

Chapter IV

The Wild Duck (1884) and Hedda Gabler (1891)

The Wild Duck, written by Henrik Ibsen in 1884, is singled out by many critics as his greatest dramatic work. The play presents a diverse array of characters, fascinating plot and a high emotional tendency. In fact, Ibsen in writing *The Wild Duck*, for the first time, undertook to launch on a dramatic work, which besides rendering typical of his principal themes aimed at approaching his characterization with a desire to investigate them more scientifically than his previous works. The other play, *Hedda Gabler*, is an important part of Ibsen 's creative life. Although the social dramas of his prose period represent full-bodied and credible characters, Ibsen achieved in *Hedda Gabler* a psychological depth that his other works never exceeded. After investigating the feminine character of a male society in *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts*, Ibsen broadened his scrutiny to include the full pathology of the social woman. Although *Hedda Gabler* is an example of perverted femininity, her situation illuminates what Ibsen considered a depraved society that aims to sacrifice its most talented members ' freedom and individual expression for their own self-interest. Despite odd circumstances, we have two plays, *The Wild Duck* published in 1884, *Hedda Garbler (1890)* that offer much insight into the subject.

The "wild duck" in the play *The Wild Duck* is both physical and metaphorical. On the one hand, it refers to a specific duck that fell into the river after being injured by Old Werle and chose to grip onto the weed in the depths of the river. The duck was then brought back to the surface by a clever dog and nurtured to health under the care of the Ekdal family. Simultaneously, the duck also symbolizes one who has his head buried in the sand, holding onto certain perceptions of reality, unable to live without some illusion. In this context, the dog then represents the enlightened one who appears to drag the "wild duck" out of its delusional state.

"I have loved that child so unspeakably. I have felt so unspeakably happy every time I came home to my poor room, and she flew to meet me, with her sweet little shortsighted eyes. Oh, confiding fool that I have been! I loved her unspeakably, and I yielded myself up to the dream, the delusion, that she loved me unspeakably in return."²

The play parallels the story of the wild duck and makes great use of the associated imagery. The foundation for the play lies in past events between two families, which we learn about through conversations between characters Gregers, his father Old Werle and his good friend Hjalmar. Through Greger's confrontations with Old Werle, we learn that a long time ago, Old Werle and his business partner Old Ekdal had been involved in a deal that went awry; Old Ekdal alone had gotten arrested for a crime they were involved in together. Later, Werle, who was married to Greger's mother, also had an affair with and impregnated one of his own housemaids, Gina. In an attempt to compensate for the mistakes he made, Werle encouraged Gina and Ekdal's son, Hjalmar, to get married. He also continued to grant monetary support to Ekdal's family, which Hjalmar greatly benefited from, in order to have access to Gina's house. However, neither Werle nor Gina ever revealed to Hjalmar the true motives for Ekdal's actions. Unaware of these previous agreements, Hjalmar builds a life with Gina and the girl he believes to be his daughter, Hedvig. He is comfortable with his lifestyle, knowing that he has some monetary ties to Old Ekdal but fully believing that he is the one his family looks up to and depends on. Upon learning of the illusions that had been cast on Hjalmar by his father Old Werle, Gregers is furious and sets out to enlighten Hjalmar on these familial affairs from the past, beginning by moving into the Ekdals' home. During this process, he comments that he would like to play the "wild dog" that saves the "wild ducks" -- Hjalmar, and his family -- that were harmed by Old Werle.

As noble as Greger's original intentions, this creates all sorts of problems. This is because, at the core, all the characters in the play seek their sense of purpose and identity on what they perceive to be truths; this concept forms the primary axis of the play. They are constantly in pursuit of some kind of dignity in the face of reality. When Gregers decides to burst the bubble to Hjalmar, the truths Hjalmar and his family had assumed to be permanent are turned upside down, and along with it, a sense of who they are.

From the beginning of the play, we see that each of the characters has something they seem completely certain about in their lives and take great pride in. On one end we have Hjalmar, who knows he is the breadwinner of his family; for him, this is his identity. He understands that he depends somewhat on Werle for his family's income, but he works really hard to break that dependence. He does not

doubt for a second that his family relies on him; after all, why wouldn't they? In fact, he believes that his family owns a significant portion of the quality of their lives to him -- for example, he introduces his wife to Gregers as the lady who was "not entirely without culture", as a consequence of her "associating with (himself) every day". As we later learn, this pride stems from the fact that he was always the center of attention and was greatly admired in his earlier days.

Though Hjalmar complains that the expectations of being the breadwinner are high when he forgets to bring candy home to Hedvig as promised, deep down he understands that this is part of this role he chose to assume. At the very least, he asserts it constantly to the people around him. He also insists on doing things himself, without his family's help. This in itself is quite ironic, because throughout the entire play we see again and again that Hjalmar can hardly survive without Gina.

With these beliefs firmly established in his mind, he works on an invention. As we later learn, he pursues his inventing career with a "breadwinner's dream" -- to make a lot of money and then pass away, leaving Gina to be the breadwinner's widow. From Hjalmar's point of view, this would make Gina dependent on him for all of her life, as he assumes that Gina would not be in a position to make a living on her own. In addition, he fully believes that Hedvig, the daughter of the house, admires him and believes in his work, and this is what fuels his feeling of purpose.

Hedvig bears many similarities to Hjalmar. Hjalmar has not told her that she was taken out of school because she is going blind, so she believes that taking care of the wild duck is her purpose in life, and has little interest in the "real" world. As with Hjalmar, she is proud of this reality and constantly feels a need to assert her identity; we see this when she claims the wild duck as her own, over and over, throughout the play - not her fathers, or her families, but her very own, because she takes care of it. This is her truth, and to her, part of living a truthful life is making sure people do not misinterpret her reality.

On the other side we have Gregers, the character who drives all of the unravelling action and disillusionment in the play. Because he witnessed his mother's misery due to Werle's affair with Gina when he was younger, Gregers is convinced that a truthful marriage lies in beginning with a clean slate with no deception. He begins to believe it is his responsibility to correct the wrongs that the Werle family

inflicted on Ekdal's family, to "establish a true marriage" in which there are no secrets between Hjalmar and Gina.

In the first half of the play, Gregers gradually solidifies this identity and clarifies his mission for himself. At the beginning of the second half of the play, the conflict and event of the play arise when Gregers decides to act on this purpose in a way that directly shatters Hjalmar's perceived reality.

When Gregers informs Hjalmar about the history between his own family and Ekdal's. Hjalmar realizes that the people around him had never depended on him as much he had thought, and the foundation to support all of his previous actions disappears. Suddenly, this boy, who had been admired greatly for his early days, learns that he is not the center of attention anymore.

The unravelling gains in intensity as Hjalmar confronts Gina, his wife. What complicates matters, of course, is that Gina has a different interpretation to Hjalmar of what living a truthful life entails in terms of how the past factors into the reality of the present, and how important the whole truth is in relation to things like happiness and love. Gina knows that she loves Hjalmar deeply and only wants to do what's best for him; in order to accomplish this, she believes that whatever happened in the past with Werle should have stayed in the past. What's noteworthy, however, is that Gina never outright lies to him, and confesses to the matter when prompted. Meanwhile, she finds her purpose and dignity in devoting herself to Hjalmar selflessly. Hjalmar, however, can't get over the fact that Gina and Hedvig did not depend on him as much as he had believed. He lets it be known that he now hates *the wild duck* because it had been Werle's property at one point in time.

"When Hjalmar hears Berta Sorby declare, that she is always candid and that's the best thing for a woman, he tries to use this against his wife.

Hjalmar: What do you say to that, Gina?

Gina: "Oh, we women are very different. Some get on best one way some another."⁵

When Hjalmar also verifies that Hedvig may not be his child, he breaks completely. Having lost his identity as breadwinner, combined with his idealistic and absolute notions of love, he can't understand how anyone could possibly love him.

Losing faith in Hedvig's adoration, he also loses the reason to pursue his invention. Just like the duck which had a hard time adjusting to life after being saved by the dog, Hjalmar has a very hard time adjusting to this lack of definition and certain truth in his life, and he decides that he must leave the house.

However, as we see in a highly comical scene near the end of the play, he has a very difficult time with that, too. First, he makes a big show of not being able to stand to live in the house, but then he realizes how harsh it would be to move out and tries very hard to find a graceful way to stay. He understands he can no longer rely on old truths but doesn't yet have the courage to seek new ones. What we witness is his indecisiveness played out in drama-queen style, particularly when he tells to Gina to "Pack, and gets the room ready!" (*The Wild Duck and Critical Cliché*, 1975: 54-70). In the midst of all this Hjalmar can't bear the sight of Hedvig, because he believes that she is the fundamental cause of all his suffering.

Of course, of all of the characters Hjalmar could have chosen to take the blame, and Hedvig is the one innocent character in the play that is completely free from deceit. She hardly understands what is going on, though she tries very hard to interpret it. Hjalmar mentions that he wished that he could shoot the duck, but would not, because of Hedvig. As mentioned already, Hedvig's understanding of her purpose in life is to take care of the wild duck; however, that is shattered when she realizes her father cares neither about the wild duck nor about her. As Hedvig gradually senses that her father is leaving her, she feels the pressing need to make sure people understand her. Her ultimate sacrifice could be regarded as the biggest display of truth and dignity in the play. Unable to comprehend her dad's actions, she finds a way to express her love for her father by killing herself.

What surprises is how quickly Hjalmar calms down and gains a sense of security the instant he learns that Hedvig died because of her love for him. At that moment, he finds an inkling of truth to support his original purpose and decides not to leave after all. Just like the duck had a hard time adjusting after being saved until it is brought under domesticity in the Ekdal household, it is another perceived truth that Hjalmar can latch to that reaffirms his purpose in life. The results, of course, are tragic. Hedvig is dead.

The result of Gregers' pure intentions is hardly favourable. The case in the play that contrasts this, where lack of decent results in a favourable outcome is in Old Werle's new marriage, which is mentioned briefly. In that case, Mrs. Sorby decides to let Old Werle in on all of the gossip in her life, and both of them are able to make peace with the past. What is different about their case is that no one else is involved besides Werle and Mrs. Sorby. The stakes don't involve a teenage girl who is trying to figure out her life.

While the disillusionment of Hjalmar and Hedvig engages us emotionally, the playwright engages us intellectually through the character of Dr. Relling. He, too, has his own notions of truth and his purpose. In the same way that Gregers feels it necessary to spread his ideas about what it means to live a truthful life, Dr Relling feels it is his responsibility as a doctor to give people what he coins a "life-illusion" when it is called for. One of his most famous lines in the play is "Take away a person's vital life-lie, and you deprive them of happiness." According to Dr. Relling, a person's "life-lie" and sense of purpose are intimately related, and it is this sense of purpose that keeps a person happy. When explaining the concept to Gregers, he refers to it exactly as he sees it -- as a lie and not an ideal. (Ibsen, Henrik. *Four Major Plays*: Volume I: 1992)

For example, he convinces Hjalmar that he has talent at inventing something photography-related. What's interesting is that although we see Hjalmar content toiling at this invention day after day, we never get to know what this mysterious invention is. This makes his pursuit of this invention seem illusory to us because it never really takes on a tangible form. It is also evident that Dr. Relling only partially believes in the likelihood that Hjalmar would actually succeed in this mission.

At first glance, spreading lies doesn't seem to suggest that the truth is important to Dr. Relling. However, through his interactions with everyone else, we realize that he is the most disillusioned character of them all; perhaps he accepts the fact that everyone needs a life-lie as the truth. Coincidentally, he also appears to be one of the least happy characters in the play, which we see when he speaks about his job as a doctor. In a sense, he finds purpose in and deals with reality he accepts by taking care of the people around him in the same way that Hedvig protects the duck from the wild. He provides shelter to others from the truth.

Most significantly, Dr. Relling acknowledges the full complexity of Ekdal's family situation, especially with regards to the Hedvig, who he firmly believes has no part in the deceit and should not have to pay for the consequences. Dr. Relling exhibits the most concern for the child's well-being throughout the entire ordeal; in stark contrast, Gregers sees Hedvig as the completely innocent and hence perfect hero to save the family. He suggests that Hedvig commit self-sacrifice by shooting the duck that her father suddenly hates so much.

At first, Gregers appears to be the mindful puppeteer, calculating ways to cause destruction; however, upon closer reading, we see that what drives him isn't that different from what drives the other characters in the play. Gregers, unlike Dr. Relling, is simply insensitive to the nuances of the situation in the Ekdal household; his idealized concepts of truth and a "truthful marriage" do not incorporate these ideas. In a way, he is just as delusional as the people he is trying to save. Even after Hjalmar's life crumbles, Gregers insists that his friend is now a happier and a greater man, and when Hedvig dies, he is convinced that this tragedy brings out the greatness in Hjalmar. After all, it is only in this way that he can stay dignified. Hence, Dr. Relling would probably say that it is a "life-lie" that supports the purpose Gregers enacts for himself: the illusion that he could bring out the greatness in people by making them see the complete truth. This is further illuminated at the end of the play. Gregers realizes that life isn't worth living when he is informed by Dr. Relling that Hjalmar could never be the hero that Gregers wishes he would become.

As we witness this struggle between Relling and Gregers, and how Greger's choices affect the Ekdal family, it appears probable that the question the author ultimately asks us, in simple terms, is: should the dog have saved the duck? It is this question that lies under the conflict of the play, and sheds light on the the pursuit of some kind of purpose and dignity in the face of truth. The ending of the *Wild Duck* seems to suggest that sometimes, the wild duck may not wish or need to be saved. Even more, sometimes the dog may be in fact a "duck", just of a different kind -- the kind that holds onto unrealistic ideals and illusions of greatness.

Hedda Gabler (1890)

This research aims at highlighting the controversy in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* being a feminist character. Although Ibsen is referred to as feminist playwright, yet

Hedda Gabler is deprived of the true feminist traits and has a number of negative aspects highlighted in her. The purpose in this research is to highlight Ibsen's woman character, Hedda Gabler as a dominant character ruling over others; having no mother-like traits and emotions which makes her a man-like character rather than mother-like. The study intends to suggest that Hedda is in no respect appropriate to play a motherly role in the play, as her step of suicide at the end of the play was extremely cruel for her unborn child. The framework of present study is Critical Discourse Analysis through which the hidden ideologies of the character Hedda Gabbler will be revealed from the text to prove that she has no feminist, rather mother-like traits. This play has been selected in order to highlight the true meaning of a woman.

In feminist perspective we find that neither is Hedda being beaten or snubbed by her husband nor her rights are being snatched. She is rather living quiet liberally. The so-called feminism and the boundless liberty it provides are merely a source of destruction for many women depriving them of motherly love and injecting them with frustration, depression and annoyance. Hedda is a victim of all the negative qualities that can be imagined. Ibsen has tried to move away from the stereotypical women by sketching feminist plays but yet when he deprives the woman of her doll-like exquisiteness and angelic beauty, he still remains confined to the stereotypical women, rather makes them merely monstrous and treacherous.

Hedda is in no respect a feminine. She lacks the scarifying and angelic womanly qualities. We find her acting as the manipulator of fates. We find that General Gabler's daughter, Hedda has married Tesman. She is bound by social norms and cannot dare to risk a challenge from the society by marrying a depraved rake as Lovborg. She ends up in a loveless marriage with Tesman. A faithless conventional life leads her to tediousness and poignant unproductiveness. She is cruel and mean to Aunt Julia and Mrs. Elvsted and contracts a devious association with Brack.

Reading the play, we come to know that Tesman has financially overwrought himself only in order to provide Hedda with the luxuries she was accustomed to. He cares a lot for Hedda and tries to keep her as pampered as her father had kept her. In spite of all this, we find Hedda very emotionless and quiet indifferent towards her husband. She is quiet cruel towards Tesman when he tells her about his slippers.

TESMAN: My old morning-shoes! My slippers.

HEDDA: Indeed. I remember you often spoke of them while we were abroad.

TESMAN: Yes, I missed them terribly. [Goes up to her.] Now you shall see them, Hedda!

HEDDA: [Going towards the stove.] Thanks, I really don't care about it.

TESMAN: [Following her.] Only think--ill as she was, Aunt Rina embroidered these for me. Oh you can't think how many associations cling to them.

HEDDA: [At the table.] Scarcely for me.

The personality of Hedda was based on woman Ibsen knew in Munich by the name of Alberg. She committed suicide by taking poison. Hedda tolerates a striking resemblance to the same woman. The play's dramatic action is the last development of the life indicated by the play's subject, the last two days of a cornered woman's progressively ineffectual effort to live a life she detest and her consequent decision to end it.

In the beginning of the play, we come to know that Hedda has come into an unfamiliar world because of her marriage. The talk between Juliana and George Tesman shows that it is an ethical play in which virtue wins over the evil. Aunt Juliana is a paragon of the devotee females of the nineteenth century who scarifies her life to a male relation. Hedda does not admire the idea of Aunt Juliana's visit to here house. She moves wisely, when the old aunt shames her. She dislikes marital responsibilities. She represents an unconventional personality by denying motherhood.

She is placed between two opposing men, Loveborog and Tesman. The former is creative while the latter appears as ordinary and unimaginative. Hedda is seen as a passionless and cold woman in the play. She is incompetent of loving anyone or having tender feelings. Her actions are destructive as she burns Loveborg's manuscript. Hedda Gabler is the study of a vengeful woman of evil instincts. She decisively changes the fates of others in order to fulfill her own desire

for liberation and independence. Thea Elvsted, Hedda's old schoolmate and aunt Juliana both are frustrated by Hedda. They are portrayals of women who present to their socially imposed womanly role and derive happiness from their lives. Thea is a typical nineteenth century feminine ideal, the scarified partner who helps a man in his work, while Juliana has unpraised George Tesman who becomes a promising educational, and now that the nephew has grown up, she looks after her blood sister. The selfless paragons, Juliana Tesman, and Thea Elvsted, have no self; they are sentimentalists who represent the image of an ideal, devoting woman; they are domestic angels as compared to Hedda. Hedda wants to live for herself, not for anyone.

Ibsen's Hedda is a privilege but spiritually unprincipled woman, free of redeeming virtue. She remains selfish, envious and in protest against other, happiness. Her anger and jealousy towards a former schoolmate and cruel manipulation of her husband and an earlier admirer leads her down a destructive path that ends abruptly with her own terrible death. Hedda is an icon of an example selfish and controlling woman. She runs away from duties of married life and is bored in the company of one and the same person as expressed in the following discussion between Hedda and Judge Brack:

Hedda : Yes, of course, and no doubt when its your vocation-But !!

Oh, my dear Mr.Brack, how mortally bored I have been.

Brack : Do you really say so? In downright earnest?

Hedda : Yes, you can surely understand it ! To go for six whole
Months without meeting a soul that knew anything or our
Circle, or could talk about the things we are interested in.

Brack : Yes, yes – I too should feel that a depravation.

Hedda : And then, what I found most intolerable of all-

Brack : well?

Hedda : Was being everlastingly in the company of –one and the Same
person-

Brack: [with a nod of assent]. Morning, noon and night, yes- at all possible times and reasons.

Hedda : I said “everlastingly”.

Brack : Just so. But I should have thought, with our excellent Tesman, one could-

Hedda : Tesman is – a specialist, my dear judge.

Brack : Undeniably.

Hedda: And specialists are not all amusing to travel with. Not in the Long run at any rate.

Brack: Not even – the specialist one happens to love?

Hedda : Faugh – don’t use that sickening word !”9

Hedda Gabler is a play about an aggressive and cruel woman. but in a society committing itself to liberation and individual description. It has the true self-description of Hedda as a woman and Loveberg as a creative spirit. It approves of Aunt Juliana’s mothering self-devotee and George’s averageness and upraises to the position of authority men like Judge Brack, a manipulator, who hardly care for people.

To Ibsen, self-knowledge was very important. One should not be forced into mold by society or family, nor should one drift without direction through life. Identifying one’s own uniqueness and special needs is a preliminary to a productive life. Although Hedda is aware of her inner conflicts, it can be that she never finds a true self.

The Hedda question makes the universal question of women right in a society created and built by men. Like Nora Helmer, Hedda has to make an autonomous decision on her life. Women, however, are blocked from taking part in the world outside their families in all but the most progressive societies. Hedda therefore has no individual resources to recognize self-growth, despite a fathomless desire for self-realization. Hedda can only describe herself adversely without a positive impact on the world. She demolishes them whatever she can't accept. To undermine her husband

with her coolness, to deny her pregnancy, to demolish the lifework of Thea, to burn the creative product of Loveborg, to destroy the children's manuscript and finally to commit suicide are all subverted matters to please her "craving for life." Ibsen expresses its strongest objection to the dual principles of society by representing the sad end of a hapless woman in the play. The protagonist finds a way out in the form of destruction for her desperation.

Hedda Gabler is therefore akin to woman like Nora Helmer in her emphasis on individual psychology or Mrs Alving who seeks personal importance in a society that denies freedom of speech. Hedda Gabler is a study in absurdity. Hedda is a motiveless character. She is a shrewd, exposing disaffection. She is more masculine than feminine. Hedda is a complete womanhood deviation. Hedda was personalized as an example of the "new woman, but a doll turned the monster into a targetless, bourgeois and grimmer antagonist of Nora Helmer. She is the inactive liberated woman and the demon knows what she has to do with her liberation".

Hedda is an unwomanly woman with a strong mind, married to a passive man. She's a woman without tender sentiment. The theme of the play is important, as Ibsen wrote in a Moritz Prozor letter, Hedda Gabler is the title of the game. My intention is to give this name to show that Hedda is supposed to be considered a personality rather than the daughter of her father than the wife of her husband. It was not really my intention to deal with so-called problems in this game.

Hedda is a strong-minded unwomanly woman, married to a passive man. She is a woman without any tender feelings. The title of the play is significant as Ibsen wrote in a letter to Moritz Prozor:

The title of the play is Hedda Gabler. My intention is giving it this name was to indicate that Hedda as a personality is to be regarded rather as her father's daughter than as her husband's wife. It was not really my intention to deal in this play with so-called problems. What I principally wanted to do was to depict human beings, human emotions and human destinies, upon a ground work of certain social conditions and principles of the present day.¹⁰

Hedda refuses to be a woman. She has nothing to do with herself and spends time interfering with the lives of other people. She considers beauty in desolation and

suicide to be a brave action. She says, "It gives me a sense of freedom to know that in this world an act of deliberate courage is still possible-an act of spontaneous beauty. " Hedda rejects womanhood. She has nothing to do for herself and spends her time meddling in other people's lives. She sees beauty in destruction and considers suicide as a courageous action. She says, "it gives me a sense of freedom to know that a deed of deliberate courage is still possible in this world - a deed of spontaneous beauty.¹¹

Hedda burns the scripts of Loveborg. She's a lovely woman. She does not love her hubby, nor does she reciprocate her admirer Brack's achievements. Hedda can not concede herself to Loveborg. She can not help a man, either biologically or intelligently, because she wants to give herself the role of a patriarch.

Set in the same situation as the other heroines of Ibsen, Hedda is facing a crisis in her life. In compliance with social resolutions, Hedda finds no way out of her personal appeals; she is constantly torn between her helpless will to liberate and her commitment to social performance principles. To refuse to submit to her feminine destiny, Hedda has such an unpleasant desire for life that she is disabled from feeling connected with others. When *A Doll's House's* Nora realizes her own unpleasant needs, she leaves her hubby and her children. Given that her most "sacred duty "was to find herself, she left home to find her individual value by facing the experiences of life before she could connect with others. Like Nora, Hedda is a kid of herself. In the absence of Nora 's daring and disobedience to resolutions, she is able to experience the trials of self-deliberation and becomes a morbid self-hatred, desolate heroine, able only to strike against successful socially confirming persons who emerge a visible criticism of her will for ignorance. Ibsen provides sufficient data in the play to illustrate how the problem of Hedda is the product of her particular background. Instead of preparing his daughter for wife or motherhood, General Gabler taught her to ride and shoot, a symbol of the military mystery that became the basis of her fascination with the violent and the romantic for Hedda. If she is unable to realize the needs of her personality, she persists enslaved to a principle of social conventionality and can only support far from the prohibited world, where freedom of expression and enthusiasm for life are prevented.

Loveborg offers Hedda the vicarious experience of a person who enjoys a free creative life. She pictures sustenance from the outbreak of his spirit, telling her about

his dreams, his duty and his unjustified way of living. When Loveborg appeals to her seriously, Hedda rejects him. George Tesman is also a suitable hubby, especially since he does not ask for sentimental incapacity of Hedda. He can make her material safe and spoil her taste for luxury and active social life without warning of her interior security.

Hedda is part of society. She is not excited to live a bold, creative life, but fears the criticism of society. Her fear of disloyalty is seen in the military background of her father, with her emphasis on the norm and compliance with the rules. She wants power and control over destiny as she places it, "I want the power to shape a human destiny for once in my life. "

Hedda 's character governs the play as do those of the latter group's great individualists, and her society is important only insofar as it influences her thoughts and makes her mind and action clear. But it's not, as they are, a study of the improvement of thinking in self-detection, because the thoughts of Hedda remain the same at the end as the first. Hedda refuses to find herself and her collision and her disaster is the result of this refusal. Desiring for life and yet fearful of it, she refuses to accept this fear and turn the energy of the clash into action, and thus a mind turns into a kind of void at the heart of the play. She wants to have her impact on everybody.

Hedda 's awake to death. Her favorite toys are the pistols of her father, clear symbols of death. Giving Loveborg one of the pistols so he can beautifully end his life gives her a sense of power. Finally, her own death may be her original self-expression. At the end, she had the strength to act freely and audaciously, instead of trying to act by others, Hedda finally acted. She broke free from the conformist society of the middle class she despised. Her last act depicts the real royal nature, because it concerns the gesture rather than the results. She finally did something she cared for, but it's totally negative. She never possesses known fulfillment, never satisfied her own nature and never achieved victory constructively, but only frustration. She wasted her energy on so-called conquests.

Hedda's conduct thus proves in every way that she is deprived of womanly exquisite traits. She loves to hurt others and rather enjoys such hideous acts. She is not a dutiful and obedient wife. She has no love and respect for her husband. She has grotesque aims and wishes to exercise power over others. She wants to play the role

of a ruling god rather than that of a human, more specifically of a woman. Females no matter how mean they are do not possess such heinous traits. Ibsen in his attempt to create the female character, *Hedda Gabler* has gone out of his way to create a monster or a demon rather than a feminine character. Yet Ibsen is claimed to be a celebrated Feminist playwright. But his feminine character does not correspond with the true female. His female is merely a manifestation of maliciousness, loathing, and foul passions. She is such a character that even the imagination cannot come up with. Hedda is deprived of motherly and wife-like passions. Throughout the play, she is negating her motherhood and pregnancy.

She is weaving an intricate web of the foulest passions in which she wishes to strangle her victims and rule over them. She enjoys snubbing those around her. She can be compared to the Lord Voldemort of Harry Potter written by J.K. Rowling.

The only difference between the two is that Lord Voldemort rejoiced by killing his victims mercilessly, but on the other hand Hedda doesn't kill her victim herself rather she mercilessly persuades him to do it himself and even provides him her guns to do so. She is thus; unfit to be called a feminine character. She is infact, a demon. How can a loving wife neglect and torture her husband? How can she insult her husband and his relatives? How can a female negate her child? How can she develop relations with other men? How can she torment people around her? How can a mother even think of burning a child when she herself is going through this glorious phase of construction? How can a female commit suicide and close all doors of life for her unborn child? All these acts show that Hedda is not a true feminine character and is deprived of all womanly qualities. It seems to me that Hedda possessed a stone heart and is deprived of motherly love, compromise and house building qualities.

Hedda Gabler; the daughter of a general of the upper class came back from her honeymoon. Her husband is George Tesman, a young, hopeful academic who has collaborated with his honeymoon. Hedda does not love Tesman; she has married him only for social security. It is also suggested in the play that she may be pregnant. The return of Eilert Lovborg throws their lives into the frenzy. Lovborg is also a recovered alcoholic and a writer. He wasted his talent until now. Lovborg shows signs of rehabilitation and has just completed a bestseller in the same field as Tesman because of a relationship with Hedda 's old schoolmate Thea Elvsted, who is Hedda 's

old classmate. Thus, Lovborg becomes a competitor of Tesman. But after meeting Lovborg, Tesman and Hedda discover that Lovborg has no intention to compete with Tesman for the university professorship he had been counting on.

Hedda is jealous of the power of Thea over Lovborg, and therefore urges him to join a party with Tesman and his associate Judge Brack. Tesman returns from the party with a masterpiece manuscript of Lovborg, which Lovborg had misplaced because he was drunk. Later Lovborg confesses to Hedda that he had lost the manuscript. Instead of telling him that the manuscript is safe, Hedda gives him her father's pistol and encourages him to commit suicide beautifully. She burns the manuscript out of spite and jealousy but poses in front of Tesman that she did so in order to secure their future. When news of Lovborg's death arrives, Tesman and Thea set themselves to renovate the manuscript from Lovborg's notes.

"Hedda : Yes, of course, and no doubt when its your vocation- But I! Oh, my dear Mr. Brack, how mortally bored I have been.

Brack: Do you really say so? In downright earnest?

Hedda: Yes, you can surely understand it ! To go for six whole months without meeting a soul that knew anything or our circle, or could talk about the things we are interested in.

Brack : Yes, yes- I too should feel that a deprivation.

Hedda : And then, What I found most intolerable of all-

Brack : Well?

Hedda

Brack

Hedda

Brack

Was being everlastingly in the company of - one and the same person- [with a nod of assent]. Morning, noon and night, yes- at all possible times and reasons.

I said "everlastingly".

Just so. But I should have thought, with our excellent

Tesman, one could-

Hedda Tesman is - a specialist, my dear judge.

Brack Undeniably.

Hedda And specialists are not all amusing to travel with. Not in the long run at any rate.

Brack Not even - the specialist one happens to love?

Hedda Faugh - don't use that sickening word !"9

In the nineteenth century, Norway saw a great deal of political and social change. Norway declared itself independent of Denmark in 1814 and established a constitution based on the American and French models. The Norwegian parliament agreed later that year to accept a union with Sweden provided that the Swedish King would allow Norway to maintain its constitution and independent institutions. After years of recession and difficulty after the Napoleonic Wars, the economy of Norway began to recover in the 1830s and 1840s. At the same time, the nationalist movement gained momentum, as Norwegians were trying to define and express their national identity and culture.

Norway was largely unaffected by the revolutions that in 1848 broke through Europe. The economy was still largely controlled by the aristocracy, as was the government, and Norwegian society remained conservative and rigidly divided by class. As in most of Europe, voting was a privilege rather than a right that only men in the upper sections of society could have. Although social reform and certain developments in favor of women's rights, including the right to inherit property, took place in the 1850s and 1860s, the status of a woman was always lower than that of a man of a comparable class.

In the coming decades Norway's farmers and workers have joined forces to become a serious political force. In the 1880s, when the last king of Sweden and Norway was forced to give up aristocratic control of the government, the nationalist movement, combined with economic and social change, came to a head. In 1898 all men were allowed to vote, except for those who received poor help. When Henrik

Ibsen wrote *Hedda Gabler* in 1890, the traditional class structure that characterized Norway in the nineteenth century was shaken, and although the social classes were still discernible, they became increasingly blurred.

The 1880s and 1890s also represented transitional decades for the rights of women in Norway. Women of the nineteenth century were expected to comply with strict standards of behavior and were thought to be instinctively morally superior to men. Women were thought to be biologically destined for domestic life. Marriage, motherhood and household care were the natural steps for women, and there was suspicion about any deviation from this path. Their presumed intellectual inferiority made male authority a necessity, and the sexually degraded prostitute represented by Mademoiselle Circe in *Hedda Gabler* was at the other end of the spectrum from the 'angel of the house.'

Challenges to these patriarchal norms became more frequent throughout the 19th century, and the fight for universal suffrage became more and more organized throughout Europe in the 1860s. By 1882, women were admitted to the University of Oslo and Norway had set up its own women's rights movement—the Norwegian Women's Movement Association—in 1884. Although Ibsen denied claims that he was a feminist, his plays certainly demonstrate his sympathy for the cause. For this reason, his work was taken up by the American actress and suffragist Elizabeth Robins, who played the role of *Hedda Gabler* in the first English and American performance.

When it was first performed in 1891, *Hedda Gabler* caused a scandal with critics branding it immoral and sordid. Hedda opposes all respectable women of the upper class: she has no interest in her imminent motherhood or in her future as a wife of George. However, although Ibsen wanted to criticize social standards, he did not write in particular to support women's rights:

" It wasn't my purpose to deal with what people in this play call problems. What I wanted to do was mainly to portray people, human emotions and human destinies on the basis of certain social conditions and principles of today's life (" Hedda and Bailu: Portraits of Two ' Bored' Women, "2001: 447-464) Henrik Ibsen

Instead of serving as an example of the 19th century 'new woman' by challenging social values and constraints, Hedda can be seen as a direct product of Ibsen's age—she is hopelessly stuck in a transitional period. Caught between desperation to free household life but frightened by the consequences, Hedda gets trapped in a marriage she didn't want because she wasn't brave enough to act. In fact, it is Thea Elvsted who is closest to embody *Hedda Gabler*'s modern woman. Thea is determined and courageous to change things in her life and to take advantage of the opportunities presented. She leaves her husband unconcerned about the scandal it could cause for Eilert Loevborg and, unlike Hedda, she is honest and honest about her personal desires.

Certainly Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* has some of these features. For psychoanalyst and critic Lou Salomé, Hedda is a tragic heroine, because only through death can she be genuinely freed from her faulty existence. We see that Hedda's change of fortune begins when she marries George Tesman; her life as a single woman in the center of society seems to have evaporated before her eyes and leaves her trying to cope with a situation where she feels powerless. Her downfall is ultimately her own—she makes the mistake of marrying George for the wrong reasons, but she is also a strongly flawed person who manipulates people unsuccessfully in an attempt to negotiate her own weaknesses. Salomé argues that the death of Hedda is tragic, because it is an act of self-renunciation: it is a free spirit that conventional society can not tamper with. Her suicide shows her self-confidence and takes her out of a false world.

However, *Hedda Gabler* cannot be classified as a tragedy for other critics. As a character, Hedda is hard to sympathize with; her behavior towards others suggests that she may not be an essentially 'good' or brave person with a weakness like the archetypal Greek hero. Another question that can be debated is whether *Hedda Gabler* achieves revelation or grows in self-awareness throughout the play. Caroline W Mayerson argues that her suicide actually appears small and futile in reality, despite Hedda's desire for a beautiful death that will free her from society's trappings.

Although Ibsen arranged Hedda's death to resemble the classical tragic end, we can see that it is not a noble or heroic act in the play. The psychological turmoil that Hedda experiences seems to act as a barrier to her discovery of her life. She chooses death not because she has gained insight from her mistakes, but because she

cannot face the consequences of her actions. Although it is undeniably difficult to sympathize with and identify with Hedda Gabler, it is also difficult not to regret her for the situation she finds herself in. Contemporary audiences would have fully grasped the implications of Hedda's relationship with the patriarchal society of the nineteenth century, which is the cause of the scandal at the publication of the play and was used in support of the women's suffrage movement. By using Hedda as the heroine or anti-heroine, Ibsen clearly attacked a culture that stifled the potential of women and fostered the feelings of entanglement and desperation that Hedda experiences. For all her shortcomings, the character of *Hedda Gabler* serves as a powerful reminder of the complex relationship of the individual with society and how we today reconcile our own needs with the roles and responsibilities we expect.

Ibsen was a pioneer of dramatic realism, focusing on frankly examining social issues in a way that would clearly affect the audience. *Hedda Gabler* focuses sharply on the different roles of men and women. George, Brack and Eilert are very much part of the public sphere –they have vocations and interests outside the domestic setting. On the other hand, Hedda and Thea are defined with regard to men and the household's private sphere. The future of Hedda is clearly laid out for her as a wife and mother, and Thea is the savior and muse of Eilert –first dependent on him and then George to express her academic ideas.

Following the psychological descent of Hedda throughout the play, Ibsen clearly criticizes the lack of acceptable choices and opportunities for life for women in the 19th century. He asks whether a culture that sees motherhood as the culmination of a woman's life could have harmful consequences for women without a strong motherly instinct? Ibsen wrote in his notes to *Hedda Gabler* that "women are not all created to be mothers." This controversial opinion is most clearly reflected in Hedda's character, who also kills her unborn child in her suicide, but can also be seen by Thea's actions as she leaves her family to pursue the man she wants. The complex relationship between women and frustration with motherhood demands is a recurring theme in Ibsen's work, and his depiction of the problems associated with accepted feminine behavior has made his female characters important icons in redefining the place of women in European society. The other major themes of the play –control, scandal and self-fulfillment –focus on the concept of gender roles and expectations, issues that still exist around the world today.

Since her marriage, Hedda has felt that she has lost control of her own fate. As a privileged child of a widowed general, she has had more freedom in the past than many other women of her status. Guns and horsemanship were once a staple of her daily life, and the pistols of her father represent her frustration and ultimately the solution to her situation. She has a taste for masculine pursuits, but the lack of a mother figure in her life made her spectacularly unprepared for her new role as a housekeeper. Hedda was not versed in feminine etiquette, and the transition from Miss Gabler to Mrs Tesman entails an astonishing loss of independence. She is expected to put her leisure life behind her and become a secondary figure: George's wife. In an attempt to regain control, Hedda uses her skills of persuasion and manipulation to influence what happens around her. If she cannot see a way to shape her own future, the next best thing is to shape the destinies of other people.

Hedda cannot bear the thought that she lost control of Eilert Loevborg to the timid and disgusting Thea Elvsted. She encourages Eilert to drink and attend the party of Judge Brack, knowing that things can only end badly, and then burns his manuscript and gives him the means to commit suicide. Unfortunately for Hedda, her attempts to control Eilert's destiny and death are not planned, and her manipulations leave her vulnerable to the will of Judge Brack. Brack is the true controller of the play; he is experienced in finding subtle ways to exercise his power, and it is an appropriate end to Ibsen's criticism of male-centered society that Hedda finds herself under his command before she kills herself. The theme of control allows Ibsen to emphasize the dire consequences of the power imbalance between the sexes in his society.

Essentially, it is Hedda's fear of scandal that prevents her from taking care of her own life and instead leads her to try to control the lives of other people. She is frightened by the prospect of leaving George due to the social consequences, and despite her low estimate of Thea, she can't help but admire the fact that she left her husband for Eilert, who took more courage than Hedda could ever have had. As a woman who lived in the 19th century, Hedda's reputation is based on morality and virtue. It is clear that she has always been careful not to fall into disrepute –when Eilert got too close to her in the past, she threatened to shoot him –but now, as a wife, she is expected to sacrifice her own needs and conform to them. An affair of the kind of 'domestic triangle,' as Judge Brack suggested, would have far more serious

implications for Hedda than for Brack, because the restraint and sexual purity of a woman were the foundation of her nature.

Eilert Loevborg was driven out of the city because of his scandalous behavior, but he still hopes to be accepted as a reformed and successful historian back into society. The reputation of a woman could not be healed so easily, and the tools available to men to help rebuild their status –such as academic studies –were not widely accessible or even used to restore the character of women. It is Judge Brack's suggestion of the level of scandal that would fall on Hedda if it were revealed that she was confined to a brothel in Eilert's sordid death, which pushes her into her own suicide. Ibsen highlights through scandal the social constraints and inequalities inherent in his culture.

Perhaps the biggest question *Hedda Gabler* asks is how we can meet our individual needs with our societies' greater expectations. Ibsen suggests that the bourgeois life of the nineteenth century restricted and had the potential to seriously damage those who failed to fulfill it. Hedda sees her marriage as a brick wall that separates her from self-fulfillment; she feels trapped in the worldliness of life and can not see the way to happiness. Instead of looking for various ways to meet her needs, as Thea does when she leaves her husband and tracks Eilert, Hedda begins to destroy herself. This process begins when George Tesman agrees to marry her, choosing stability and property over unpredictability and excitement. Her scandalous fear sparks her descent into self-destruction, which continues with her pregnancy, failed manipulation attempts and finally her suicide. Unlike the obviously destructive behavior of Eilert, which is revealed by his actions, the destruction of Hedda is internal and psychological; we only see glimpses of it until its final act. Unable to determine the course of her life or manipulate those around her successfully, her failure to achieve herself leads to her death.

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