

Chapter-I

Introduction

Modernism is a highly contested 'ism', pantechanical as well an international upheaval palpable not only on English but Western art too. M. H Abrams in his *Glossary of Literary Terms* (1981) states that to most critics modernism " involves a deliberate and radical break with the traditional bases both of Western culture and of Western art" and that the "precursors" of this break "are thinkers who questioned the certainties that had hitherto provided a support to social organization, religion, morality and the conception of the human self -thinkers such as Freidrich Nietzsche (1844-1900), Marx, Freud, and James Frazer, whose *The Golden Bough* (1890-1915) stressed the correspondence between central Christian tenets and barbaric myths and rituals". However Abrams contend that it was essentially " after World War 1 shook men's faith in the foundations and continuity of Western civilization and culture" that witnessed actualization of modernism in literary sphere.(p.109). According to *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, modernism in literature "reveals a breaking away from established rules, traditions and conventions, fresh ways of looking at men's position and function in the universe and many (in some cases remarkable) experiments in form and style." (Cudon 516)

Notwithstanding the above, *modern* is not very new. It comes from the Latin *modernus*, implying "now time" in opposition to the past of a tradition. It emerged in the medieval period as a term in the so-called battle of the books, in which traditional values in art and thought were opposed to more contemporary or modern ones. Ever since *modern* has generally described a state of affairs characterized by apprehensions, comprehensions, accommodations, innovation, experimentation and certain kinds of distancing from the past. The expansion of the research demands an understanding and the interconnectedness between the key concepts modern, modernity and modernism.

The first use of the term *modern* was noticed in the 5th century, in order to signify the new coming times of Christianity as opposite the former Roman pagan times (Habermas 3). Christopher L.C.E. Witcombe shows how art critics referred to their contemporary artists as 'modern' ever since the 15th century, giving the example

of Cennino Cennini who was referring to Giotto as modern in 1437, as well as Giorgio Vasari who “writing in 16th-century Italy refers to the art of his own period as ‘modern.’ Witcombe posits ‘modern’ as an art historical term that is generally and roughly used to signify the artistic creation (in style and ideology) in the period from 1860 to the 1970s.

The genesis of literary modernism can be fathomed in the attempts of writers striving to come to terms with emerging new view of Man at the centre of varied ideas of Darwin, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud etc. etc. The impact was that from the middle of the 19th-century, the very basic foundation of earlier understanding of core issues of nature, the place of Man witnessed cataclysmic change forcing artists and creative writers to experience a sense of bewilderment, full of apprehensions as patent in works from Moore and Gissing to Joyce and Lewis, from Browning and Arnold to Eliot and Pound. The 19th-century writers and thinkers were not actually aware of modernity or modernism as we perceive it, simply because they were the anticipators, or rather, the initiators, of what will later become the complex modernist constellation of aesthetic movements in the first half of the 20th century. (Berman 2010, 15–36). Difficult as it may be to fix an era, the four decades between 1890-1930 could be a safe bet also validated from the anthologies of works available. As Virginia Woolf on the demise of Edward VII remarked “All human relations shifted—those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change there is at the same time a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature.” (1966, p.321 in *Collected Essays*, Vol I, ed Leonard Woolf, The Hogarth Press, London.)

Since the term "Modern" is used to describe a wide range of periods, any definition of modernity must account for the context in question. Modern can mean all of post-medieval European history, in the context of dividing history into three large epochs: Antiquity, Medieval, and Modern. Likewise, it is often used to describe the Euro-American culture that arises out of the Enlightenment and continues in some way into the present.

Paul De Mann however in ‘Literary History and Literary Modernity’ has a word of caution and therefore he emphasizes on ‘modernity’ rather than on ‘modernism’ as it encompasses not on isolated, single event rather entails

'incandescent' attempts 'to wipe out whatever came earlier, in the hope of reaching at last a point that could be called a true present, a point of origin that marks a new departure'.(1971,p.148).Terry Eagleton in *Against the Grain: Selected Essays* perhaps echoes the same when he writes of

a sense of one's particular historical conjuncture as being somehow peculiarly pregnant with crisis and change...[A]portentous, confused yet curiously heightened self-consciousness of one's own historical moment,at once self-doubting and self-congratulatory, anxious and triumphalistic together...[A]t one and the same time an arresting and denial of history in the violent shock of the immediate present, from which vantage point all previous developments may be complacently consigned to the ashcan of 'tradition'.(1986,p.139)

The two most common understandings of modernity, a more convenient term applicable to several periods lies in the difference in their attitude to time: one possible understanding of modernity is as a form of life, meaning that to be modern at all times is a prerequisite for being contemporary, fashionable, current, in a here-and-now space, and the other common understanding of modernity is as a period in history that encompasses the historical time and all the events since the renaissance. Modernity was unwrapping and developing differently in different parts of Europe, as well as in the States. As the sublimation of these two ways of understanding modernity, John Jervis suggests that modernity is:

The experience of the world as constantly changing, constantly engendering a past out of the death of here and now, and constantly reproducing that here and now as the present, the contemporary, the fashionable. ...the past is inert and the future is unreal: what is real is the momentary experience of the 'now', as it moves from an unrealized future into a lifeless, shadowy past. The 'eternal in the transient' is perhaps the eternal, recurrence of the transient itself. (Jervis 6)

This notion of the world as constantly changing could have developed only with the abandoning of the Middle Age concept of the world as a pre-determinate order where everything is fixed and fatalistically unchangeable, as well as with the development of the sciences and the discoveries of the new worlds. This definition of modernity is rooted in the present, in the moment, in constant adaptation and change.

These adaptations and changes are especially short-lived, various and many in the modern period. To remain modern, a person is required to always be ready to perform right, to stage and shift the self.

The period from 1850 to 1950, is the period when the world experienced the first rapid changes of the fast and massive industrialization, the new means of transport and production, the quick and faster changes of fashions, moods and styles, growth of population and cities, the development of media and public transportation (for instance the railways and the trams, the emergence of the telegrams and so on.).

Modernity is also characterised by the constant, active and adaptive performance of its position in relation to history and to all that can be labeled as other (to an individual, to a nation, to a culture, to a gender, to a race, etc.). This is how modernity directs the formation of identity – through its constant performing, through its constant re-iteration. The modern times brought changes that fast forwarded and underlined the already existing awareness of the performative qualities of life. Plato's concept of the world as a reflection of ideas, Aristotle's concept of mimesis, the Latin idea of *teatrum mundi*, Shakespeare's famous quote that all the World is a stage, the Eastern concepts of the illusionist nature of reality, as well as almost all of the ancient forms of ritual and theatre – all these, are connections of life to performances, games, imitation and reflection. The firm structures of society and culture were established by performing modern times and modern values in relation to past life and values, public life in relation to the private, space in relation to its essence and function, etc. The awareness for these processes which was initial in the age of modernity, by the end of the 20th century resulted with the appearance of the field of performance studies that covers anthropological, sociological, psychological, teatrological, culturological, aesthetic, philosophical, linguistic, literary etc. research.

Modernity and modernism were trying to break with their predecessor – romanticism. Freedom or libertinism was the real big issue of the modern times: freedom from the Church and its clerics, freedom from the landlords and feudalism, freedom of the individual. The belief in this freedom is what caused the emergence of capitalism – The freedom to earn and change one's class on the basis of the capital one owns. Individuality was also a new concept, typical for early capitalism – and one that our contemporary society is based on as well: all modern people prefer to be seen

as individuals, and lack of individuality is perceived as a form of imprisonment, or as a lack of character. At the same time, the effort to achieve individuality brings a sense of alienation, a specific melancholy mood and a sort of a chronic existential crisis for the modern person. The failure of the effort to achieve individuality and personal freedom meant not performing being modern correctly and successfully, it meant an unsuccessful performance of the modern times.

Modernity is often characterized by comparing modern societies to pre-modern or postmodern ones, and the understanding of those non-modern social statuses is, again, far from a settled issue. To an extent, it is reasonable to doubt the very possibility of a descriptive concept that can adequately capture diverse realities of societies of various historical contexts, especially non-European ones, let alone a three-stage model of social evolution from pre-modernity to postmodernity. As one can see above, often seemingly opposite forces (such as objectivism and subjectivism, individualism and the nationalism, democratization and totalitarianism) are attributed to modernity, and there are perhaps reasons to argue why each is a result of the modern world. In terms of social structure, for example, many of the defining events and characteristics listed above stem from a transition from relatively isolated local communities to a more integrated large-scale society. Understood this way, modernization might be a general, abstract process which can be found in many different parts of histories, rather than a unique event in Europe.

Donald Preziosi (1999) defines modernity as “the performance of the ethics and politics of identity, at every scale from the person to the race.” (33) The politics of identity served the forming of nations and the nation states, and it made clearer the difference between the individual self and the person identified with and belonging to a nation. One of the significant emerging phenomena in the 19th century was the massive appearance of museums and the development of art history. These two interrelated occurrences: the scientific, systematic approach (art history) and the collecting, performing institution (the museum) served the strengthening of national feelings, and consequently, the forming of a person’s identity. The art objects and the other artifacts in museums served as controlled, objectified, even moral lessons – they were an indication of the past that was gone and over. Museums and art history served the development of awareness for the difference between cultures and societies, of otherness, and they often employed “spectacle, stagecraft and dramaturgy” in order to

show the relations of the exhibited objects to the world, the relation among the separate exhibited objects and perhaps most importantly, to initiate a reflective reaction in the individual. (Preziosi 31) Showing the history of the world and its development, the art objects in museums served as an exposition of “the hidden truth of the citizen, the modern individual subject.” (Preziosi 33) Art history developed from the impulse of modernity to mark and in an act of confirmation perform its existence as separate from everything that had happened before – the past and art belonged to museums.

What art represented for the creator/artist, how the world or the relation of an individual to the world was represented through art became a source for reflection for the one observing. The works of art were looked upon as openings to the creator’s soul, and their interpretation began to be the subject of psychoanalysis. This is why Preziosi sees art history as a bridge between psychoanalysis and history, serving the purpose of clarifying the line between the individual and society. The development of art history and museums became one of the tools for performing modernity. Through them, the modern individual knowingly and scientifically separated himself from the past. The artifacts and their history also served another very important function: to initiate a reflective process, that ultimately leads to self-reflection. They were and still are a corrective performance. Aesthetic modernism is a consequence and a reaction to the development of art history since it decided to cut itself away from history and old ideologies and to form itself according to a new one: denying a reference point in the past, but strongly rooted in self-reflexivity.

Modernization brought a series of seemingly indisputable benefits to people. Lower infant mortality rate, decreased death from starvation, eradication of some of the fatal diseases, more equal treatment of people with different backgrounds and incomes, and so on. To some, this is an indication of the potential of modernity, perhaps yet to be fully realized. In general, rational, scientific approach to problems and the pursuit of economic wealth seems still too many a reasonable way of understanding good social development.

Many critics also point out psychological and moral hazards of modern life - alienation, feeling of rootlessness, loss of strong bonds and common values, hedonism, disenchantment of the world, and so on. Likewise, the loss of a generally

agreed upon definitions of human dignity, human nature, and the resulting loss of value in human life have all been cited as the impact of a social process/civilization that reaps the fruits of growing privatization, subjectivism, reductionism, as well as a loss of traditional values and worldviews. Some have suggested that the end result of modernity is the loss of a stable conception of humanity and/or the human being.

It is indeed imperative to gain an understanding of the Modern Self which plays an integral part of the rapid change. The modern self assumes an autonomy that seeks to reject the claims of authority, tradition, or community. It self-searches for personal therapy that only results in the subjective experience of well-being. The true, the good, and the beautiful are undiscoverable, so they are judged as not applicable to human experience. The modern self has moved from an emphasis on redemption of character to liberation from social inhibitions. Identity is self-constructed through self-consumption of products of desire.

Henrik Ibsen who was a major 19th century Norwegian playwright is often referred to as the "father of modern drama". The Danish critic Georg Brandes, Ibsen's contemporary, labelled him as "one of the modern minds that made the modern breakthrough." (McFarlane and Bradbury 43). Today he is considered to be the greatest Norwegian author and is celebrated as a national hero by the Norwegians. However, there was a time when Ibsen was an object of criticism and condemnation not only in his contemporary Norway, but also in continental Europe, and in the conservative bourgeois society in particular

James McFarlane gives biographical facts about Ibsen's awareness of the coming new times, of "the new era," and of his own role in it's forming: (*The Oxford Ibsen*, ed. James Walter McFarlane, 5:437)

It has been said that I too, in our countries, have taken a lead in contributing to the creation of the new era. I believe, (...), that the age in which we live might just as well be described as an ending, and that from it something new is on the point of being born. Indeed I believe that the doctrine of evolution and as it is in the natural sciences is valid in the cultural aspects of life. I believe that the time is immanent when the concept of politics and the concept of society will cease to exist in their present forms, (...), poetry philosophy and religion

will merge into a new category, a new vital force, of which we who are living today have no understanding. (Ibsen in McFarlane 157)

In fact, Ibsen and Brandes were supporting each other on this creation of the new era, believing in one another to be one of the first ones to act in the world towards it becoming reality. In order to do this, Ibsen advised Brandes that one has to

Subvert the concept of statehood; make free choice and spiritual kinship the sole essentials for union and you have a start of a liberty that is worth something. (...) Yes, dear friend, all that matters is not to be frightened by the venerableness of the institution (...) what is there, fundamentally, that we are obliged to hold fast to? Who can guarantee me that 2 and 2 don't make five on Jupiter? (Ibsen in McFarlane 1979: 164)

As a pioneer of the modern industrialized new era, Ibsen shows remarkable awareness for the role he was playing in its forming. His words cited above show a remarkable idealism and they are written in a prophetic style, a hope in the new times that were supposed to change humanity in its core. However, what McFarlane also points to is that in fact, Ibsen was supporting, motivating, and pushing Brandes towards acting in the battle for the new era more than he was acting publicly on it himself. According to McFarlane, Ibsen didn't feel enthusiastic about joining parties, public projects, speeches, "any kind of oratorical posturing" and he even wrote to Brandes that having friends prevents from spiritual development. Ibsen insisted on aloneness and isolation for the purpose of spiritual development because contact with others implies having to oblige to courtesy and politeness that prevent one from being one's self. (McFarlane 168) Ibsen was avoiding being a public figure and conforming to the performative standards of a public person, but he couldn't avoid being modern, and he couldn't escape the modern (ist) thinking.

The meaning of the term modern as Georg Brandes had used it refers to the changes that were apparently completely new at the time Ibsen was writing, compared to other writers from the same period and compared to the established tradition before Ibsen. Ibsen was also referred to as modern by German writers that were active in the same period. In fact, he was so modern in Europe, especially in Berlin, that there was an almost established 'Ibsenism'.

Ibsen, Ibsen everywhere! There's nothing like it! Over the whole globe Ibsen fever rages. The whole world is Ibsen-mad, even though unwillingly, for the entire air is full of Ibsen-germs! No salvation! Fashions and advertisements, everywhere proclaim Ibsen's name, trumpet his praise. On cigars, ladies' trinkets, pastries, bodices, ties is flaunted the world in letters of gold: Ibsen! A la Ibsen! (McFarlane 112).

These are the words of a small rhyme (the rhyme is lost in translation) that was being recited in the streets of Berlin after the performance of his plays in the theatres. Pamphlets and various manifestos were popping out in the late 19th and early 20th century Europe, proclaiming aesthetics, styles of life and behaviour, moral and ethical values, poetic guide-lines, visions, and prophecies. This appraisal of Ibsen is very similar to the appraisals that the later modernists (the Surrealists, the Dadaists, and the Futurists are the most typical examples) were writing for the purpose of spreading their own fashions. In the ending passage from *The Manifesto of Surrealism* (1924) by Andre Breton, one can observe the same rhetoric that opposes art/poetics to nature. While the Ibsen lovers of the late 19th century were using the rhetoric of natural sciences and evolution as a metaphor for the growing popularity of Ibsen, the surrealists themselves were trying to chase away natural existence and take over the world with their art and poetics. They were desperate to erase reality, nature and natural sciences and change the world-view of humanity.

What is important in the emerging of such pamphlets and manifestoes is the 'prescription' for being modern, the announcing of the fashions, the description and the performing of 'style'. What can also be read from these pamphlets and manifestoes is awareness and praising of artificiality, turning to culture, neglecting nature, or using it for the purpose of emphasizing culture.

In his biography of Ibsen, Robert Ferguson demonstrates how much Ibsen was modern and famous at the time he was preparing and writing his dramatic Epilogue, his last play:

The realism of Ibsen's modern drama lies in this representation of the impact of society on the bourgeois family, shifting the interest from the folklore-based story to a shocking depiction of reality. However, as James McFarlane points out, modernism brought the awareness of the individual and the struggle to

state and implement individual truth, for the purpose of uncovering the false nature of established “truths”. (McFarlane 80)

The modern realist drama was pointing to the audience the complexity of the private public relations, the insecurities of the modern times. The space that is left for the plots and events that do not "normally" happen is exactly Ibsen's strong and attractive side, it is the point where his realism is spiced up with issues and techniques that bring him closer to modernism. It is also the space where deep buried psychological issues and mechanisms appear on the stage. It is the space where the search for the true self-begins, the place where the public life appears only as a threat, as a controlling mechanism, and where the questions fall not on the social purpose and the pragmatism of the human, but on his very essence and his true desires. It is the space where psychological reflexivity enters Ibsen's works, as a result of the psyche's need for security.

Henrik Ibsen intersects at crucial phase. He was the first dramatist to have felt the need and necessity of capturing the various nuances and emotions of femininity. It is not presumptuous to credit Ibsen for initiating, challenging, questioning the narrative of the delineating feminine behaviour on stage. Ibsen's works are also a reflection and a result of the growing awareness of performativity in the age of modernity and that this awareness is present in them as one of the dominant topics. The metaphor of *A Doll's House* is speaking for itself (people are like dolls, puppets in a decorated home playing out an ideal of life instead of living reality), as much as the loft from *The Wild Duck* (which can be perceived as a metaphor for the illusions in people's lives about their own freedom of thought, behaviour and choice), the ending massive scene of *Pillars of Society* (where with a very subtle irony Ibsen points to the acted out scenarios and the fake rhetoric of powerful and influential people), Hedda Gabler's attempt to create a scenario for her ideal of the beautiful death, Hilda Wangel's re-creating the scene of her childhood in which Sollness loses his life – all these are vivid elements that point to Ibsen's awareness of the importance and variations of performances in life.

However, it would be a mistake if one fails to mention that he was also breaking the rules of established naturalism and realism by introducing romanticist and modernist elements in his works, by commencing myth, folklore and hints of the

supernatural. He presented new points of view to accepted and commonly established norms of cultural, social, aesthetic, religious and moral issues, uncovering the truth about human relations grounded in power, the bourgeois ideal of the home, the family, the new capitalist society, the artistic ideal.

The recent book *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism* of Toril Moi (2006) demonstrate and explains how Ibsen's formal techniques and innovations in playwriting, his "self-conscious meta-theatrical reflections" (Moi 2), as well as his choice of topics and problems, are clear signs of modernism. She rejects the most commonly established opinion of Ibsen as only a realist, or even a naturalist, and shows that there is a need for a new and fresh look at these categories. Moi opens her book with a discussion on the ambiguous position that Ibsen has within the defining limits of modernism by pointing to the curious fact that although Ibsen's works are in the common curricula for studying modernism in the dramatic arts, he is usually not claimed to be one of the first introducers of modernism in drama. Rather, he is considered to be a rather vague and boring figure, a necessary but not interesting link in the historical chain that leads to the birth of the many European modernisms of the first half of the 20th century. She explains this to be a result of the "specific set of aesthetic beliefs" (Moi 2) of the post-World War Period that completely rejected romanticist idealism as well as later realism and was turned solely to the poetics and aesthetics of the developed modernisms of the early twentieth century.

Historically and aesthetically, Ibsen was raised in the tradition of romanticism, and he stopped writing just before the fruitful emerging of many of the European forms of modernism. Therefore, it is natural to look at his work as the link between these two aesthetic paradigms, and to look at him as an in-between-periods writer that cannot be placed totally in one or the other concept, but can be understood as having his own unique poetics and aesthetics that encompasses elements from romanticism and announces issues of modernism while using realist techniques and settings. Therefore, we must be inclined to call Ibsen's specific modernism proto-modernism, since it is not modernism in the purest sense of the word, nor does it fit historically into the period of the blossoming of the many modernist movements. In fact, the modernists were always denying and throwing of Ibsen as a realist, as boring, and they were establishing their set of aesthetic guides and beliefs on this basis of the rejection of realism. This attitude is what Moi labels as 'modernist ideology.' (Moi 2)

The later modernists were more oriented towards aesthetic criteria that praised artificiality, meta-artistic and otherworldly qualities, they were experimenting radically with the formal aspects of art, as well as language, and they had an increased interest in madness, pagan religions and cults, distant civilizations, childhood and mystery – the everyday, reality, and even art was banal if it was not aestheticized, changed, or mystified in some way. Language had to be fragmented, distorted and sometimes meaningless, the family was not considered as high value by modernists - they were mostly in search of extraordinary experiences, and humanity was mostly seen through scopes of utopia or dystopia. Ibsen was presenting real-life problems, the family and the everyday as something that is under a threat from the early capitalism, he was concerned with the changes that the modern times impose on the self, he was self-reflexive and considerate of the common and the everyday. He was observing and noticing the changes that the modernists are a consequence as Østerud suggests, he was also introducing modernist aesthetic techniques and criteria. On the formal level, he shows more inclinations towards innovations and experiments as his writings develop. His last plays are the ones that are closest to modernist aesthetics in this sense. While his are mostly reactions to the melodramatic conventions, the modernists' reactions are against realism and realistic presentation. Therefore, Ibsen cannot be labelled as a pure modernist, but as a proto-modernist, as a crossing, transitory bridge from romanticism to modernism.

In 'Anticipations of Modernism in the Age of Romanticism' (1985), Brian Rowley emphasizes the fact that both romanticism and modernism appeared at the end of a century – romanticism at the end of 18th and modernism at the end of 19th century. The concept of 'the turn of the century' is usually marked as a period when change is 'naturally' expected. Therefore, paradoxically, change usually 'naturally' arrives at turns of centuries. When change is present in the general expectations of a nation, a culture, or all humanity, change actually occurs, inspired by the idea that it can happen. Change at the turn of centuries is a performed phenomenon, a public construct.

Fritz Paul connected the fin de siècle mythem with the metaphysical landscapes in Ibsen's later plays and with the representation of space and the vertical scheme of climbing and falling in his later works. One sees in this, besides the modish cultural pessimism and decadence of the turn of the century, that consciousness of the

existential crisis of the secularized man that characterizes the often puppet-like figures of the drama. (Paul 18)

John Jervis also views the modern human as burdened by the ability to reflect on his own actions and experiences, as a necessary consequence of what he calls 'the project' of modernity. (Jervis 9-10) 'The project' of modernity is an expression that Jervis uses in order to explicate the constructed circular relation between self-reflexivity as a prerequisite of the modern mood and of self-reflexivity as an imminent consequence of the changes that come with modernity. The quality of ambivalence typical of the modern person comes as a natural result of the dialectical and simultaneous experiencing the changes that come with modernity, together with the required awareness of them. In order to be able to understand the changes, it is necessary to be distanced from them. Therefore, a person belonging to the age of modernity has to be utterly present and perceptive, but distant at the same time.

In this respect, Ibsen's self-exile from Norway, and the fact that he was writing about Norwegian society, Norwegian context, and the Norwegian bourgeois family while residing in other European countries can be understood as a necessary distancing from the changes and the traumatic experiences from these same changes that were happening in his country during his lifetime. While reflecting on them, understanding them and presenting them, Ibsen was also observing the changes that were happening at the same time within the specific nation - contexts and their own specific histories and developments. His works are also a reaction to the observation of these changes as well. In a sense, Ibsen's life and his works can be seen as one of the first announcements of 'the projects of modernity', or even better, as a 'personal project' - an artist who spends a life time to reflect and write about the changes that were happening at the same time he was experiencing them, i.e. at the same time they were affecting him.

Naomi Lebowitz characterises Ibsen's works as uncovering of the need to connect to the Great World (or the utopian idea of the modern, new society, corresponding to the idea of the Third World in *Emperor and Galilean*) through the parody and satire of the small world, or the bourgeois reality and the home. "His concern with social freedom disguises the passion for Freedom; his virulent parodic depiction of the small world of bourgeois duty camouflages the rich and relentless

presence of the Great World of liberated spirit, desire, and art.” (Lebowitz 1) Lebowitz suggests that Ibsen was, in fact, a believer in the Great World and Freedom in the most idealist sense and that his realism and criticism of society serves the purpose of suggesting these ideas, or better, the human need for ideals.

True Freedom’s fear of consummation and climax makes a friend of irony and parody in Ibsen’s art, dedicated to not finishing off the struggle to reach the Great World. To stay honest, it needs as continuous a story as does the Romantic return to original innocence, to keep us away from dying from disappointment. (...) Ibsen’s failures and tenuous, fragile success never point us back to a state of merged maternal peace, but always, by way of exile, deeper on the way to our natural, renounced medium of rich mystery and gladfulness of being. (...) Like the therapist, Ibsen confronts us “with our own shadows,” and like the patient, he stands as his own judge between his darkness and his light. This is the depth from which we can sense, from time to time, even if we are not quite ready for a real homeland, that we might become citizens of the Great World that has been so long feared, so long desired. (Lebowitz 233 - 234)

What Lebowitz suggests is that Ibsen was both self-aware of his own beliefs and ideas, as well as that he made this awareness a project that can be uncovered in his art. Instead of being a propagator of the Great World and Freedom, he was writing works that showed how the modern world constricts this need in the human. In this sense, his works can be read as a project, as a meaningful and deliberate message. As he himself has pointed out, his works should be read in chronological order, as a development of a project that ends with the Epilogue. Therefore, they are a personal project as well, reflecting on the changes of the author as he was progressing in his work.

This idea of the project of modernity touches upon the performed nature of modernity. Self-reflexivity, which is the main characteristic of the modern human means thinking of and influencing one’s own behaviour, it means a need to correct one’s self in all relations. The need for this comes from the outside, from culture and society that demand presence and immediate reaction, but it is executed in the inside, in one’s psyche. This relation between the outside and the inside corresponds to the public and the public. Self-reflective thinking looks back on one’s actions, it happens

after something has occurred, but the purpose of it and the need for it comes in order to learn better how to respond in a similar situation the next time it appears, at the moment it appears. The guidance for the responses in situations comes from society; it is the 'prescribed' behaviour in certain situations. On all levels, modernity is a project that asks for a performative individual to perform correctly, so that the global project of modernity can be performed correctly.

The idea of the project of modernity is rooted in Jaus's idea of history as cyclical and reactionary, as a relation between the new and the ancient, or innovation and tradition. Through analyzing how the term 'modern' appears in history each time there is a consciousness of a new and establishing attitude towards the ancients, i.e. towards a previous tradition, Habermas defines modernity (and with this modernism, which he calls aesthetic modernity) as a 'modern' tradition that cuts away the ties with any specific history. (Habermas 3-4) It is exactly this cutting away that establishes modernity and modernism as radically new. All new movements that were conscious of their reactionary nature were modern when they first appeared as a reaction to an establishment, but the ones that were using the term 'modern' in order to explicate their innovative attitude had a conscious, inspiring connection and relation towards a previous period or movement as well. Modernity radically cut off the connection with the ancients and tradition.

That is to say, the term 'modern' appeared and re-appeared exactly during those periods in Europe when the consciousness of a new epoch formed itself through a renewed relationship to the ancients – whenever, moreover, antiquity was considered a model to be recovered through some kind of imitation." (Habermas 4) This imitation can also be seen and thought of as a performance, as acting, or a re-enacting of past values and methods. Modernity, however, was not imitating a previous reality in order to recover a model; in fact, it was building its own model as the reality of here and now, as an adaptation-craving, flux-like repetition of what is modern and fashionable. Brian Johnston connected the national project of Ibsen's youth to the need to re-connect with a "living but exiled spiritual past, seeking to regain the stage of his theatre and thus to regain its place in modern consciousness." (Johnston 652)

He claims this to be a feature of all of Ibsen's works, and that this need is responsible for the entering of myth, legend and cultural history in them. According to Johnston, Ibsen was aware that the only way to create new, fresh and modern art to reconnect it to the past. (Johnston 653) Using the concepts of the Platonic (or Hegelian) concept of memory as anamnesis, as "unforgetting," Johnston claims that Ibsen's works act as a reminder of the modernist's repressed anamnesis of spiritual truths. He also connects Ibsen's works to another concept of memory and history, corresponding to the meticulous and constant scholarly gathering of facts and information, which can best be seen in the historical dramas. According to Johnston,

In the early work up to *Emperor and Galilean*, Ibsen is looking at the past from the stand-point of his contemporary world and its needs; in the later work he is looking at the contemporary world from the standpoint of the past and its requirements. The later Ibsen has gone over to the ranks of the occult, of the reproachful ghosts. (Johnston 655)

The need to turn to the realms of the past comes from modernity's effort to erase it. From the Hegelian perspective, Ibsen's dramatic art, with its references to the past would serve the purpose of deepening and awakening the conceptual range of people, opening it up to further realms than the present moment of here and now. Similar to Østerud's view of Ibsen's dramas as double realist-sacred dramas, Johnston suggests that Ibsen's modernism is actually an attempt to transform modernity, to "take on the identity of the mythopoeic, myth-saturated world of his imagination, to render reality occult." (Johnston 658) In all the realist settings of Ibsen, Johnston sees archetypes and in all the actions archetypal actions. These covered archetypes serve the purpose to estrange reality, to uncover the known as unknown, to show that what we are used to as reality is actually not our nature, to fill what is familiar with unfamiliarity. However, what Johnston fails to mention is that these archetypes do not necessarily have to connect to the national past and history. They are also the memory of the psyche, the unconscious part of all humanity. This is what Johnston refers to as the occult, the mythical. However, myths are parts of the imaginary structures of humanity, just as archetypes, symbols, and schemes. What the modern individual solves with self-reflection and psychotherapy the mythical thinking societies were solving through iteration of mythical and ritual experiences.

The ancient world turned imaginary concepts in images and myths, but the modern world is overflowing with them as well. They are present in the modern prose (of Joyce, James, Hardy, Kafka as few examples), and also in modern drama. They can be estranged and recognized in the modern world only by self-awareness and self-reflection because their conscious use implies an awareness of them as concepts.

Psychology and psychiatry are products of the modern world, and they are a result of the first explorations of the imaginary structures of the human. National myths are only one way of using these concepts. Using them in literary works is another. What is interesting about Ibsen is his use of these concepts in realist settings, as psychic, other-worldly, mythical intrusions in modern reality.

The relationship between art and the outside world becomes a metaphor for the relations and tensions between a man and his environment, his reality, his world. Rosengarten views the modern self-conscious plays and dramatists as deliberately using the tools of realism and naturalism, as well as the common contemporary contexts (such as the home of the new bourgeois class) only to demonstrate that this whole context resembles a game, that it is a transcendent, eternal structure that the artists have become aware of. That is why they also portray characters that are aware of these same tensions.

Ibsen began his artistic career when romanticism was historically being replaced by naturalism and aestheticism, which ultimately led to the emerging of the many modernisms. By paralleling Schenk's concerns of romantic art as "the subjective expression of feeling and the glorification of the artist," and Shelley's "concerns of art (poetry) as an awakening and enlarging of the mind, as something divine and central, THE KNOWLEDGE that comprehends all science and thought," Rosengarten states that from his earliest works, Ibsen was interested in and actually writing about "clusters of elements" that present a persistent attempt to balance out the idea that art could improve society, lift its awareness, make it better with the personal idealized self of the artist. (Rosengarten 46) He is inclined to viewing Ibsen's career as a collision between these two lines, an emerging conflict that "digs deeper and deeper into the art itself, more and more becomes the very subject matter of the art itself." (Rosengarten 46)

Karin Sanders points to the use of archaeology and archaeological terms in Ibsen's works as a "psychological trope [that] has been wedded to a cultural and material component. ... a model of digging, which connects past and present in an ongoing interpretative gesture." (Sanders 107) The various archaeological artifacts in the plays of Ibsen (Sanders analyses *The Burial Mound*, John Gabriel *Borkman* and *The Masterbuilder*) work as materialised metaphors, as guides to the fossils of the past. Sanders lucidly points to the use of archaeological terms in psychoanalysis, especially in Freud. She is inclined to see the real value of these metaphoric uses in their ability to construct and interpret the past while at the same time we are acknowledging that "interpretation both imagines and creates new material." (Sanders 100) In such a way, artefacts serve the performance of a constructed past and become substance for constructing a (hi) story that is already aware of itself as history. In other words, artefacts serve the rehearsing of history, its performance in order to confirm the present.

Theatre in Ibsen's time began showing realistic spectacles so that the individual could reflect upon them as if they were a part of reality. The individual's life became a set of behaviours and performances, and the stage became a reflection of real life. What these realist presentations were showing is that these games and acted out performances in society destroy love and relations and that they are deadly if they penetrate one's private life and the home. What Ibsen's specific realism is showing us is that one of the biggest problems of the modern individual is that he cannot be absorbed in and enjoy the everyday, since modernity requires constant performing on so many levels. A lot (if not all) of the private life is also performed, but the mere performing of these roles does not lead to happiness. Ibsen was for the everyday, or at least he was very interested in the everyday, since all of his modern prose plays are reflections of the bourgeois everyday reality.

WOMEN

It is Ibsen who has given women a vigorous, strong voice and a modern approach by creating powerful female characters like Nora Helmer, Mrs. Hedda Gabler, Alving and Hilda Wangel. Ibsen's female characters are eminent in merit, intelligence, firmness and integrity in comparison with the males. It is widely believed that his plays deal with social conflicts, the dilemma of freedom and necessity,

marriage problems, unwed motherhood and divorce, hypocrisy of the church, career and family, freedom and fairness in the expression of salvation, vicissitudes of human life, universal rights and suffrage of women in the modern society. Ibsen's women are excited in sexuality, self-conceited in appearance and agitation caused by the demand of bourgeois society they encounter in everyday life. He wants to show us how women fall victim of sacrifice in spreading predominance of power and freedom from the lower stage to the higher level of masculine society. He is a forerunner in exploring the notion of woman's self in gendered relationships in his major plays. He creates an array of interesting female characters in a predominantly male society.

Women, in the 19th century in Scandinavian societies were constantly subjugated and marginalized by the members of the patriarchal society. On the whole, this submission attempts to focus on the categorization of Ibsen's women, the treatment of women and contemporary Scandinavia, the role of motherhood and literary criticism of his powerful women.

They are actually bold, revolutionary women warriors with independent and intelligent psychology and aspiration for spiritual emancipation. They endure great pains to defend dignity and rights as human beings rather than subservient to the male-dominated societies. An Ibsen heroine, like Nora Helmer, Mrs. Alving and a fascinating one, Hedda Gabler, is first and foremost a human being rather than merely a woman. The word "woman", in fact implies the "role" intended for her by society or man, who sets the norm for her. She should be weak, gentle, comforting, caring, tame and obedient while for those unconventional women characters through possessing strong, intelligent, ambitious, resolute and irreconcilable personality. From Ibsen's contemporary age to the present, they are supposed to be the source of inspiration for today's women socially, economically, politically and psychologically. While we study of Ibsen's play-texts, we are immediately impressed by his women characters, that bear testimony of strong personality incomparable with social conventions.

Generally, Ibsen's women characters are of two categories. One of the critical approaches to his women characters is: a man is caught between a pair of opposing women, one is strong, independent and deviant, and the other is weak, tame and obedient, namely "the demon" and "the darling" opposites in the term of Asbjorn

Aaserth. Thus, Ibsen's heroines naturally fall into the "demonic "or unconventional category. It is the strong deviant woman who is foregrounded in his plays, while mild, gentle, sweet, darling women are set in the background to highlight their bold and rebellious sisters. Sometimes, these strong women even belittle male characters. The unconventional heroines are based on the powerful personalities consisting of strong-will, independent , intelligent and full of vitality.

In some cases, they are sexually passionate, erotic, proud, temperamental, demanding and easily bored with trivial mundane matters. With the strong personalities, they are confined to a male-centered society where they are deprived of basic rights and suffrage as human beings in its full vigour. Since society is based on patriarchal structures and dominated by patriarchal rules, it is simply not in such a society, a concept such as "individual " is gendered in terms of the male gaze.

A female individual is assigned with all her duties and obligations directed by the patriarchy. Men dominate over the "male-centric" world, while women have to be obedient and subservient. They are usually bound in matrimony functioning as either toys or tools to serve others. In serving this, an obligation is embedded in their social and female identity, while their identity as a human being with the right to happiness and freedom is almost completely sacrificed. In such a patriarchal social framework, they are represented by a set of self-sacrificing and subservient attributes; those who break away from this norm are labelled with such tags as "deviant, "" rebellious "or even "demonic." Most of his women from this labelling are victims of the male-dominated society for their rebellious spirit. Ibsen insightfully describes a range of rebellious characters and unveiled the spiritual pilgrimage; they have gone through their persistent pursuit of emancipation, freedom and bitter struggle to regain their identity and power as human beings. On the other hand, there are Ibsen's women who fall into "the darling" categories, including Sea Elvested in *Hedda Gabler*, Mrs. Linda in *A Doll's House* , Beata in *Rosmersholm*, Bolette, Hilde in the *Lady From the Sea*. The "darling" type is the embodiment of traditional virtues: weak, gentle, caring and compassionate, capable of unselfish love, committed to their duties as devoted wives and loving mothers. Scholars and critics have contributed to enriching this approach to the portrayal of women by using different terms like "good" and "bad", or "mild" and "strong". This type of categorization seems to be convincible based on Ibsen's notes:

The mild woman represents the ideal image of a woman created according to the romantic role of a woman. On the other hand, this strong woman contrasts with the traditional idea of what femininity should be, that is to say. Her nature does not coincide with the role of society for her. Male-dominated society denies its formal education or professional training and the conceivable results of finding a vocation that gains an autonomous life better than the average. Women are homeless and insolvent in a society. (Anne Marie Stanton (1996), *A Place of Woman*, 29-52)

Ann Marie Stanton [4] points out that women are constructed as a social being who is obliged to give herself entirely up to man and child. Those who break away from this patriarchal social framework are certainly incompatible to conventions and will be put to death if they cannot to observe these conventions. Many rebellious women often suffer persecution in such societies in which the patriarchal system has been practiced for centuries.

Ibsen's treatment of women was much influenced by the 19th century Scandinavian women's rights and movements. Naturalistic issues and women's questions were central points in his plays. Women demanded legal equality, financial independence and economic solvency, and above all suffrage.

The naturalist movement, particularly at the time when it reached the theater, coincided with the fight for women's rights and fostered the demands for legal equality, financial independence and the voting rights. Ibsen presented women in his naturalistic plays, most notably Nora in *A Doll's House*, Mrs. Alving in *Ghosts*, Rebecca West in *Rosmersholm*, and Hedda Gabler's title figure. Ibsen's women were portrayed without moral bias as figures seeking authenticity against the unconscious hypocrisy of males in their patriarchal society. The naturalist emphasis on women created a new dimension in the theater history and Ibsen led the way with his strong women characters. His plays focus on the ideology of women's movement, but in theatrical images they were accessible and the empathy created by stage performance encouraged women's identification.

The views of women characters were given equal rights and weightage to those of male figures in his social and realistic plays. By asserting themselves in opposition to the male-dominated society, women revolted against traditional norms

and orders, even though in general they failed and either withdrew from society or be trapped like Mrs Alving in the play *Ghosts*.

The situation of women in Scandinavia had become a subject of debate by 1854 when Norwegian daughters were given equal inheritance rights to sons. In the same year, two Swedish economists focused on peasant women and servants that woman in the north was the household beast of burden and the slave of man. Moreover, contemporary sociologists were much concerned with contemporary women's situations, who pointed out that women of the middle-class women though spared from drudgery, were cut from functional activity. They were either intimate servants or decorative hothouse plants. If their fathers and husbands were rich enough to keep them in indolence, they might be given excellent formalistic educations, but they were separated from the world and from life by a Chinese wall of proprieties which served to frustrate any desire for active self-expression. The wall built of modesty, helplessness, delicacy, gratitude and chastity was valued more than its ignorance. Supreme Virtue was obedience. Men of the lower middle classes demanded the women as the same behavior. If a lot of daughter and wife were drab, the unmarried woman would be dreary. She was not even ornamental, where she could perform some useful work in the house of her relative; she could maintain her respect for herself and was often welcomed. Otherwise, she must become a burden or seek refuge in some sort foundation or take employment as a servant.

The ideals of women frustrated self-expression and isolated women from public life form the context of Ibsen's women characters with *Hedda Gabler* as the most notable. Similarly, although the male guardianship of an unmarried woman was abolished in Norway in 1863 and after 1866 women had the right to earn an independent living, the situation facing unmarried women was still bleak, adding weight to Mrs Linden (who bemoans life of a working woman) and Nora's famous decision to walk out of her marriage and make her own way in the world in *A Doll's House*. In addition, Norwegian nationalism itself contained a symbolic representation of gender that denied equality. For example, on the May 17 celebration of statehood in 1827, the procession carried paintings of Nora, the female symbol of Norwegian nation's, the name of Ibsen's heroine in his most shocking early naturalistic play, while the national anthem was first performed on 17 May 1864 and codified different roles for men and women. A commentator wrote in 1996: "The song reflected the

roles assigned to each gender in building a national home: the strong father protecting his house, actively supported by his wife". She continued, "In this context, it seems natural that men, as fathers and defenders of the nation, should have the right to take part in political decisions". Women as mothers had their special function in the national home, but to take part in active combat did not comply with their feminism.

Ibsen had associated with the women's movement in Norway shortly after writing *A Doll's House*. He expressed clearly his support for the women's rights movement. A short speech reflected his desire for individual liberty and self-fulfillment for all, not just for women, but for "mankind in general". Since his speech was delivered a year before he started drafting *Hedda Gabler*, where the heroine not only burns a manuscript that she clearly identifies as the intellectual equivalent of a baby, but also rejects constricting ties of motherhood in the most final way through her suicide, which means the murder of her unborn child, his comment on the role of mothers had particular significance.

Ibsen's speech at the celebration of the Norwegian Women's Right League, Christiania (present Oslo), 26 May 1898, as follows:

I am not an individual of the Women's Rights League. Whatever I wrote, it was without a known idea to publicize purposefully. I've been more the writer and less the social scientist than most people seem to accept. I thank you for the toast, but I must reject the respect that you have worked intentionally for the Women's Rights movement. I am not even very clear what this movement for women's rights really is. To me, in general, a question of humanity has arisen. And you will understand it if you read my books cautiously. It is sufficiently genuine to deal with the problem of women, along with all the others, but that was not the whole reason. My error was the representation of mankind. To make sure at any point that such a depiction is sensibly valid, the reader reads his own emotions and slants created by the writer. These are at that point credited to the writer, but thus each reader perfectly and conveniently remolds the work, each as indicated by his own identity. Not only are the people who compose, but also the people who read poets. They are partners. Often they are more poetic than the poet himself. Allow me to thank you for the toast you gave me with these reservations. Indeed, I perceive

that women have a vital role to play in the specific directions; this club works together. I am grateful to the League for Women's Rights for proposing a toast, wishing it development and achievement. The task always before my brain was to promote our nation and give a higher standard to our people. To achieve this, two elements are important. It is up to mothers to awaken a knowledgeable sense of culture and discipline through hard and supported work. This inclination must be raised before the general population can be raised to a higher level. The women tackle the human problem. They will explain it as mothers. What's more, is this limit they could tackle? This is an unbelievable mistake for women. My deepest thanks! In addition, achievement in the League for the Rights of Women [6].

The statement stated above gives us an idea concerning Ibsen full support toward women's rights and suffrages. It also demonstrates the responsibility and the obligation of women to solve human problems. His speech to the Norwegian Women's Rights League notwithstanding, the younger Ibsen made a number of claim that qualified him for the position of 'social philosopher.' While making notes *for A Doll's House* in 1878, he stated: 'A woman cannot act naturally in contemporary society; it is a male society with laws drawn up by men, guidance and judges who judge women directly from the male point of view. ("Trolls in Ibsen's Late Plays," 1998/1999:541-80).

Ibsen's women are not judged by explicit "good" actions as opposed to "bad" ones by the good faith they bring to their acts. Their attitude towards sex illuminates their struggle for happiness. Men, generally declare sexual pleasure inferior to more ideal varieties. Women who are endowed with critical clarity and energy are the most sexual. Ibsen's idea of freedom means emancipation from oppression from any kind. To Ibsen, the subordinate condition of women within the four walls of the house was like the condition of working men who were equally deprived. Women's rights and human rights have been synonymous with Ibsen. He wanted to give Nora all the social rights that society is unwilling to give to a woman. He saw wife as an individual, not "man's dependent if not his slave." (Rifat M, Afroze J, Zaman N, Amin S(2006) *Ibsen 's A Doll's House* and Chopin 's *The Awakening*: 119-128)

Ibsen's aim was to see the world through female eyes for establishing a separate identity. They have never been encouraged to see the world. As if they were deprived of essential biological organs to see and feel it, it is through men's eyes that they learn to see the world. The obsessed, blocked view of women never gives them the opportunity to realize that woman is first and foremost a human being. They must step out to see the real world that is not man-made and learn how to build their own opinions. Ibsen's idea of independent women was different. What Ibsen necessarily wanted to establish is that it is the self-realization of women that can give them the courage to strive to achieve freedom in the male dominated society; she should be aware of herself as well as of her position in family and society. Ibsen rightly said, "What you call freedom, I call liberties; and what I call freedom is nothing but a constant, active acquisition of the idea of freedom". Woman's idea of freedom is still a burning issue in the 21st century. Women in the Western world have gone a long way to achieve their freedom to lead their own lives. But, in third-world countries, women are still struggling to achieve human rights. Ibsen dreamt of having a new world where women would be equal to men, based on equity, transparency and love. His women's dilemma, struggle and conflicts reflect every woman who wants to wake up "gradually out of a dream, a delicious, grotesque, impossible dream" to live a free life.

The motherhood of Ibsen's omni-mothers are women who occupy or perform the role of bearing some relation to their children who may or may not be their biological offsprings. Thus dependent on the context, women can be regarded as mothers by virtue of having given birth, by raising their children, supplying their ovum for fertilization or some combination thereof. Such conditions provide give a way of delineating the idea of motherhood or the state of being a mother. Women in the third and first categories fall under the terms "birth mother" or "biological mother", regardless of whether the person concerned continues to parent the child. Accordingly, a woman who meets only the second condition may be regarded as an adoptive mother and those who meet only the third a surrogacy mother. The above concepts defining the role of a mother are neither exhaustive nor universal, as any meaning of a mother may differ based on how social, cultural and religious roles are defined. The parallel conditions and terms for males: those who are, biologically fathers, do not by definition take up the role of fatherhood. It should also be noted that

motherhood and fatherhood are not limited to those who are or have parented. Women who are pregnant may be referred to as expectant mothers or mothers-to-be though such applications tend to be less applied to fathers or adoptive parents.

Historically, the role of women has to some extent been limited to mother and wife, and women are expected to devote most of their energy to these roles and spend most of their time at home. In many cultures, women receive significant help in performing these tasks from older female relatives, such as mother in law or their own mothers. Mothers have historically played the primary role in raising children, but since the late 20th century the role of the father in child care has been given greater prominence and social acceptance in some Western countries. The 20th century also witnessed more and more women enter paid work. The social role and experience of motherhood vary widely depending on the location. Mothers are more likely than fathers to acknowledge assimilative and communion enhancing patterns in their children. Mothers are more likely than fathers to recognize the contributions of their children in conversation. The way mothers speak to their children is better suited to support very young children in their efforts to understand speech than fathers. Since the 1970s, in-vitro fertilization has made pregnancy possible at all ages well beyond “natural” limits, generating ethical controversy and forcing significant changes in the social meaning of motherhood. This is, however, a position highly biased by the Western world: outside the Western world, in-vitro fertilization has far less prominence, importance or currency compared to primary, basic health care, women's basic health, reducing infant mortality and the prevention of life-threatening diseases such as polio, typhus and malaria. Traditionally, and still in most parts of the world today, a mother was expected to be a married woman, carrying strong social stigma to birth outside marriage. Historically, this stigma applied not only to the mother but also to her child. This is prevalent in many parts of the developing world today. However, in many Western countries the situation has changed radically, with single motherhood gaining socially acceptability.

A careful examination of complex, powerful women, in particular Nora Helmer, Mrs. Alving and Hedda Gabler, sheds new light on Ibsen 's observations. Ibsen suggested that potentially or partially emancipated women in the male dominated set up of the society affect their thinking from birth, stand by the way of autonomy. This belief is reinforced by multiple representations of motherhood,

whether actual, prospective, foster or metaphorical in his plays. As the most important ramification of physiological differences between women and men is the ability of women to give birth to children and the issue of motherhood has been central to every feminist movement. As Julia Kristeva wrote, "in patriarchal society it is not a woman as such who is oppressed, but a mother" (Gail F, McFarlane J(2004) *Ibsen and Feminism*, 89-105). A focussed look at Ibsen's mother figures reveal a similar message: maternity is seen by those who are non-biological mothers, whereas his actual or prospective mother abandon their children, give them away to be cared elsewhere, raises them in an atmosphere of disappointment or neglects them. Motherless women inflict results from their own victimization by a powerful social norm that equates anatomy with destiny. In the notes to *A Doll's House* Ibsen wrote that a mother in modern society is like "certain insects who go away and die when she has done her duty in the propagation of the race". Ibsen testified to a historical strategy of the 19th century called "hysteria" by Foucault, or the process of defining women in terms of female sexuality, the result of which was to link them to their reproductive function.

In literature, self-design is linked to an individual quest for existence based on a moral position that contradicts the individual with rational, collective social institutions. Ibsen was a forerunner in exploring the notion of self, especially female self in a gendered relationship in his plays. He created a variety of interesting female characters in a predominantly male society based on their romantic quest and struggle for existence. It is a quest for a coherent identity on women's part and their incessant search for self-expression that have caught the fancy of many young writers in the early 20th century. Nora's moral crisis in life, her struggle for self-fashioning and autonomy, her assertion of her emerging female self and her ultimate determination to leave for a family in search of a coherent identity have been noted with admiration and approval by young intellectuals. The Nora motif looks fresh when the protagonist decides to divorce her husband whom she loves to maintain integrity and existence. Nora, as a symbol of motherly woman, autonomy, integrity and emancipation, presents the emerging female consciousness that allows women to re-examine their sexuality. Many critics noted that no playwright could have created such an assertive, likable heroine without sympathy for the challenges women are facing at the time. It

is therefore natural for feminists all over the world to consider the play as one of the masterpieces for the liberation of women.

The depictions of motherhood or imminent motherhood victimization are as memorable as *Hedda Gabler's*. While Hedda is pregnant, the play contains many suggestions of her condition; as Janet Suzman guaranteed: "The pregnancy of Hedda brings together every part of the play." Hedda is the main character who does not refer to her wishes; in response to her husband Tesman's allusions to the possibility of pregnancy by his aunt Juliane Tesman and Judge Brack, she reacts with ir When Brack refers to the possibility of a holy duty, she gives herself the reason. For the motherly calling of the conventional 19th century, in Hedda, women are thwarted by tendencies that are considered masculine.

According to Marholm, Ibsen's plays were revelations; she first read Ibsen in 1883 and later recalled this moment as a real eye-opener. Ibsen's social plays had "a liberating influence on Marholm and other women in the 1880s, "Broomans and Marholm [16] saw women as individuals in Ibsen's plays who rebelled against bourgeois society's rules. She pointed out the importance of love. Those women who manage to combine womanhood with artistic expression are natural women. She reacted to female images in authorship such as Ibsen 's.

In 'Henrik Ibsen and Marriage,' Meyboom stated that marriage is an important theme when reading Ibsen 's plays. She discussed his view of marriage, love and the question of how a person can sacrifice true love for another, higher cause without the approval of his loved one. In her analysis, she showed from the *Comedy of Love to When We Dead Awaken*. In his later plays, two themes, lapses of judgment and marriages are interconnected. Another observation of Meyboom was that the consciousness of Ibsen grows with regard to the difficult position of women. Meyboom was positive about his disagreement with the person who rejects true love and lives a life of falsehood. She (1892) commented in the survey of The Master Builder:

Here we find a full awareness that even women have a vocation worth the same as the most educated man's mission. Even as an artist who can't develop his talent, she can be broken [16].

Herzfeld praised Ibsen's earlier heroic plays in "Trends in Nordic Literature," but criticized the play, *A Doll's House*, and commented that the step towards Nora is the step that leads Ibsen away from esthetics. She regarded Nora and Torvald Helmer's characters as "dead coat hangers" whose sole function was to propagate Ibsen's ideas. If Nora is an eye-opener for Marholm, a support for breaking free, Nora is the end of Ibsen as a real poet for Herzfeld. It is striking that Marholm and Herzfeld both criticized Ibsen for his disobedience to what they considered to be true women.

Though De Savornin Lohman was positive about some of Ibsen's plays, she was negative regarding the final scene of *A Doll's House*, and what she thought was the central part in Ibsen's view on women. Lohman described, in *Politikken*, the way Ibsen wrote about the nature of women:

[...] He (Ibsen) knows that women can be something else than our narrow-minded upbringing has thought us to be. However, when Ibsen describes a woman who liberates herself from the ties she is bound with and who dare to go to a new direction; he is connecting himself with the yearning for freedom his poetical characters feel. And, at this point, Ibsen goes too far, for a man cannot understand a woman—the most delicate of her inner life the quintessence of her nature, her love.

Lohman's criticism can be seen against the backdrop of her view concerning women's emancipation and her view on love. She is for equal rights between men and women, equal pay for equal work, but she is of the view that it has to be restricted within the natural destination of a woman, and that is to love the husband. She questioned in an essay from 1896 whether it is worth for the sake of one's own personality "to harm, to wound and to destroy the abandoned husband or parents or children". How a real woman feels and loves can never be understood by a man, For instance, Nora's love lies when she understands what Torvald Helmer is really like a mistake. Lohman points out that a woman's love will never die like this. A woman loves blindly and will always forgive. Another mistake of Ibsen's is that he lets Nora forget her children. A real woman could never do that. Lohman also admitted that Ibsen might be the only male author who understood women's emancipation if they get an opportunity to develop their talents so that society can benefit from them.

Marholm, Herzfeld, and Lohman had an ambivalent attitude towards Ibsen's powerful women. Their criticism of *A Doll's House* is, in general, negative, Meyboom, who wrote her article about ten years later and after the death of Ibsen in 1906, was of a different opinion, Ibsen wrote realistically about the real people. For Meyboom, Ibsen's work was about marriage, true love, and the real people. Marholm, Herzfeld and Lohman, who were in the midst of the "New Women" debate, seemed to have followed a new trend in the image of Nordic literature in Europe: "A focus on neo-romanticism and a quest for a new woman, a true woman". It is a trend that the nature of a true woman can be expressed by a woman and is not expressible for the male writers, even for Ibsen.

The question of Ibsen's powerful women characters bears a sufficient resemblance to real women either Norwegian or generally European, was frequently debated in connection with the publication of his modern prose plays in the 1880s and 1890s. In a Norwegian booklet, "Are Ibsen's Female Characters Truly Norwegian in Kind?" Hertzberg commented that the author, who is a male claim that women in the contemporary Norwegian society are freer than shown by Ibsen; they practically enjoy the same rights as men. He expressed his concern that Ibsen's drama makes a depressing effect on the foreigners as to the conditions of women in his own country. A contemporary English critic, Mary S Gilliland (1894) also pointed out that Ibsen tears down more than he builds up. She deplores the absence on the Ibsen stage of female ideals like the ones we are familiar with from Shakespeare's plays:

That in Ibsen's world there is a want of beauty and of joy must, we fear, be admitted, where do we find in any of his pages, the joyous whole hearted self-surrender of a Juliet? We are used to hearing that Ibsen is the prophet of modern womanhood; he tells that they must be independent and fearless, must learn to take an initiative in life, and must learn to realize their own souls. But, where has he shown us a woman more fearless, more frank, more independent, more instant in knowing her mind, or more brave and resolute in acting on it than this dear and deathless daughter of the Capulets? The end of Juliet is tragic, but she has triumphed, and she lives forever in our hearts, radiant, tearless, loving, and beautiful.

Gilliland commented that what Ibsen created to reject the kind of women, was not a proper response. The ugly and the prosaic appear to belong to the art of time; Ibsen is, in this respect, intensely modern. Women characters like Nora, Hedda, and Hilde Wangel are not exactly ugly; they are brave, strong, and important; they are of today. That is why the effect of an Ibsen play is unfailing: "Ibsen comes home to us. His problems are real problems and are ours" [3].

Studies of Ibsen's plays with regard to the relationship between sexes led in 1890 to an observation that seemed to confirm the view that his powerful women characters are superior both morally and intellectually compared to male characters. Ellen Key, an outstanding Swedish essayist, found, that the typical Ibsen woman is more personally devoted to her ideas than her male counterpart; she is more passionate in her efforts to do away with obsolete conventions and more upright and determined in fighting the spirit of compromise. "To be less of a social being, more of an elemental force that is the quality which, in Ibsen's view, makes a woman more thoroughbred, more vigorous, more demanding, more in need of closeness to real life and vital fullness than man." The quality may be created for a literary purpose and is meant to produce a dramatic effect, which is hardly considered by feminist critics of the age. They need all the evidence; they can find to advance in their fight for equal rights for women.

Many have interpreted Henrik Ibsen's social and realistic plays as a direct contribution to the cause of women's rights. In this view, *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* are seen as the dramatic versions of the modern literary program that George Brandes, a Danish critic (1872) set forth at the time in his work, *Main Currents in Nineteenth Century Literature*. He demanded that literature must break with romanticism and become realistic. This means that social issues have to be debated in the literature. These issues are to be linked to social institutions including marriage, sexuality, business affairs, school, church, and law. Women's rights stand out as an issue of singular importance. John Stuart Mill's book, *On the Subjection of Women* (1869) played a prominent role in raising awareness of the oppressive women. Brandes also claimed that the question of women's rights must be taken as a central topic of debate in the modern literature of the times. In this way, Ibsen's plays bear the identity of modern women. Ibsen wanted to create modernism among his women characters,

where self-existence is the pre-dominant issue in their inner psychology. In fact, his female creation is truly acceptable from the post-modern point of view.

In several of her publications, Sandra Saari further emphasized the connection between the suppressed positions of women in Ibsen's time and the portraits that Ibsen sketched both rebellious and well-adjusted women. To a woman deprived of social, legal and political power, the ideal is to be ready and willing to sacrifice. Saari quoted from a publication about the art of marriage, written for the young women at that time. It was every woman's goal to become "virtuous", "humble," "modest", "submissive from choice," and "obedient from inclination."

According to this description, an idea for a woman is to live "a fixed secluded and meditative life." Saari commented that in Ibsen's plays a number of women characters go under precisely because they are forced into such socially created roles; she maintained that if Ibsen's women should attempt to become actively involved in society, they would soon discover that society in an external sense has no place for them in living out their lives. Their newly gained independence would not be needed. Saari put it in this way: "If she rejects the traditional image of an 'ideal woman,' being strong in her sense of self and a member of an established society, she finds no significant and challenging vocation open to her, and her strength and initiative reach a dead end" (Vigdis Y (1997) *Women's Utopia in Ibsen's Writings*, in *Ibsen: through Contemporary Eye*, Dhaka: 50-55)

In *The History of the Norwegian Women's Movement*, Anna Caspari Agerholt commented that "the case of women in Norway had its decisive break through at a time when literature began to portray current social concerns." Then she continued: "Henrik Ibsen undoubtedly belongs to those who through literary art indirectly and involuntarily turns out to advance the cause of women". In that connection, Agerholt referred to a well-known statement by Ibsen himself, in which he guarded against being perceived as a poet debating on behalf of feminine gender. (Vigdis Y (1997) *Women's Utopia in Ibsen's Writings*, in *Ibsen*: 50-55)

In the study, "Ibsen's Liberated Heroines and the Fear of Freedom," Errol Durbach underscored that women's concerns are potent as a sounding board in Ibsen's social plays. Ibsen, on a realistic level, depicted the suppressed position of contemporary Scandinavian women which we call the modern breakthrough; through

his rebellious women characters, he protested against the situation. But this is not the heart of the matter in his plays. On a deeper level, we find a conception of freedom and liberation that pertains not to societal issues, but rather to existential issues. It is modern existential philosophy that provides the frame of reference for Durbach understood about Ibsen. In his article, he indicated how his powerful women characters are tested and tried with regard to one ruling issue: it is not possible to claim a fully developed human life without attaining to what is called authentic existence. Durbach thought that this kind of human liberation, not the social liberation, is the goal of his women. He then discovered that Ibsen represented strong women with considerable anxiety linked to the tragic paradox that freedom can involve death at the same time. Women from an earlier phase including Nora Helmer and Mrs. Alving want freedom from everything that inhibits their development. Taboo and sexuality, socially dictated, leave them un-free. The women of a later phase, including Ellida Wangel and Hedda Gabler strive for the freedom to something, to something indefinable; they dream of a “becoming,” with their individuality fully intact. A human being who strives for freedom must make a choice; she must know what she wants. To Hedda, existence itself is a prison when she wants to learn herself away from it, death is her only way out. Spontaneity and responsibility must be reconciled in a higher unity. This is the real test or touch-stone of a woman’s personal existence. For a woman as Hedda, such unity is impossible to actualize in her life. It looks as if Durbach might be right about Ibsen’s women characters having a stronger desire for a personal life in freedom than for life as active members of society. Consequently, their rebellion bears the hallmark of protest in close, even intimate human relations – involving, for instance, husband or lover rather than in the larger context of society. In the early social and realistic plays, the husband is a representative of society [17].

Lou Salome analysed Ibsen’s women characters with regard to a utopia of love. In *Ibsen’s Heroines*, Lou Salome (1892) concerned herself more with woman’s psyche than with any social fitness in Ibsen’s fictional women. Salome saw a development of *A Doll’s House* and *Ghosts* where women glorify love, elevate their male partners and have to disengage themselves from them to the plays: *The Wild Duck*, *the Lady from the Sea*, *Rosmersholm* and *Hedda Gabler*, where women no longer cultivate men as an object of love, but where they continue to idealize their

own emotional lives and their own love. They are so keenly conscious and in control of self that they choose to sacrifice the self for the ideal of love in which they believe. Though sacrifice, women like Rebecca and Hedda Gabler realize their nature at the deepest level. The development moves in the direction of “the giving of one’s self instead of freedom one’s self”.

Salome’s pointing to the woman in a sacrificed role was viewed positively. This stood in contrast to Sandra Saari, who viewed a corresponding feature in purely negative terms. But, the problem of sacrifice was quite in keeping with what Ibsen-scholars noted as a distinctive feature running through the entire authorship, a feature that links Ibsen to the literature of tragedy in the west and to the protagonists. In spite of this, some people believed that the dream of love and the struggle to realize one’s personal life are clearly evident among Ibsen’s powerful women.

Daniel Haakonsen, an Ibsen scholar, wanted to focus in Ibsen’s portrayal of women on an apparent contradiction between a socio-critical and a personal-philosophical theme. In his article, “Women in Ibsen’s Writings,” he observed how Ibsen’s women generally express utter contempt for ordinary social ethics. This is because they live in non-social and legal areas. They are characterized by emotional spontaneous reactions; they demand that their men follow higher-order visions than everyday life.

In conclusion, Ibsen’s powerful female characters require appreciation from readers, researchers, scholars, critics, dramatic artists, audiences, producers, translators, actors, actresses and so on in many countries of the world from the Ibsen era to the present in many countries of the world. Despite contradictory remarks, some powerful women have gained popularity either through stage performance or research, or through translation or transformation. Ibsen presented his women in some plays as audacious, revolutionary, powerful, unconventional and feminine figures. Some of them, on the other hand, are weak, tame, obedient, so-called sweet, conventional, and mild. They are committed to their identity, freedom, self-existence, empowerment, right and suffrage. Through the female protagonists, Ibsen strives to focus on the social problems of the Scandinavian bourgeois society of the 19th century. In general, the objective of this study is to categorize Ibsen’s women, his treatment of women and contemporary Scandinavia, the woman question of his era—

second half of the nineteenth century in specific, the role of motherhood and the critical assessment of his strong women. All the six plays: *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House*, *An Enemy of the People*, *the Ghosts*, *Hedda Gabbler*, and *The Wild Duck* in the present study explores, Ibsen's 'New Women' fighting for their recognition in the patriarchal society not as women – daughters, sisters, sweethearts, wives, and mothers – but as individuals, and above all, as equally rational human beings. Further, the study attempts to elucidate Ibsen's explicit 'New' and 'Old Woman' conceptions foregrounding the conflicts between woman's aspirations and the societal constraints.

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