetuation of the self in work reflecting one’s personality . . . This idea of a self-creative power attributed to certain individuals signified a decisive step beyond the naive belief in the automatic survival of one’s own double in that it impressed upon man the conviction that he has to work for his immortality by creating lasting achievements (B.P. 99).

CHAPTER VII

RANK ON WILL AND FREEDOM OF CHOICE.

CREATIVE WILL

Otto Rank's explains his powerful and unusual concept of "will" in the following terms:

By will, I do not mean will-to-power as conceived by Nietzsche and Adler, or "wish" in the Freudian sense, though it might include both these aspects. I mean rather an autonomous organizing force in the individual which does not represent any particular biological impulse or social drive but constitutes the creative expression of the total personality and distinguishes one individual from another. This individual will, as the united and balancing force between impulses and inhibition, is the decisive psychological factor in human behavior (B.P. 50).

Rank's concept of the *will* was the foundation for the creative theories examined in the preceding chapters. The emotions, sexuality, neurosis, the artist, and the fear of life and death are all connected to the existence of human will and counter-will. This final chapter will concentrate on creativity and the importance of the *will* in freedom of choice and the molding of personality.

Rank believes that man's duality is a factor connected to the growth and shaping of personality in addition to the "dynamic dualism" that operates in man as a force of balance and as a source of conflict. Conformity and differentiation exist as essential interacting forces in the maintenance of man's psycho-social life and Rank sees this balance as affected by processes of evolution and revolution. Revolution institutes

massive social change to which the individual must adjust and through which his psychology is changed. Evolution, through the operation of educational influences, attempts to change the individual, but, in so doing, runs the risk of encouraging conformity to existing social values rather than self-realization through the development of individualistic values (B.P. 20).

The crucial duality in the dynamics of human life, argues Rank, is that between differentiation and oneness, between creation of self and submergence of self, therefore between birth and death, or in the imagery of painting, between figure and ground. The operation of this duality never comes to rest, but man is inclined to seek one-sided solutions to problems in the form of absolutistic ideologies, be they political, religious, educational, or psychological. Furthermore, claims Rank, these ideologies provide for man something outside of and larger than himself and by identification can become his own and in this way guarantee his immortality. Human life in its oscillation between individualization which is finite and generalization which is infinite is constantly attempting the creation of new forms through which the uniqueness of the individual can come into its own and through which society can afford the individual some sense of unity and oneness. Rank thinks that the times during which such births and deaths are taking place, are times of great social crisis. Such is the very nature of human life and the acceptance of this fact, not just intellectually, but as a living reality, makes possible the creative expression of the individual will (21).

In his theory of the will, Rank restores to man his most human attributes- autonomy, responsibility, and conscience. In therapy, he aims at the restoration of positive, instead of destructive manifestations of will, that

is, at supporting the individual's striving for self-realization. The possibility for such growth and fulfillment of self is not primarily or exclusively linked to uncovering causality in the past, nor upon the emergence of unconscious impulses, nor upon any of the "techniques" that we generally associate with psychoanalytic procedure, but upon a liberation of the will based on a philosophic acceptance and understanding of the nature of life and of one's place in it; and on a faith in its potential for growth and development (54).

This is the heart of Rank's contribution to successful therapy and the formula that many present day analysts follow. Esther Menaker, a practicing analyst, contends that no theory of therapy and very few views of man have come so close to her heart. She feels that Rank's understanding goes beyond psychology and makes quite clear that a world which had just discovered a new psychology- namely psychoanalysis- was not prepared to give it up for a new perspective until it had made its contribution to social advance and fulfilled its usefulness as an ideology. Now, declares Menaker, we have come to another level of social crisis and there are straws in the wind that seem to indicate that the time is ripe for the birth of a new meaningfulness which shall include the understanding of the interplay of the individual will with processes of social change and progress (1967 Paper 74).

Saul Hofstein, another psychiatrist who studied and used Rank in his work, suggests that the nature of will, as Rank views it, has a twofold function as an impulsive and also an inhibiting force, which accounts for the paradox that the will can manifest itself creatively or destructively, depending on the individual's attitude toward himself and life in general. The will thus acts upon inner forces as well as in relation to the external

world. Hofstein says that, as he understands Rank's theory, it is the aspect of self through which the individual makes those choices that enable him to maintain his integrity, meet his needs and sustain the relationships necessary to his survival (68-69).

COUNTER WILL

Hofstein cautions that the impact of social guilt added to ethical guilt creates a powerful force within the self which can operate to limit and negate the will. Will assertion, particularly as it acts to separate the self as different, can be sensed as bad and the difference associated with will may be feared and rejected. He notes that Rank has characterized these forces which tend to inhibit will affirmation as "negative" or "counter" will. The existence of counterwill, comprising the fear and guilt within the self, constitutes a continuing source of tension within the individual. To the extent that these forces exert a degree of control over the will and prevent the individual from a too total or too precipitate move towards a stifling relationship or isolation, they can provide a useful inner control. Fear, guilt, and anxiety thus reinforce the inhibiting factors which provide necessary controls to the will and the expression of impulse. Rank saw these forces "as vital and genuine as are all other self-preserving and self-expressing instincts." They collectively lead to the development of self discipline which he saw as a "tendency inherent in the individual" not forced upon the individual from the outside (73).

These forces of resistance or counter-will are extremely important in effective therapy, Rank claims, because they are part of "the same thing that is potent in every relationship between two human beings, namely the will."

In psychoanalysis, the will was pejoratively called "resistance." It was to be met and overcome. Rank admits that willing has a bad name because it appears as willfulness, obstinacy, protest, insistence, and aggression, and its expressions could fill volumes of negative as well as positive human acts. It is hazardous as well as wonderful, argues Rank, as people tend to moralize about the *effects* of willing- its content- overlooking the *process*, with its potential for variety, creativity, and self-control. Will originates in the child's experience of opposing another's will and thus it is first felt as "counter-will," a negative force. Rank warns that depending on the parental response, a child's will- the basic expression of its personality- may be constructively developed, stifled, or distorted from the start (W.T. 7).

Rank's theory implies that if the will is affirmed and not negated or denied, the life instinct can result; and happiness, like salvation, is found in life and experience, in the creation and acceptance of both without having to ask how, where, what, and why. Questions which originate from the division of will into guilt and self consciousness cannot be answered through any psychological or philosophic theory, states Rank, because the answer is the more disillusioning, the more correct it is. For happiness can only be found in reality, not in truth, and redemption never in reality and from reality, but only in itself and from itself (T.R. 97).

Ira Progoff, in his analysis of Rank's work concerning the will, alleges that the human being experiences his individuality in terms of his will; and this means that his personal existence is identical with his capacity to express his will in the world. Death however, explains Progoff, puts an end to the kind of will expression that man experiences in his mortal life. Individual existence seems to terminate; but if there is no will

remaining to man, his connection to life is destroyed. The point we need to understand then, says Progoff, is that the most basic fact underlying man's psychological and cultural history is the observation first made under the most primitive circumstances that death apparently brings the individual's existence to an end. One way or another, man must come to terms with this simple but unavoidable observation. Not out of idle curiosity, but out of a profound psychological need, man interprets and reinterprets it throughout history, constructing and reconstructing his conception of the universe in order to establish a place for himself after his death. Progoff believes that man does this out of his deepest nature. He cannot live, or he can live only painfully confused and neurotically unsure of himself, if he does not possess a clear conviction of the continued existence of his will in some form. This, to Rank, is the psychological fact that underlies the development of the individual personality and the variety of man's works in religion, art, and civilization. The "urge to immortality" is man's inexorable drive to feel connected to life in terms of his individual will with a sense of inner assurance that that connection will not be broken or pass away. Progoff believes that the will strives for immortality in an infinite variety of ways. It may seem to us that "immortality" is much too exalted a word to describe the prosaic fact that man covers his fear of death with the most ingenious and grandiose fantasies, but Progoff cautions that we need to understand that as Rank uses it, the term "immortality" is metaphysically neutral. Rank speaks of the belief in "immortality" as nothing more than a psychological fact; but he does not dismiss the possibility that there may be a cosmic truth of even greater significance behind the persistent recurrence of that faith. Rank's immediate goal according to Progoff, however, lay in another direction. Rank's principal

aim was to place the different kinds of immortality belief into historical perspective in order to find their meaning for the individual personality in modern times (210-212).

By means of his historical depth psychology, Rank reached the irrational ground of man's existence. He saw then that the individual life is irreducible, and that there is no rational substitute for each man's experience of his own soul in the light of immortality. Progoff believes that the fundamental significance of Rank's work lies in his perception of the fact that *psychology leads beyond itself*. Rank understood that the role of psychology is as an intermediary by means of which modern man can make the transition from his old spiritual beliefs to the experience of a "new soul" still to come. In this special sense, Rank's later writings represent to Progoff the culmination of the classic period of depth psychology. Rank marked off the historical limits of the psychological view of man and by so doing, he opened larger vistas for the future in which psychology can play a new and creative role (253).

As a patient of Otto Rank, Anais Nin learned a great deal about the psychology of the creative will. Many years later, she read a paper at a meeting of *The Otto Rank Association* in Doylestown, Pennsylvania about Rank and his theories. Nin states that her whole life as a woman artist has been influenced by the wisdom of them. When she first went to see Rank, he disregarded her immediate problems, the difficulties in her relationships, the conflicts between fiction writer and diarist, between woman and writer, and concentrated on the strongest element in her divided and chaotic self, her writing. Instead of paying attention to the negatives which the patient usually brings to the therapist, Rank focused on the most positive element in Nin's character. She reveals that he had

shifted the whole problem of human life to the problem of the creative will and Rank was counting on this will to find its own solutions. He was challenging her creative will and when that became strengthened, she began to alter her personal life.

In *Truth and Reality*, Rank talks about the guilt that accompanies every act of will, either creative will or the assertion of our personal will, Nin reports. He knew the extent of our guilt. The artists know it, too, because it was proved many times in the history of artists' lives. They often expressed the need to justify their work, to justify their concentration and even obsession with it. Nin asserts at the end of her paper that the idea of creative will was Rank's greatest contribution to the psychology of woman. Rank had said: "Whatever we achieve inwardly will change our outer reality." Nin believes that this is one process by which we create ourselves. The other lies in therapy. "Therapy is not only a healing of neurosis, it is a lesson on how to grow, how to overcome the obstacles of our growth." We close up defensively, says Nin, to protect ourselves from pain, to dull our responses. The psychology of Otto Rank removes the scars, the fears, the rigidities which prevent us from expanding. "It is a revivifying process" (Nin 53-54).

FREEDOM OF CHOICE

Freedom of choice is closely associated with creative will. Martin Luther (1483-1546), whose life was touched upon in the previous chapter, seemed to emerge a hero in Rankian terms because of his obvious use of creative will during his battles with Rome. However, it should be noted that this theory of will affirmation seems to be at odds with the very core of Luther's religious tenet of "servum arbitrium", the unfree will: "The

will of the fallen man apart from grace is totally incapable of doing anything for salvation, totally unfree to do anything that is good 'corum Deo' "(McSorley 282). Can the apparent conflict between Luther's personality growth as a result of creative will be reconciled with servum arbitrio? Rank's artist/hero must have an outlet through which he can express his will in a unified, devoted fashion: "Compared with our average man, the artist has . . . a 100% vocational psychology." The hero is the man who devotes his life to his work and achieves immortality by dedicating himself to the task of converting a dream into reality. The artist, in his own way, follows exactly the same course except that he lives his life with a total dedication to the inner reality of his being (Rank, P.S. 141). Luther devoted his adult life to his work- total application toward converting of his dream of Church reforms to the reality of the Reformation. Did not Luther create his essential self, his strong personality, by his own choices? If this is true, how could he believe that man's will is bound to choose only evil? There seems to be a conflict of interest here that is difficult to understand and I looked for answers from several sources.

Erasmus of Rotterdam (1466-1536) a leading humanist of his day, was a strong supporter of Luther's attack upon the Papacy and, next to Luther, the most influential intellectual figure in Northern Europe. But he felt that the Scriptures were unclear and that Luther's movement was destroying the rebirth of good learning and genuine religion. Therefore, Erasmus looked for an issue to distance himself from Luther, and when Thomas More suggested the freedom of the will, Erasmus wrote *A Diatribe on the Freedom of the Will* (Sept. 1524). He built his argument around the position that the question could never be finally resolved

because the Scriptures were obscure, so that experience and reason must be taken into account. He concluded that, because individuals continually made choices between good and evil, or between better or worse, and because they were ordered to do so (by God and the law), they had to be able to respond. Therefore, they must have free will. Erasmus' book listed more than two hundred scriptural citations to prove that there was no final answer to the question. In brief, the power of the human will by which man can apply himself toward or turn himself away from the things leading to eternal salvation, can be defined as "liberum arbitrium", freedom of will (Kittelson 205).

In 1525, Luther replied with *On the Bondage of Will* and refuted every one of Erasmus' scriptural citations that made it appear that the human will could claim a measure of freedom. Luther granted that free choice is allowed to man, but only in regard to that which is beneath him and not to anything above him. He asserted that human beings did have dignity, because God would not have created the kingdom of heaven for geese. In the course of a sermon a few years earlier, Luther had preached:

That the free will of man can do nothing whatever by itself. Nor is it in the power of his free will to acknowledge or do good, but solely in the grace of God which makes him free . . . Apart from grace he does not do God's will but his own, which is never good (McSorley 246).

Harry J. McSorley who wrote an ecumenical-theological study on the subject of *servum arbitrium*, *Luther: Right or Wrong*, asserts that St. Augustine did not emphasize the necessity of grace for liberating man from the captivity of sin and for helping him to live a life of true goodness.

Augustine in *de libero arbitrio* (388-395), pointed out that the first cause of evil is not nature, but the free will of man. Without free will, man cannot live justly and, if he lacked will, it would be unjust to punish or reward him. Fallen man does not have the free will to choose a truly just way of living. In other words argues McSorley, Augustine meant by *servum arbitrium* nothing more than that the free will of fallen man is a slave to sin and can be liberated from this condition of bondage only by the grace of God. This doctrine is the basis of Luther's belief (McSorley 30).

The subject of free will was also a matter for intense discussion during the period of Renaissance medieval thought, because it allowed man the rational capacity both to lead a moral life in secular activities and to achieve salvation. However, Charles Trinkhaus(*The Scope of Renaissance Humanism*) claims that the humanists and the reformers denied that man could do both. The humanists took the position of denying the possibility of subordinating economic to moral ends and leaving man the necessary free will to escape contamination by the world and to gain salvation by his own powers. The reformers, particularly Luther, also denied the possibility of morality in business or politics, but they took the further step of denying man any power to achieve either virtue or justification by his own free will (268). The "fine line" for Martin Luther was a bumpy ride but no more difficult than the coping problems many men and women experience. A harsh and difficult childhood. A life filled with conflicting ideas, despair and inspiration and varying degrees of success and failure. Creative will in the Rankian sense and the fear of death guided his choices in spite of his personal beliefs. In the final analysis, everything came down to his choices, the rejection or acceptance of life, his vigorous appetites, his lust for battle. Zweig described Luther in this manner: "Of all the men of

genius who have lived upon this earth, he was, perhaps, the most fanatical, the most unteachable, the most intractable, and the most quarrelsome” (Zweig 137).

One of the humanists of that time, Lorenzo Valla (1407-1457), composed his *Dialogue on Free Will* around 1440 and attacked the notion that philosophy and the use of reason could be the handmaiden of theology. He also denied the possibility of man understanding the contradiction of man’s seeming possession of free will and God’s powers used to “harden” one man and show mercy to another. In the dialogue, Valla uses a foil by the name of Antonio Glarea, a fellow citizen of San Lorenzo, on whom to hone the argument. Valla classified all events into three categories: “Natural phenomena always running the same course; fortuitous things that, having a kind of statistical predictability, follow a certain course of their own; and affairs of the will.” There are no loopholes for freedom, however, argues Lorenzo, just as Jove created the wolf to be rapacious, the hare timid, the lion brave, the ass stupid, the dog savage, and the sheep gentle, so also has he made some men sweet and some hard. He goes on to say that some men lean toward crime and some virtue; to one man is given an incorrigible disposition and to another, a corrigible one and each will act out of the qualities of his character (49, 57).

In other words, the “inborn character” will determine voluntary behavior and bring Valla’s position very close to the reformers who believed:

And if we entrust our life to our friends, should we not dare to entrust it to Christ who for our salvation took on both the life of the flesh and the death of the cross? We don’t know the cause of this

matter; of what consequence is it? We stand by faith, not by the probability of reason (Zweig 135).

Predestination versus free will. Determinism versus freedom of choice. I believe that Martin Luther was controlled by the two opposing forces of inhibition and impulse. As Rank defines it so graphically, the term “will” is an autonomous organizing force in the individual which does not represent any particular biological impulse or social drive, but constitutes the creative expression of the total personality and distinguishes one individual from another. The individual’s will, as the uniting and balancing force between impulses and inhibition, is the decisive psychological factor in human behavior. This means that the will can manifest itself creatively or destructively, depending upon the individual’s attitude toward himself and life in general. Using Rankian hypotheses, I believe I have the answer to my question of how a man like Luther could exercise so much creative will and still believe in predestination. As a neurotic individual, subject to a repressive childhood and confinement in a monastery, Luther was overburdened with guilt and anxiety, and the will or energy to make creative choices became counter-will or the resistance to these choices, causing him to suffer from the fact that he could not accept nor endure himself and wanted to change. As mentioned in the preceding chapter, his frequent moods of rage and melancholy led him to accept despair and disease as his fate and death as imminent, a logical reason for him to believe that his choices were already determined.

These inner conflicts of inhibition and impulse are the necessary consequence of aggressively taking possession of the outer world and represent an essential psychological opposition, according to Rank. One

cannot expect either from life or from therapeutic release, that the individual remain free of both outer and inner conflict. It can only be a matter of balance between the two, he argues, that is not attained once and for all, but must be created ever anew. This comes about through experience, but only when it is not interpreted as fate, but is created in free self-determination. Here, Rank points out, we can define self-determination as a voluntary and conscious creating of one's own fate, making one's own choices. This means to have no fate in an external sense, but to accept and affirm oneself as fate and fate-creating power. This inner fate includes self-determination also, in the sense of the pleasurable will struggle with ourselves, the conflict which we affirm as long as we interpret it as consciously willed self-creation, and not neurotically as the force of stronger supernatural forces or earthly authorities (W.T. 91,92).

Rank thinks that here we have the contrast between fate and self-determination as representative of the conflict between knowledge and experience. The creative expression of the personality in real experience with all the deception of its emotional displacement and denial, is constructive. Self knowledge (introspection) is and remains destructive with all its content of truth. He also believes that the problem of separation and guilt in the last analysis has shown itself to be the internal conflict present in all of us between creature and creator. The analytic situation reveals to us what we find confirmed in common experience, that whenever it is a matter of a step toward independence and self reliance, which the individual does not want to be responsible for himself, an "other" is made to play the part of fate (86).

Some of the characters in the works examined in this thesis used the "other", i.e., another real or imagined person, as a scapegoat for their

problems as they railed against fate. This form of scapegoating is present in the news every day as people accused of violent acts try to blame their actions on what “others” have done to them. We are no different from the characters invented by the artists of literature and film except that our fantasies come from within and theirs is made up for them. Are we human beings predisposed toward some aspects of our personalities as Lorenzo Valla suggested, i.e., the dog, the wolf, the lion, the ass? Do our genes carry these personality traits as well as disease and physical traits? If so, then some parts of our life *could* be beyond our control. Nurture or nature enters the lists. If my grandfather and my father died from heart disease at the age of forty does that mean that I also will no matter what I do? Or will my prognosis be different because of the latest medical knowledge I have access to and the availability of new drugs? Down with the scapegoat! The number of years that we live is not the measure of our lives.

Rank believes that we are born in pain and we die in pain and should accept life-pain as unavoidable- indeed a necessary part of earthly existence, not merely the price we have to pay for pleasure. Man is born beyond psychology and he dies beyond it but he can live beyond it only through vital experiences of his own-- in religious terms, through revaluation, conversion, or rebirth. In his last book, *Beyond Psychology*, Rank said:

My own life work is completed, the subjects of my former interest, the hero, the artist, the neurotic appear once more upon the stage, not only as participants in the eternal battle of life, but after the curtain has gone down, unmasked, undressed, unpretentious, not as

punctured illusions, but as human beings who require no interpreter (16).

I have tried to establish in this dissertation that Rank's ideas affect the very heart and soul of human life, the nitty-gritty daily problems as well as the exciting moments that sometimes reward or punish us. Other philosophers, psychologists, and creative writers have expressed some of these same ideas in their writings before or since I elected to focus on Otto Rank, but he has served to confirm my belief that our choices, our acts of commission as well as omission, contribute to the growth or impedance of our personalities, which, as Rank suggests, continue to change throughout life in spite of, or perhaps because of, the fears that reside deep within all of us. The key to the "fine line" and to the drama of life is freedom of choice and creative will.

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