

**PASSION FOR BUILDING: HENRIK IBSEN'S
THE MASTER BUILDER AND ARNOLD WRESKER'S
THEIR VERY OWN AND GOLDEN CITY**

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Abstract: People have always been interested in their residences and developing the quality of their houses in every respect. Theatre as an art reflecting human life in detail has not disregarded where people live as well as how they live. People's wish to design larger and taller buildings for their own use and for the use of others has in time turned into passion which has attracted many designers. Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen and British playwright Arnold Wesker are among those playwrights who have felt the need to bring to the stage the never ending passion that people have always felt to improve the quality of their houses. Both dramatists make public that the effort spent in this activity requires not only skill but also passion, and denote that individuals with passion to improve the standards of dwelling-houses, neglecting those in their lives needing their interest, may meet with a loss.

Key Words: Henrik Ibsen, Arnold Wesker, residence, passion.

The history of mankind is also a history of houses for people to live in. Developments in every field occupying the minds of creative individuals have exerted their inevitable influence on building construction for those intending to improve their living conditions. Designs of numerous types of governmental buildings, constructions for public use and personal homes have resulted from man's wish and passion to be innovative. The prominence of living spaces could not be left apart in drama, which is the art of reflecting human life in all its aspects holding a mirror to show the audiences their lives at large.

Although the history of drama before Henrik Ibsen's three-act play, *The Master Builder* (1892), mostly witnessed a proper coherence between people and their residences, it did not focus on the nature of houses for people. In *The Master Builder*, Ibsen brought to the fore how remarkable houses are in the minds of individuals through "emblematic representations of human life"¹ in Norway during the close of 19th century. For the master playwright the issue of building houses is not only creating a location for accommodation but also generating a location of meaning. And, by this way, he demonstrated that like many things in their lives, people are attached to their houses when they mean a

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¹ Joan Templeton. (2000). "The Munch-Ibsen Connection: Exposing A Critical Myth", *Scandinavian Studies*. Vol. 72, No: 4, (445-62) p: 642.

lot to them. With his focus on this issue Ibsen “can be seen as planting time-bombs, which, as they go off, mark the climaxes of a dramatic Action”².

The Master Builder clearly points towards the indispensability of ideals embellished in the designs of Halvard Solness, a passionate character as a master builder whose main purpose is to build houses in a style that suits his creative genius. Ibsen, as a dramatist accepting the fact that “drama is essentially illusion and fantasy while demanding at the same time that its characters should possess traits and qualities recognizable from our experience of fellow humans in our daily lives”³, is especially keen on reflecting the desire of the master builder to make every effort to be, in his professional position, always ahead of others including those working for him for the time being but planning to surpass him in the future. This makes the play revolve “around images of potency and impotence. From the outset, a strong link is established between sexual and creative potency. Creativity points to the sky like a tower”.⁴

Ibsen emphasizes the place of passion as a supportive power in the careers of individuals who are trying to prove themselves in their professions. The characters in *The Master Builder* reflect this point with all its clarity. Once working for Knut Brovik, a former architect, Solness now runs his own business and employs both Knut and his son, Ragnar, with a kind of relationship reminding one of “king to subjects”⁵. The irony of fate may have changed the men’s positions, but the strong desire of the characters to be successful in their profession is still alive and felt deeply; and this is why Solness will always be anxious of whether Ragnar will have him down one day. Although the father is seriously ill at the opening of the first act of the play, he still wants to stand on his feet and wants neither his son nor his son’s fiancé, Kaja, to be aware of his condition. He thinks that this will negatively affect his son’s passion to succeed in the field of building and his wish to carry out a project by himself. His aim is to see his son as a boss in the position of Solness. The image of the father is characteristic of Ibsen, in whose plays “every character is provided with a family”⁶. Knut openly expresses his desire for his son’s improvement in his career when he hears that a couple want their house built as fast as possible and Solness is not so eager to build, for them, a house the plans of which have not been completed yet. When Solness says that he will not have anything to do

² Eric Bentley. (2003). “What Ibsen Has Meant”, *Southwest Review*. Vol. 88, Issue 4. (531-38) p: 533.

³ Jan W. Dietrichson. (1997). “The Theatrical Ideas of Henrick Ibsen”, *Contemporary Approaches to Ibsen*. Vol. IX, Ed. By Bjørn Hemmer and Vigdis Ystad. Oslo: Scandinavian University Pres. (165-80) p: 170.

⁴ David Thomas. (1983). *Macmillan Modern Dramatists: Henrik Ibsen*. London and Basingstoke: The Macmillan Pres Ltd. p: 124.

⁵ Orley I. Holtan. (1970). *Mythic Patterns in Ibsen’s Last Plays*. Minneapolis: University of Minesota Pres. p: 104.

⁶ Raymond Williams. (1973). *Drama From Ibsen To Brecht*. Middlesex: Penguin Boks. p: 17.

with customers who will “make do with anything-any kind of a-a roost. Just a peg to hang their hats. But not a home”⁷, father Brovik plans to make use of this opportunity for his son despite the fact that at the moment he needs to care for his health more than anything else:

BROVIK (having seated himself with difficulty). Yes, well, it's Ragnar; he's on my mind. What's going to happen with him?

SOLNESS. Your son, he can stay on here with me, naturally, as long as he wants.

BROVIK. But that's just the thing: it's not what he wants. He thinks he can't- now, any longer.

SOLNESS. Well, I'd say he's got a very nice salary. But if he's out for a little more, I wouldn't be adverse to-

*BROVIK. No, no, it isn't that! (Impatiently -.) But he needs a chance to work on his own.*⁸

Brovik's request from Solness is not for a job for his son; as Solness indicates, his son has a good income. What is expected of Ragnar is to keep alive both his father's and his own passion as a builder. Although the playwright does not openly demonstrate the particulars of Ragnar's passion, it still seems that the father wants the roles between Solness and Ragnar to be changed as it happened before to him and Solness. This is not an issue of respect or honesty because Solness himself seems to care for the wellbeing of his former employer. But when it comes to the question of being the top builder, the spiritual value of which far exceeds its material significance, Solness is extremely intent on preserving his present position. He wants to keep his position however much the new trend in building requires changes in his style as a builder and however much father Brovik insists on his giving a chance to his son as an act of making room for youth. Solness's conclusion of the debate with nervous tension, saying “I'm not giving up! I never give ground. Not voluntarily. Never in this world, never!”⁹, is a symptom of his never ending excitement and passion as a master builder.

A characteristic theme especially striking in this particular work is “the vital core of the Self”¹⁰. It serves the understanding of personality development and the search for identity. This search for personality is overtly exposed with

⁷ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). *Four Major Plays: A Doll House, The Wild Duck, Hedda Gabbler, The Master Builder*. A New Translation with a Foreword by Rolf Fjelde. New York: Signet Classics. p: 311.

⁸ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 312.

⁹ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 314.

¹⁰ Erol Durbach. (1997). “The Modernist Malaise: ‘Nichts og Ingenting’ at the Core of Ibsen's Onion”, *Contemporary Approaches to Ibsen*. Vol. IX. Ed. By Bjørn Hemmer and Vigdis Ystad. Oslo: Scandinavian University Pres. p: 13.

as many details as possible in the personality of the master builder with a focus on the process through which he has attained his goal. The most significant element in this process is 'destiny', which Ibsen includes in the play as a dimension described as an agent unifying the elements in the process of personality development which makes Solness the master builder.

Ibsen creates Solness as a character who wants to own everything around him disregarding such outer pressures as the change in the style of building houses or Ragnar's wish to work on his own. His passion to possess includes even those working for him. He does not want to give Ragnar a chance to work on his own; he does not want him to be out of work, though. Even Ragnar's fiancé, Kaja, who cared a lot for Ragnar before she started to work for Solness, but who cares only for Solness now, is among those he wants to keep as a possession. Believing strongly that she will "never care for anyone else!"¹¹, Kaja is ready to break off with Ragnar, who cannot advance in his career without Solness's authorization, in order to stay with her hero. As Engelstad demonstrates, Solness is "holding power over Ragnar through his strong erotic appeal to his fiancé Kaja, and uses this cynically to bind her to himself. As long as Solness can commit Kaja emotionally to himself, he can prevent Ragnar from leaving the firm and starting a competing business".¹²

The Master Builder indubitably manifests the point that Solness has not passed through an easy process to reach the stage where he is occupying now. The start of his rise in his career as a master builder was a sad event. He longed for his wife Aline's family home to burn down so that he could obtain a precious land exploitable for his purpose. The fire, the reason of which is not appropriately and convincingly mentioned in the play, broke out but at the same time caused the death of Aline's (and Solness's) twin babies along with all her possessions. And this unfortunate event, which Solness regarded as the will of God to make him a master builder, exerted its inevitable influence on their family relations. The rest of Aline's life with Solness is not actually a real marriage since she has no way to alleviate her sorrow. After her terrible losses, she has become an Ibsen character who began to see life as being "dominated by an alien moral law, an alien conscience"¹³, and thus stands in stark conflict with her husband.

That his wife leads such a life does not, at first sight, seem to disturb Solness as it is expected to do in the mutual relationship of an ordinary couple. From the beginning of the play, he is busy with the burden which his professional passion put on his back but which has invisibly destroyed his life

¹¹ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 315.

¹² Fredrik Engelstad. (2002). "The Centrality of Power in Henrik Ibsen's Drama", *Proceedings*. IX. International Ibsen Conference, Bergen. (289-98) p: 296.

¹³ Errol Durbach. (1991). *A Doll's House: Ibsen Myth of Transformation*. Boston: Twayne Publishers. p: 93.

bit by bit. In fact, Solness is a self-taught artist who has reached the top of his profession by dint of technical skill and personal charisma. But because of the state of affairs in his family circle, his art, like his wife, is devoid of love. It is based, not on a loving acceptance of others, but on the violent exploitation of the needs and feelings of those closest to him.¹⁴

The playwright embodies an attention-grabbing personality in this leading character, who is mindful enough to weigh up the result of the destruction of what happened to his wife. He is even well aware of the fact that a day will come when “things have to change”¹⁵, as a consequence of the endeavours of the youth spending their energy in his field of occupation which may ultimately make him obsolete. Yet, he is Halvard Solness, the master builder, who, although not even happy with his business in the real sense, must not fall down whatever endangers or whoever undermines his success in building. Durbach defines his actions in the effort to keep his position and his final act to prove his greatness as an indication of the wish to be a mythical hero.¹⁶

The view of life and mutual relationships of the master builder with those around him must be divided into two periods: before and after Hilda comes. Before Hilda, Solness’ philosophy was to lead a professional life the personal satisfaction of which was based mainly on the gratification of being a top builder. He had feelings devoted to his profession with an expectation to keep his position as a master builder. Yet, the play’s action takes quite a different stance with the arrival of Hilda, whom Solness does not remember but who remembers Solness from a time he built a tower on the old church in Lysanger. Hilda’s emergence shows Solness “hesitantly internalizing and developing a subversive challenge of her vision, fusing it with her remembered past, until it becomes a reality he acknowledges as his own”¹⁷. Hilda has not decreased his passion for success, but has made him “a prisoner of her fantasized vision of him”¹⁸. Happening ten years ago, their meeting gave Hilda an ideal to be the princess of that master builder, whose appearance is as vivid at the moment in Hilda’s mind as it was ten years ago as seen in her description of the event:

It was so terribly thrilling and lovely. I'd never dreamt that anywhere in the world there was a builder who could build a tower so high. And then, that you could stand there right at the top, large

¹⁴ David Thomas. (1983). p: 128-129.

¹⁵ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 323.

¹⁶ Erol Durbach. (1982). *Ibsen the Romantic: Analogues of Paradise in the Later Plays*. Athens: University of Georgia Pres. p: 147.

¹⁷ Brian Johnston. (2000). “Play It Again. Past Story Re-visited as Tragic Plot: *Rosmersholm* and *The Master Builder*”, *Proceedings*. IX. International Ibsen Conference, Bergen. (315-24) p: 321.

¹⁸ John Bemrose. (Jan 29, 1996). “Prisoned by Power”, *Maclean’s Toronto*. Vol. 109, Issue 5, p: 61.

*as life! And that you weren't the least bit dizzy! That's what made me so-almost dizzy to realize.*¹⁹

Hilda has waited since the day Solness was invited to her family's house for the night where he saw her in her white dress and said that when she has grown up she could be his princess. Now, ten years later, she wants her kingdom, "the Kingdom of Orangia"²⁰, from Solness, who still finds it hard to understand why she has come. Hilda's request from Solness is, as a matter of fact, a "small world, passionately dedicated to a morality that can entirely dominate it"²¹. Because, like many of Ibsen's female characters, she is a model of "the 'new woman' in the late-nineteenth- and early-twentieth century popular imagery"²², and is ready to dedicate herself to change, ownership and passion.

The description of Solness's profession from his mouth is first heard in a dialogue between him and Hilda. It is understood once more that Solness is a productive builder most of whose life is devoted to work and who does not have any expectation other than success in his vocation. Besides, he seems to have stopped building structures for religious purposes and turned to building homes for people, which is most possibly a decision taken as a reaction to what God has taken from him:

HILDA. Oh, to begin with, I want to go round and look at everything you've built.

SOLNESS. That'll keep you going a while.

HILDA. Yes, you've built such an awful lot.

SOLNESS. I have, yes. Mainly these later years.

HILDA. Many more church towers? Enormously high ones?

SOLNESS. No, I don't build any church towers now. Nor churches either.

HILDA. What do you build then?

*SOLNESS. Homes for human beings.*²³

As seen in this dialogue, when Solness describes the particulars of his work in brief, Hilda becomes disappointed because in her estimation, he should be a master builder in the heights of towers. Not being so content with the houses Solness builds without towers, Hilda insists that he should build houses

¹⁹ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 329.

²⁰ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 330.

²¹ Naomi Lebowitz. (1990). *Ibsen and The Great World*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Pres. p: 190.

²² Penny Farfan. (2002). "Reading, Writing, and Authority in Ibsen's "Women's Plays", *Modern Drama*. Vol. 45, Issue 1. (1-8) p: 6.

²³ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 334.

with “something pointing-free, sort of, into the sky”²⁴. She also wants to assure Solness that there is no reason for him to think that the young will come and replace him in the sphere of building.

The perspective Hilda brings to the work of the master builder naturally creates intimacy between her and this lonely man, who deeply feels the need to hear such comments from a person near him, especially from a member of the youth. It is natural to expect the birth of finely tuned closeness between these two characters in the following acts of the play, a reflection of Ibsen’s wish as a playwright to “satisfy or exploit his audience’s desire for seemingly unmediated experience.”²⁵

Act Two of *The Master Builder* elucidates Solness’s family unit with deeper retrospection. Not only Aline but also Solness feel that their lives are empty. No matter how hard he tries to keep himself occupied by building a new house for his family, or rather, for his wife, hoping to improve the conditions of their mutual life, he is not able to see any glimmer of hope to change the course of things in the family. Mrs. Solness does not have a high estimation of anything concerning life, including the new house. Her mind is always fully absorbed in the thought of the loss of her old house and twin babies. Solness tries to relieve her spiritual pains but cannot be said to succeed in achieving this properly. His wife is sure that the new house will not change her life because it “can never be different. Just as empty-just as barren”²⁶. If it were not for her never ending grief resulting from her grave loss, Aline could be in a position to participate in what is going on around her. However, with the things at hand, she cannot feel the joy of life with all its components.

The only power to stimulate Solness in such a difficult period becomes Hilda. Similar to her support in the first act, she encourages him to improve in his profession, placing emphasis on the idea that he deserves to be alone in the profession of building. This is the very strength that keeps Solness going on in his work as a master builder who is devoted to building homes for people, which is “a motive full of contradictions”²⁷. His description of the houses he builds and the price he pays for his success includes a touchy choice of words containing elements of the missing things in his life:

SOLNESS (quietly stressing his words). By means of that fire, and that alone, I won my chance to build homes for human beings. Snug, cosy, sunlit homes, where a father and mother and a whole drove of children could live safe and happy, feeling what a sweet

²⁴ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 334.

²⁵ Merrill Kaplan. (Winter 2003). “On the Road to Realism with Asbyørnsen and Moe, Peer Gynt, and Henrik Ibsen”, *Scandinavian Studies*. Vol 75, Issue 4. (491-508) p: 507.

²⁶ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 341.

²⁷ Helge Røning. (2000). “Closed Rooms and Open Dreams”, *Proceedings*. IX. International Ibsen Conference, Bergen. (423-31) p: 428.

thing it is to be alive in this world. And mostly, knowing they belonged to each other-in the big things and the small.

HILDA (animated). Yes, but isn't it really a joy for you then, to create these beautiful homes?

SOLNESS. The price, Hilda. The awful price I've had to pay for that chance.

HILDA. But can you never get over that?

SOLNESS. No. For this chance to build homes for others, I've had to give up-absolutely give up any home of my own-a real home, I mean, with children.²⁸

Having to pay the price of his success in business with human happiness, that is, by relinquishing the happiness in his personal and family life, Solness explicitly evokes the feeling that the rest of his life will not be any different as regards happiness and joy of life. Sharing with Hilda issues of love, happiness, family unit, his wife's misery and his personal dilemma, he, in a sense, tries to get rid of the evil encircling his life. He is a master builder who has managed to overcome every difficulty in his field of business so far, but he has not been able to find happiness and serenity in his personal life. This eats at his brain without stopping for a moment.

The dissimilarity between the master builder's professional and personal life is so striking that one can hardly make them a whole in an occasion other than Solness's story. Although he is successful in solving any problem in his professional life, he does not seem so willing to solve his family problems. Perhaps he thinks that it is a vain business to believe that he can overcome the sources of unhappiness in his family. This must have been the incentive that makes him look for happiness outside his house in mostly artificial things. It also makes sense to think that the reason why Solness wants Ragnar to stay with him is to feel the vivacity of a member of the youth working for him as well as his desire to prevent Ragnar from starting his career as a rival who can beat him and can reverse the roles as he did to father Brovik. Solness has the fear that a time will come when there will be no one around him, which means a factual ruin for a person who can only survive "by ruthlessly exploiting the young people who work for him"²⁹. He knows that a small step will lead to another which will be followed by others. For him it is like the symbolic expression of the crack in the chimney that he saw and that might have caused the fire in his house (Though it is certain that the fire broke out in a clothes closet, Solness will not be sure of this till the end of his life because of his negligence to fix the crack in the chimney). And his uncontrollable passion to dominate the people and happenings around him mostly results from his wish not to experience

²⁸ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 349.

²⁹ David Thomas. (1983). p: 22

another disappointing occurrence. As understood from what he says to Hilda, he is well aware that he is doomed to suffer because of the coincidence that has made him an eminent builder:

*If old Knut Brovik had owned the house, it would never have burned down so conveniently for him-I'm positive of that. ... So you see, Hilda-it is my fault that the twins had to die. And isn't it my fault, too, that Aline's never become the woman she could have and should have been? And wanted to be, more than anything?*³⁰

Solness knows and confesses that there is a troll in him that calls on the powers; an "inner troll that masters him"³¹. The case is no different for Hilda, who also has a troll in her that led her to Solness in search of her kingdom. The vigour of the troll is so strong that although both characters can rationally evaluate some of the things that they must do, they cannot give up their compelling force to realize their dreams. But this does not last forever, and Solness comes to a point where he understands that he should no longer prevent Ragnar from starting his own business. Yet, he knows that this will kill the troll in him and bring his own career as the master builder to an end. He sends Ragnar's drawings back with Kaja, also letting him know that he does not want Ragnar to work for him any longer. For Kaja, this inevitably means the death of her troll but there is nothing she can do to change the process Solness wants things to develop.

The third and last act of the play reveals the continuity of the process exhibited in the previous act. Mrs. Solness still lives with her pains caused by the loss of her children. The new house, in which Solness thinks she will be happier, does not signify any positive expectation in her mind regarding the future of her life. She confesses in her talk with Hilda that "it isn't always so easy forcing your thoughts to obey"³², which plainly designates her unhappy life. Unlike Hilda, who has come to their residence to realize her dreams, she is in a position to live with the dreams of her lost children and dolls. Her marriage has lost its significance and there is no hope that she will recover what she has lost so far. She is not given any responsibilities in the family, which nearly makes her a doll-wife and prevents her marriage from being one based on comradeship and partnership³³. In the midst of all this, Hilda gets the picture that she will not be able to attain her goal without destroying the already injured life of Mrs. Solness, and weighing up the consequence of her stay, she chooses

³⁰ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 354-355.

³¹ Marilyn A. Anderson. (September 1971). "Norse Trolls and Ghosts in Ibsen", *The Journal of Popular Culture*. Vol. 5, Issue 2. (349-66) p: 362.

³² Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 365.

³³ F.L.Lucas. (1962). *The Drama of Ibsen And Strindberg*. London: Cassell And Company. p: 153.

to leave. This will unavoidably make Solness's life drearier because Hilda is now the only person to inspire hope and life in his mind:

HILDA (with intensity). I just can't hurt somebody I know! Or take away something that's really hers-

SOLNESS. Who wants you to?

HILDA. A stranger, yes. Because that's different, completely! Someone I never laid eyes on. But somebody I've gotten close to-! No, not that! Never!

SOLNESS. But what have I ever suggested?

HILDA. Oh, master builder, you know so well what would happen. And that's why I'm going away.

SOLNESS. And what'll become of me when you're gone. What'll I have to live for then? Afterwards?

HILDA (with the inscrutable look in her eyes). There's no real problem for you. You have your duties to her. Live for those duties.

SOLNESS. Too late. These powers- these-these-

HILDA. Devils-³⁴

Having heard Hilda's resolution, Solness loses the bastion in which he can take refuge in his needy days. Becoming conscious of the fact that the troll inside him made him "chained to the dead"³⁵, that is, his wife, he fully grasps the notion that he has no reason to have ideals including the work of building houses. He comes to a stage where he deliberates over his life and sees that he is an individual devoid of hope and future but still struggling against reality. He announces that he no longer thinks of building houses, which demonstrates the end of "spontaneous choice in continually emergent situations"³⁶. When Hilda asks, "No more warm, happy homes for mothers and fathers-and droves of children?"³⁷, he answers back remarking his perception that there might not be any use for homes in the future. But, if truth be told, there are; Hilda wants him to build a castle, "very high up-and free on every side"³⁸, for her where she can feel in a place of safety and from which she will look at the ones who build churches. She will accept the master builder to join her if he wants to because she sees that the master builder also needs that castle. She is ready to dedicate her life to the master builder not in his place of settlement but in a castle in the air. Because castles in the air are "so easy to hide away in. And easy to build

³⁴ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 369.

³⁵ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 369.

³⁶ Michael Goldman. (1999). *Ibsen: The Dramaturgy of Fear*. New York: Columbia University Press. p: 39.

³⁷ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 370.

³⁸ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 371.

too”³⁹. Yet, the time is no longer so encouraging and promising for Solness, who very much wishes to tell at that age, like his creator, that he sees his “life remolded into a poem, a fairy poem”⁴⁰, but who knows that he will never be as fortunate as he has been thus far.

Ibsen purposely makes Solness a master builder who is afraid of standing at dizzy heights. This condition, which Hilda accepts, is criticized by Ragnar most probably because Solness is a symbol of a devil devouring his father’s fortune and preventing him from attaining success as a young master builder for quite a long time. He does not shun telling his opinions of the master builder to Hilda, who is eager to live in a world of dreams with him without questioning anything:

*In certain ways he’s afraid-this great master builder. When it comes to stealing other people’s happiness in life-like my father’s and mine-there he’s not afraid. But it’s a matter of climbing up a measly piece of scaffolding-watch him take God’s own sweet time getting around to it!*⁴¹

The Master Builder ends with Solness falling to death from the top of the weather vane where he climbed to put the wreath. This action of Solness is the self-destructive decision of “an aging man attempting to prove his powers, his potency, in response to the combined spiritual and sensual challenge of a young woman”⁴². It is true that Solness was aware of the danger while climbing so high up, but the irresistible urge to demonstrate that he is still the master builder inescapably made him climb. He substantiated the aspect of his destiny that he can do everything he should to make evident that he is the master builder. Nevertheless, he knew beforehand that he was not supposed to do this, which was nothing but a protest to what God made him, and the whole meaning of which was a visual proof that he could climb up for himself, for Hilda and for all others.

The action of climbing at a height he should have avoided was a necessity for Solness, who has achieved great success in his profession, but who is on the verge of crisis because of the probability that the younger generation will undermine him. Seen from this perspective, it can be observed that he has done what he should have. He has become independent and unbeatable so far but now things are supposed to change and there is a danger awaiting him. He

³⁹ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 372.

⁴⁰ Henrik Ibsen. (1972). “Speech At The Banquet In Stockholm, April 13th, 1898”, *Speeches and New Letters*, Translated by Arne Kildal, With An Introduction By Dr. Lee M. Hollander. New York: Haskell House Publishers Ltd. p: 64.

⁴¹ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 375.

⁴² Andrew Kennedy. (2000). “A Choice of Death? Logic, Symbol and Form in Ibsen’s Modern Tragedy?”, *Proceedings*. IX. International Ibsen Conference, Bergen. (211-16) p: 214.

knows that he cannot accept being inferior to any rival in the area he has devoted his whole life to. Leaving everything at a perfect point, and being remembered at the point he has reached seems to be more preferable for him. Regarding this tragic end, Ystad refers to the fact that it must have been a kind of path to actual freedom:

Ibsen's characters never attain higher freedom and insight than in the moment of death, and their insights are resolutions of underlying tendencies and possibilities that have coloured the action of the drama to its end. The values that are presumably destroyed through the death of the main character are given continued life through the suicide as an act of sacrifice. Even if life cannot be preserved, its idea is rescued and elevated to a higher level of meaning identical with the calling and life-dream of the tragic character."⁴³

Solness's deliberate action that results in his death carries great weight, for it coincides with the time Ragnar brings his students "to see him have the pleasure of keeping himself down"⁴⁴ as Solness kept them down for long. Having envisaged this semi-tragic consequence, Solness "is tempted to climb the roof for his fatal fall"⁴⁵. Ragnar's action shows that he will be at least as passionate as Solness in his building career, a business that naturally seems to make those involved fiery. And, most probably, he will be much more ruthless in stopping any thing or people likely to endanger the progression of his success.

Ending the play in this way, Ibsen demonstrates how a person's passion as a master builder may ruin his life, and makes obvious the fact that the ideal of the master builder ultimately moves toward building houses for people who, as Solness comes to think, "don't know how to use these homes of theirs"⁴⁶. This makes the play gain a "far more expressive form of psychological theatre"⁴⁷. Yet, although the people who are to live in those houses will not praise the effort Solness spends for his works, he still will be content because he will dedicate "his career not to religious monuments to the greater glory of God but to secular dwelling places for the greater comfort of human beings"⁴⁸.

There are critics who allege that "*The Master Builder* is really Ibsen's dramatisation of his late-life crisis, a complaint against being an old man in love

⁴³ Vigdis Ystad. (2000). "Sacrifice, Suicide and Tragedy in Ibsen's Drama". *Proceedings*. IX. International Ibsen Conference, Bergen. (265-72) p: 268.

⁴⁴ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 381.

⁴⁵ Byron Nelson. (March 2004). "Brand", *Theatre Journal*. Vol. 56, Issue 1. (104-105) p: 105.

⁴⁶ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 379.

⁴⁷ Eric Bentley. (2003). p: 534.

⁴⁸ Robert Brustein. (1964). *The Theatre of Revolt*. Boston: Little Brown and Company. p: 76.

with a young girl, a situation from which no good can come”⁴⁹. The passion of the master builder at an old age is obvious, and his effort to own and dominate even in such a delicate issue as love is also definitely clear; however, whether the play is the reflection of the writer’s personal crisis is a point open to discussion. Johnston’s evaluation of the case in point is quite striking, and provides a relevant perspective to the nature of the issue:

*The dimensions of reality implicated in the structure and texture of The Master Builder involve every area of reality. On the physical, prebiological level is the rhythm of the sun’s rising and setting, the rhythm of eternally repeated death and resurrection, in which the sun must go down in the evening and rise in the morning, the year’s decline in autumn to revive in spring. On the biological level is the life of the organism, the conflict of the generations, where the old must give way to the younger, where the death of the individual is the condition of life for the species, a situation against which the highly developed human consciousness, like Solness, vainly protests. The recovery of such a rhythm in the form of modern realism is one of Ibsen’s most significant achievements in this play ...*⁵⁰

The excitement in Ibsen’s Solness for building homes is witnessed in much the same way in Andrew Cobham, in *Their Very Own And Golden City* (1966), by Arnold Wesker, a prominent post-war British playwright whose “plays incline to be concerned with a struggle towards articulateness”⁵¹. Wesker’s play is a piece of work reminding the audience of the significance of achievement for personal and communal sake. The action of the play starts from 1926 and lasts till about 1990. The play, which, as Wesker himself puts into words, is “about the compromise of an idealistic architect”⁵², can be categorized as a work devoted to serve the happiness of people by enabling them to live in their homes in an ideal city. Wesker specially calls this city ‘Golden City’. His definition of the play is concordant with the general characteristics of modern theatre which is supposed to be the theatre of engagement, of social criticism,

⁴⁹ Sheridan Morley & Lisa Allardice. (7 July 2003). “Sex, Scrabble and Murder”, *New Statesman*. Vol. 132, Issue 4645. p: 44.

⁵⁰ Brian Johnston. (1992). *The Ibsen Cycle: The Design of the Plays from Pillars of Society to When We Dead Awaken*. Revised Edition. Pennsylvania: Pennsylvania State University Press. p: 350.

⁵¹ C. W. E. Bigsby. (1993). “The Politics of Anxiety: Contemporary Socialist Theatre in England”, *Contemporary British Drama 1970-1990*, ed. Hersh Zeifman and Cynthia Zimmermann. London: The Macmillan Press Ltd. p: 284.

⁵² Arnold Wesker. (1970). “Fears of Fragmentation” in *Fears of Fragmentation*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd. p: 112.

whose works can generally be categorized under realism⁵³. This definition proves that passion and idealism cannot be peculiar to only one period or one playwright in history.

Places of settlement and the houses people live in attract Wesker so much because he sees them as works of art created by imaginative minds. He notes that he is a keen observer of the characteristics of change in the history of architecture: “When I travel abroad I am constantly amazed at human endeavour. From the air I see cities and cultivation; in cities I see buildings going back centuries and museums full of artefacts going back centuries. Someone worked with hand, heart and imagination”⁵⁴.

Their Very Own And Golden City reflects the efforts of Andrew starting from 1926 to build six cities. Andrew’s dreams are also shared by his wife Jessie and his friends Paul and Stoney. The cities to be built are intended to be not only ordinary settlements for people but the realization of a new community as well. The houses in the city are to be “owned entirely by their inhabitants who will have the freedom to fulfil themselves and to experiment with the organization of work and leisure, free from external pressures”⁵⁵. Houses mean a lot for Wesker, who makes a connection between houses and human spirit as a playwright whose “world is one of the family, an intimate group bound by affection and experience”⁵⁶. He expresses his views on the issue in his lecture “Two Snarling Heads”, delivered in some trades councils and to university students in a number of cities including Oslo:

You might say that a house keeps a man sheltered from the cradle to the grave, but if he lives his life sheltered in one room only then the quality of that sheltering, we could safely assume, is a little mean and meagre. He might be protected from the wind and the rain, but what else could he do? Wash, eat, sleep, cook, entertain- all in one room?

Whereas a larger, double fronted house would also be sheltering him from the wind and the rain, but would also be doing more. There would be room to have a family. There would be a space to stretch his legs, and he could decorate it as he liked and surround himself with friends. There would be room, in fact, to breathe and feel a real man. Both houses would shelter his life from the cradle

⁵³ Myles Weber. (2001) “Seeking A Post-Ibsenian Playwright”, *Kenyon Review*. Vol. 23, Issue 1. (188-94) p: 190.

⁵⁴ Alain De Botton & Frances Stonor. (9.23.2002). “Celebrities on Holiday: A Rough Guide”, *New Statesman*. Vol. 131, Issue 4606. (38-42) p: 40.

⁵⁵ Glenda Leeming. (1972). *Arnold Wesker*. Ed. By Ian Scott-Kilvert. London: Longman Group Ltd. p: 22.

⁵⁶ A. R. Jones. (1960). “The Theatre of Arnold Wesker”, *Critical Quarterly*. Vol. II. (366-70) p: 370.

*to the grave, but living in the larger one would be more satisfactory because he could say, 'I only live once and thank Christ I had the room to move, to spread, to grow, rather than having to rot.'*⁵⁷

Bringing Wesker's above-mentioned idealism to the stage, the play represents a transition from buildings houses in *The Master Builder* to building cities. While Solness is busy with building homes for people to live in, Andrew is engaged in a work of building cities. But, it is convincing enough that both playwrights think a lot of houses for people to live in as places to feel comfortable and secure. Again, both characters are engaged in the effort to build houses intended to satisfy the needs of those who will live in them, and request that people look for the probabilities of living in the best houses they can. The dream of 'air castle' in Ibsen's play and the idea of 'golden city' in Wesker's play stem from this very thought of the individuality and quality of life, and satisfaction from life in every respect.

Andrew's passionate attitude unequivocally makes him identical to Solness in that he is insistent on his decision and identical to Ragnar given that he is a member of youth objecting to the resolutions of the older generation. At the very beginning of Act One, Andy shows how hungry he is for perfection. The scene is in the interior of the Durham Cathedral and Andy, then presented as Young Andy, expresses that he is fascinated by the splendour of the architecture. The writer, like Ibsen, brings to the fore the symbolic value of the cathedral. Andy's expression, "a cathedral is built for one man. ... Every man should have a cathedral in his back garden"⁵⁸, takes us to Ibsen's castles in the air as it represents the meaning and significance of ownership, and owning something that you feel will be yours and free from outside effects.

Solness says that, to be free from the pressure of the outside world, one should live in a high up place "with solid foundations"⁵⁹, from the top of which it will be possible to dominate a vast piece of the surrounding without any impediment. Andy, too, pointing to the tower of the cathedral, says: "a house should be built that high"⁶⁰, and wants to build "a house that soars"⁶¹ for Jessie, whom he wants to marry. The striking common point of both characters in this respect is that they want these constructions to be owned and used by people.

The fact that these two dramatists want to stress the importance of places of living for people does not mean that only houses should be built and nothing

⁵⁷ Arnold Wesker. (1970). "Two Snarling Heads" in *Fears of Fragmentation*. London: Jonathan Cape Ltd. p: 32.

⁵⁸ Arnold Wesker. (1990). *Volume 2: The Kitchen, The Four Seasons, Their Very Own And Golden City*. London: Penguin Boks. p: 129.

⁵⁹ Henrik Ibsen. (1965). p: 372.

⁶⁰ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 132.

⁶¹ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 130.

else. Buildings such as cathedrals and churches are among those buildings whose construction has been cared for a lot by people. Zimmermann suggests that the idea of building a cathedral, or rather, building a very colossal work of architecture for religious purposes is not the reflection of God's might or glory but people's creativity, passion and determination. If people are strong-minded enough to force the boundaries of their capacity, they can prove that the limits of their ability and creativity can go far beyond a point imagined even by themselves. That standpoint has become the initiative for Andy and his friends: if people can build Durham Cathedral, why shouldn't they build Golden Cities? The cathedral is a symbol of utopia for them persuading them to accept the possibility of building Golden Cities, just as the church tower built by Solness was a springboard for Hilda on the way to her air castle.⁶²

The desire to lead a happy life is one that each person naturally has in mind. Andy wants to live with his family while going on his work in the building profession. This desire, which most probably existed for Solness at the beginning of his marriage, was later the thing missing in Solness's house because he was destined to be the master builder and to lead a business life. The fate that led Solness up the steps of success is likely to do the same to Andy, who wants to be regarded as a forerunner of change. Andy has confidence in himself and in his future line of business, and does not seem to accept to be directed by destiny. He is self-assured that some things that could not be done a long time ago could be done now. This change will make him an appreciated person. As a matter of fact, he is so sure of this that Jessie cannot help warning him, saying "Get off your head, Andy, stand on your feet".⁶³

Wesker creates Andy as a character full of hope and enthusiasm. Andy, whose rise in the first half of the play "shows him learning how ingratitude and ruthlessness aid the ambitious man"⁶⁴, is a technical designer who is studying architecture out of office hours, and is sure to end up an architect. His "increasing compartmentalization of his life-his detaching himself from Jessie, his wife, his withdrawal of real concern from his private practice-is both harmful and delusory, because the ability to compromise and cut corners spreads to his ideals and the Golden Cities too"⁶⁵. His courage and faith in his success can be manifestly recognized in his appraisal of his impending accomplishment and the expected attitude of Casper, head of the firm Andy is working for:

⁶² Heins Zimmermann. (1986). "Wesker and Utopia in the Sixties". *Modern Drama*. Vol. XXIX. Number 2. (185-206) p: 198.

⁶³ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 131.

⁶⁴ Malcolm Page. (1968). "Whatever Happened To Arnold Wesker?: His Recent Plays", *Modern Drama*. Vol 11, Issue 3. (317-25) p: 323.

⁶⁵ Glenda Leeming. (1983). *Wesker the Playwright*. London: Methuen. p: 76

Old Casper will totter around mumbling to himself, 'You're a draughtsman, a good draughtsman, good draughtsmen can't be found every day, be satisfied, the good Lord made you a draughtsman don't argue with him.' And then the news will come through that I've passed and he'll go on mumbling, 'brilliant, clever boy, the good Lord's made you an architect, praise Him then, mumble, mumble, mumble.' And he will offer me a partnership, you'll see-dear God, look how that ceiling soars".⁶⁶

Andy's above expression denotes that he is ready to dedicate all his energy to work as a draughtsman. He is a dreamer who "retains his hopes even though they are considerably dimmed at the end"⁶⁷. He is determined to fill the rest of his life with this business whereas Solness suffered a lot because of being created as a master builder. Andy is in search of creating the conditions to be a master builder, the conditions which devastated Solness's life at the end of *The Master Builder*. Yet, it is striking to note that the essence of being a master builder is to sacrifice one's personal and family life.

Wesker brings to the stage the steps that make Andy an architect and lets him concentrate on his work in the rest of the play. The first thing Andy decides to do when he becomes an architect is to leave Casper because he is "a good man, a gentle man, but he's a dull architect"⁶⁸. He aspires to reach farther horizons as an eminent architect who can change the course of things in his area of occupation. He is certain that he will reach his goal, as understood from his comment of the period they are in: "The year of depression for everyone else but the world's going right for me"⁶⁹. He is ready to dominate everything he can because Wesker wants to make his piece of work "an inordinately ambitious play"⁷⁰. His creator being most successful "in equating the artist in his nature with the political and social animal"⁷¹, Andy is so eager and hungry to own. He wants Jessie to give him six children, then he increases the number to twelve and at last makes it twenty. He is a young architect who, in his old age, wants his influence to be felt because of his courage and will to achieve great things. He becomes more audacious when he hears the retiring chairman of the trade union, Jake Latham, saying, "that's my reputation anyway, being different, a stale sort of reputation I'm feeling now"⁷², and stressing "Revolutionaries is

⁶⁶ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 132-133.

⁶⁷ Susan Rusinko. (1989). *British Drama 1950 To The Present: A Critical History*. Boston: Twayne Publishers. p: 157.

⁶⁸ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 135.

⁶⁹ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 135.

⁷⁰ Ronald Hayman. (1970). *Contemporary Playwright Series: Arnold Wesker*. London: Heinemann Educational Books Ltd. p: 61.

⁷¹ *The Times*. (12 Dec 1963). "Arnold Wesker".

⁷² Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 137.

what we want—they spend less time rebelling against what’s past and give their energy to the vision ahead”⁷³ to initiate change with the aim of “a sort of social revolution”⁷⁴. Besides, however much he trusts himself, he is of the opinion that he has a lot to learn from Latham and asks for that:

JAKE: When you come to me and say ‘teach me’ what do you mean? No, first—why me?

ANDY: I’ve always had a picture in my mind of an old, sorry—

JAKE: Yes, yes, old, I’m old, don’t fumble, I’m old.

ANDY: A man, somebody, who’d talk to me. Don’t misunderstand me, I don’t want to be told what to think. I’ve read, I’ve always read, but I’ve never been, well, guided. Waste, I can’t beat waste. I may die young, you see.

JAKE: Huh! Romantic as well. An optimistic romantic! I’d say you were doomed, Cobham. Go home.

*ANDY: I’m not impressed with cynicism, Mr. Latham, it’s a bit dull is cynicism. You say I’m damned and it sounds clever I know, but I’m not impressed. Neither were you, were you?*⁷⁵

Jake Latham notices that Andy was doomed to be an architect and there is no way back. Latham also gets the implication that Andy is supposed to spend all his energy for one thing: in a ferocious rage against inactivity in his profession as an architect. The concept of ‘happiness’ is not eating, drinking, earning much money, or living in luxury for him; he equals happiness with the work of architecture to create a utopian society.⁷⁶ This naturally reminds us of Solness, who strongly believes that he is doomed to be a master builder. Although Andy does not see it exactly, those around him witness that he is following the path opened by Solness. And as if to remind Andy of Solness’s story, Jake confesses that he once had a large number of principles, but now he feels defeated and wants Andy to be prepared for such an end in the future. Another warning concerning his life comes from Kate, Jake’s friend: “You want to be an architect? You want to build beautiful homes? Then how can you surround yourself with ugliness? Look how you dress, look what you hang on your walls. How can you dare plan other people’s houses when you live with such mediocrity?”⁷⁷. The purpose of these critical views is to make Andy see that life is a whole with other interests as well as work and that one’s work as the only one thing cannot satisfy him properly.

⁷³ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 138

⁷⁴ *The Times*. (12 Dec 1963). “Arnold Wesker”.

⁷⁵ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 139.

⁷⁶ Heins Zimmermann. (1986). p: 189.

⁷⁷ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 144.

Hayman notes that Kate is used as an additional expression in the dialogue where an extra voice is needed, and adds that Wesker himself told him that it was clear that there was no sexual relationship between Kate and Andy⁷⁸. However, what Wilcher presumes is quite the reverse: "Central to the scheme of Wesker's complex dramatic allegory is the contrast between the two women, Jessie and Kate, who are not conventional rivals as wife and mistress but rather extensions of the private and the public aspects of his personality"⁷⁹. Isn't it true that Solness, as well, needed first Kaja and then Hilda to satisfy the public aspect of his personality?

Wesker's play particularly focuses on the need to build homes for people from all segments of the society. It should be remarked that the writer painstakingly characterized the occupational attributes of Andy so as to manifest, without any doubt, how devoted he is to building homes. Andy is not after personal benefit from any circles including political ones and straightforwardly expresses this when he says: "I don't want to go into local politics-I'm an architect; they should be screaming for me to build their houses, down on their bloody knees for me"⁸⁰. He represents the views of his creator, who believes that the effort spent on the way to contribute to the well-being of people is really a divine one. He questions the previous construction design of the city, saying "Now look at that city down there. What gangrenous vision excited the men who built that, I wonder?"⁸¹, and makes known how rigid he is in his view of the future places of settlement for people. This shows that the writer is of the opinion that experience must be "fiercely annealed in the imagination"⁸². Besides, that Andy's friend Stoney also wants politicians to "give the city to its teachers and artists"⁸³ contributes to the verification of the view initiated.

Andy is not alone in his struggle to do what he yearns for, Jessie is always a driving power for him. When he feels that he is about to lose his hopes and power, she motivates him and enables him to go on working on his inspiring project. She also includes his friends in her effort to stir him:

YOUNG JESSIE: What kind of cities shall we build, Andy?

YOUNG ANDY: Cities of light and shade, Jessie, with secret corners.

...

YOUNG JESSIE: Paul, what kind of cities?

⁷⁸ Ronald Hayman. (1970). p: 68-69.

⁷⁹ Robert Wilcher. (1991). *Understanding Arnold Wesker*. South Carolina: University of South Carolina Pres. p: 72.

⁸⁰ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 151.

⁸¹ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 150.

⁸² J. W. Lambert. (22 May 1966). *Sunday Times*.

⁸³ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 152.

YOUNG PAUL [getting to his knees, hands on heart]: Cities for lovers, Jessie, and crowds and lone wolves.

YOUNG JESSIE: Stoney?

YOUNG STONEY [croaking to his knees]: Cities for old men and crawling children, Jessie.

...

YOUNG ANDY: Cosy cities, Jessie, family cities.

YOUNG PAUL: With wide streets and twisting lanes.

YOUNG STONEY: And warm houses, low arches, long alleys.

YOUNG ANDY: Cities full of sound for the blind and colour for the deaf.

YOUNG PAUL: Cities that cradle the people who live there.

*YOUNG ANDY: That frighten no one.*⁸⁴

Wesker maintains at the beginning of the second act of his play that it is not easy for a single person to achieve great things within a system not ready to break the rules of the status quo. However, as in his other plays he tries “to make sense of a world that appeared chaotic and confusing to him”⁸⁵ in this play. Andy is about to lose his hopes of building the Golden City because of the lack of support and ingenuity of those who are supposed to be involved in the project. This is severely criticised by Kate, who, as Hilda did to Solness, wants to inspire hope and courage in Andy: “Andy, I’m tired of timid lads who laugh at themselves. I’m tired of little men and vain gestures. I have a need, O God how I have a need to see someone who’s not intimidated. Who’s not afraid to be heroic again”⁸⁶. At first sight this type of motivating force seems exactly what Andy needs to maintain his effort for his purpose, but one gets the impression that he is thoroughly downhearted: “Yes, of course I’m afraid of failure-petrified. A golden city is doomed to failure, don’t you understand? One city, six cities, a dozen-what difference? It’s all patchwork”⁸⁷. This articulation of discontent is of a didactic type and is significant for the playwright in whose estimation “revolutionary change was something more than a rhetorical flourish”⁸⁸. And to support the point that his “plays are made up of speech”⁸⁹ Wesker generalizes his expression to comprise all fields of humanity: “The language of heroism is a dead language”⁹⁰. This is a kind of resentment in the

⁸⁴ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 160.

⁸⁵ Monica Lauritzen Mannheimer. (1975). “Ordering Chaos: The Genesis of Arnold Wesker’s *The Friends*”, *English Studies*. Vol. 56, Issue 1. (34-44) p: 36.

⁸⁶ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 165.

⁸⁷ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 165.

⁸⁸ C. W. E. Bigsby. (1981). “The Language of Crisis in British Theatre: The Drama of Cultural Pathology”, *Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies: Contemporary English Drama*. Associate Editor: C. W. E. Bigsby. London: Edward Arnold. (1152) p: 20.

⁸⁹ Susannah Clapp. (2.14.1997). “Quips with Everything”, *New Statesman*. Vol. 126, Issue 4231. (39-40) p: 39.

⁹⁰ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 166.

“story of the frustrations in the lifelong endeavors of a visionary, idealistic architect”⁹¹ against forces preventing Andy from attaining his goal as well as reflecting his “interest in society and its improvement”.⁹²

In fact, Wesker does not have any problem with traditions in his effort to realize improved ways in human life. And he takes tradition seriously but is of the opinion that art is not only for schoolchildren and that society must be able to get some things of importance from his art created for their sake alone⁹³. Wesker is at least as passionate as his character in his profession as a playwright, and notes: “In my quiet moments I reassure myself by telling myself that a few people have really got what I am saying, but this is not enough to make me happy”⁹⁴. What seems difficult for him is the fact that he is doomed to fail in this particular effort. His analysis, echoed by Stoney, in a Trades Union Congress, is indicative of the difficulty of accepting any possible failure in his utopia:

*I tell you,
the dull and dreary men preach caution, caution is a kind of fear.
The dull and dreary men breed apathy, apathy is a kind of cancer.
But look, we have a city. The dull and dreary men, beware-beware
the dull and dreary men.
I tell you, look-
We have a city, we can have a city!*⁹⁵

This argument has clear echoes of the attitudes expressed by Wesker. Just as Andy’s utopia was to build cities for people, Wesker’s was to take culture to the masses with his theatre, Centre 42; but he could not attain the rate of success he had envisaged and eventually had to give up that occupation though he had an insatiable appetite for his purpose to realize his dreams. Wesker sees this disillusionment as a private pain in the human endeavour to help establish a better state of society⁹⁶. In an interview, he notes that there are parallels between Centre 42 and Golden City and adds: “I am ambivalent about Centre 42, which can be viewed as patchwork in what is basically a society built on lunatic

⁹¹ Karl-Heinz Stoll. (1976) “Interviews with Edward Bond and Arnold Wesker”. *Twentieth Century Literature*. Vol. XXII. (411-28) p: 423.

⁹² John Russel Taylor. (1988). *Anger and After: A Guide to the New British Drama*. London: Methuen. p: 169.

⁹³ D. A. N. Jones. (29 Oct 1967). “Second Opinion: Arnold Wesker”, in Facsimile Collections of Various Articles and Interviews, Michael Marland (Ed) (1970), Times Education Services, *TheTimes’ Authors No. 1*.

⁹⁴ Arnold Wesker. (1961). “Art is Not Enough”, *Twentieth Century*. (190-94) p: 194.

⁹⁵ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 174.

⁹⁶ Glenda Leeming. (1981). “Articulatory and Awareness: The Modulation of Familiar Themes in Wesker’s Plays in the Seventies”, *Stratford-Upon-Avon Studies: Contemporary English Drama*. Associate Editor: C. W. E. Bigsby. London: Edward Arnold. (65-78) p: 66.

values, just as the six Golden Cities are all patchwork”⁹⁷. Likewise, disappointed by his attempt to build cities for people, Andy is seen tearing up some designs a customer has turned down, showing that all the effort and time he has spent so far is about to be “a shout in the wilderness”⁹⁸. When Jessie asks the reason, he replies that when he started his own business, he swore that he would not erect a building he did not approve. But now, his City being his price, he has changed his mind and is ready to build the patrons anything they want. However, the fact that he has lost his idealism is severely thought of by Jessie, as she expressed in a very critical way: “Andrew Cobham, as the years go on it gets harder and harder to live with you. I’ll have you grunting and storming through this house because you’re building a building you don’t want to build. You, with a screaming and snapping head above what you are, is more than I can bear.”⁹⁹

With her appraisal of the case phrased in such a way as to persuade Andy to weigh up some aspects of his work and his life again, Jessie reflects Wesker’s belief that “Some people would always have energy”¹⁰⁰ to go on working in order to realize their ideals, and in this sense resembles Hilda, who wants to keep Solness’s creativity alive and active. It really helps Andy to start again with a new hope. At last a site for the first city has been found. More important than the process of building, the number of people who have started to buy their own city has gone up. Andy announces that the building of the city has begun. Here, the playwright gives another detailed description of the city, which will be for all people from all segments of the society, but this time the description also includes the development of the phases of building the city and the ultimate determination to complete “Sixteen hundred homes a year”¹⁰¹. Ribalow’s analysis of the play, focusing on this very point that the process has started, brings to the fore the value of optimism from the heart of the playwright. The critic attracts attention to the play’s powerful sequences, biting speeches, bewildering complaints and wailings, and suggests that “Wesker, in creating this plot, in establishing an impossible dream, would rather go on to defeat in his attempt than not to dream and try at all.”¹⁰²

The prospect of Andy’s cities seems to be good, but the likelihood of the firmness and the continuity of his once blissful marriage is not so certain. Jessie

⁹⁷ Simon Trussler. (1966). “His Very Own and Golden City: An Interview With Arnold Wesker”, *Tulane Drama Review*. Vol. XIC. (192-202) p: 199.

⁹⁸ Colin Chambers and Mike Prior. (1987). *Playwrights’ Progress: Patterns of Postwar British Drama*. Oxford: Amber Lane Pres Ltd. p: 145.

⁹⁹ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 177.

¹⁰⁰ Catherine Itzin. (1986). *Stages In The Revolution: Political Theatre In Britain Since 1968*. London: Methuen. p: 114-15.

¹⁰¹ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 182.

¹⁰² Harold V. Ribalow. (1965). *Arnold Wesker*. Twayne’s English Author Series. New York: Twayne Publishers Inc. p: 77.

is not pleased that Andy spends all his time working at his profession and not with his wife and children. Due to the fact that Andy has to spend most of his time away from home, she feels depressed and unhappy. Her husband's success has not sufficed to satisfy her, a condition that has affected Aline in the same way in *The Master Builder*. Wesker notes that it is a natural and common feature for a family matching this description: "Problems arise, there is a conflict between himself and his wife-she has to mind the children and this is not merely an eight-hour job, it's an around-the-clock job so that she doesn't always have the time to go to the pictures or the pub. She becomes resentful"¹⁰³. Since Wesker's characters "are real, and they do live"¹⁰⁴, the nature of their relationships and their actual conditions must be appropriately handled. The writer includes the validity of this thought in his drama in general stressing the significance of "the classic slamming of the door by Ibsen's heroine"¹⁰⁵. As a conclusive example to this, he shows, in a way resembling Ibsen again, that Andy's limitations resulting from his profession are not so acceptable by his wife, who has to squeeze words out of his mouth even though she wants to share life with him:

I'm a good mother, you say, I cook, I mend, I even iron your shirts to your satisfaction, but-words, I can never find words. I'm not a fool; I've been made to feel it often enough, but I'm not a fool, even though I think you're right all the time, and-oh, if only I had the powers to argue and work it out-there's a wrong somewhere.

...

Don't you know what I'm saying? Don't you hear what I'm telling? I don't mind being inferior but I can't bear being made to feel inferior. I know I'm only a housekeeper but I can't bear being treated like one.

Wasn't it you wanted to treat everyone like an aristocrat? Well, what about me? I don't claim it as a wife, forget I'm your wife, but a human being. I claim it, as a human being. [Pause.] Claim? I'm too old to stake claims, aren't I? Like wanting to be beautiful, or enthusiastic or in love with yourself.¹⁰⁶

This comes in the central point of a long dialogue which is fully at odds with the rest of the play. It is a curious disturbance caused by a demanding wife who requires that her husband be busy with the family. Hayman is of the opinion regarding their marriage that "a good marriage is integral to a good life

¹⁰³ Arnold Wesker. (1970). p: 33.

¹⁰⁴ Kenneth Tynan. (12 Jun 1960). *The Observer*.

¹⁰⁵ Christopher Innes. (1992). *Modern British Drama 1890-1990*. Cambridge: CUP. p: 118.

¹⁰⁶ Arnold Wesker. (1990). p: 190.

and a good life of the sort Andy dreams about turns out to be unattainable¹⁰⁷. Wesker makes Andy an architect who has devoted all his time and energy to his work and who is called ‘Sir Andrew’ at the end of the play. Like Solness, who has become a master builder, he is on the way to be a master designer. Moreover, like Solness, he does not want to stop at a point, and wants to keep his status in the front position. Yet, he is sure to neglect his family and cause irreparable problems in his household because Wesker is a playwright concerned “not with individual psychology but with individual lives”¹⁰⁸. Andy is “so full of his self-generated enthusiasm that he scarcely thinks of Jessie as an individual”¹⁰⁹. It is not a totally pessimistic conclusion, but one naturally wonders whether, as it happened to Solness, a day will come when Andy, who has started to see himself as big as cathedrals, can get no pleasure of the thing he has done as a master architect.

For those critics who are inclined to see Ibsen “as a fussy writer of the nineteenth century social problem plays, whose very problems seemed old fashioned”¹¹⁰, Wesker’s handling of the case of Andy in *Their Very Own And Golden City* represents a case indicative of such problems as those met on the way to be a master in one’s field and as those arising from one’s neglecting his family are not old fashioned. It seems that both playwrights want ‘passion’ as an irreplaceable urge in those whose minds are passionate with building. Their motto is ‘Move on’, suggesting advance “in one’s career up the ladder of success”¹¹¹. Eric Bentley suggests that the meaning “of any literature, including dramatic literature, resides in its power, its impact, if you will, and thus does not repose in any statement it may seem to make or any philosophy it may be seen to embody”¹¹². Wesker states that the important thing about the play is “the tools that the people find in order to try and make it work and the extent to which they don’t make it work. And the forces, the pressures, that make them compromise on each step.”¹¹³

Stella Adler analyses Ibsen’s playwriting and concludes that Ibsen “divides society into three types: the Idealist who accepts society’s illusions, including the most treacherous misrepresentations of marriage; the Compromiser who “knows the truth but settles for something else”; and the least common

¹⁰⁷ Ronald Hayman. (1970). p: 67.

¹⁰⁸ D. Keith Peacock. (1991). *Radical Stages: Alternative History in Modern British Drama*. Westport: Greenwood Pres. p: 34.

¹⁰⁹ Michael Anderson. (1968). “Arnold Wesker: The Last Humanist?”, *New Theatre Magazine*. Vol. 7, Issue 3. (10-27) p: 26.

¹¹⁰ Richard Hornby. (Winter 2004). “Ibsen Triumphant”, *Hudson Review*. Vol. 56, Issue 4. (685-91) p: 685.

¹¹¹ (July 19, 2004). “Diary: Arnold Wesker”, *New Statesman*. Vol. 133, Issue. 4697. p: 8.

¹¹² Eric Bentley. (2003). p: 536.

¹¹³ Giles Gordon. (1966). “Arnold Wesker: An Interview”, *Transatlantic Review*. Vol. 21. (15-25) p: 20.

type, the Realist who “knows the truth but wants and tries to change it”, often paying ultimate price”¹¹⁴. Solness, as an individual who “has compartmentalized people, each of whom he owes a debt to”¹¹⁵, seems to be a representative of the third type without doubt. And it makes sense to suggest that this third type is also a proper definition for Andrew. The lesson Ibsen and Wesker intend to impart to their audience is that one’s passion only in his professional success inevitably deteriorates his emotional ties with those around him.

Özet: İnsanların yaşam kaliteleri ile yaşadıkları konutlar arasında yakın bir ilişki vardır. Bu bağlamda da, yaşadıkları mekanları geliştirme yönünde çabaları olmuştur. İnsan yaşamını yansıtan bir sanat olan tiyatro da insanların nasıl yaşadıkları yanında nerede yaşadıkları konusunu da sahneye getiren bir sanat olmuştur. İnsanların kendi kullanımları ve başkalarının kullanımları için daha büyük ve daha yüksek binalar yapma isteği zaman içinde tutkuya dönüşmüş ve bu tutku birçok tasarımcıyı kendine bağlamıştır. Norveç’li oyun yazarı Henrik Ibsen ve İngiliz oyun yazarı Arnold Wesker insanların oturdukları evlerin kalitesini her bakımdan geliştirme çabasını sahneye getiren oyun yazarları arasındadır. Her iki oyun yazarı da bu eylem için harcanan çabanın yalnız beceri değil, tutku da gerektirdiğini ortaya koyar ve yaşamlarındaki insanların gereksinimlerini göz ardı ederek, tutkularını bütünüyle evlerin kalitesini geliştirmeye adanmış insanların birçok şeyi kaybetmesinin kaçınılmaz olduğunu vurgular.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Henrik Ibsen, Arnold Wesker, ev, tutku.

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¹¹⁴ Stella Adler. (1999). *On Ibsen, Strindberg, and Chekhov*. Edited by. Barry Paris. New York: Knopf. p: 21.

¹¹⁵ Joan Anderman. (Feb 7, 1999). “Designing a ‘Master Builder’ At ART, Ibsen’s Play is Having a Whole World Constructed Around It”, *Boston Globe*.

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