

Playing the Wrong Gender Role: The Character of Hedda in Ibsen's Hedda Gabler

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Abstract

This paper studies the unconventional woman character presented by Henrik Ibsen in the play of *Hedda Gabler* among his most distinguished social dramas. The scrutiny of Hedda Gabler's character in this paper focuses on gender and gender role. It seems that Hedda's attempt to play the male gender role has led to her destruction in the play. This study utilizes an eclectic approach to do a literary textual analyses based on the concepts of stereotyping, objectification, and oppression as examined through the lenses of the theories of Existentialist Feminism by Simone De Beauvoir, Sexual Politics by Kate Millet and Human Basic Needs by Abraham Maslow successively. The analysis of the character of Hedda Gabler in this study aims to investigate evidences of the themes of stereotyping, objectification and oppression that are worked by patriarchal politics of gender, sexuality, and oppression respectively in order to lead to the disintegration of the female character as manifestation of gender inequality. The three theories are used then to explain how these themes of stereotyping, objectification, and oppression create the disintegration which is responsible for the misery of women. Hedda's struggle against the disintegration process is highlighted in the play. Results reached in this study that Hedda lost her battle to live a normal life because she chose to challenge gender roles and tried to live as a man.

Introduction

Hedda Gabler is one of Ibsen's social dramas with the most sophisticated female protagonist. It was first produced in 1890 to add to Ibsen's controversial position as social critic with stirring topics. *Hedda Gabler* may seem on the surface to be a play about a villain woman who brings about destruction not only to people whose lives she touches but also to non-living items that she touches too. At the end, she brings about her own destruction.

Among Ibsen plays that won the most attention of critics after *A Doll's House* is *Hedda Gabler*. In his discussion of *Hedda Gabler*, Weigand (1970) indicates that it is "the last of Ibsen's plays to have the dramatic interest centered on a complex woman character." (Weigand: 1970. 246) He, then, explains that the character of Hedda is a mixture of so many contradicting traits that make it easy for critics to misinterpret her. The point of view demonstrated by Wiegand is essential in the analysis of characters in the current study. Women's life is so much controlled, directed, and manipulated by the masculine dominance.

Criticism of Ibsen's plays has various intentions. It may reflect feminist intentions, a pure artistic realism or a social reform. In line with the above discussion, Brandi Hoffman Andrade's dissertation comes to discuss

the interrelation among realism, feminism, and social reform. In her *Hedda and Her Sisters: Realism, Feminism, and Social Reform on the American Stage* (2005), Andrade discusses some of Ibsen's plays along with Shaw's and other authors. The main focus of her study is on relating feminism to realism and social reform. According to her, realism¹ serves feminism; especially when the major concern of that realism is the social reform. She indicates that "feminists and realists at the dawn of the twentieth century attempted to use this power of the theatre to articulate a new social vision." (Andrade: 2005.3) However, she refers to the fact that "Ibsen and Shaw were frequently accused of presenting inappropriate debased situations onstage" (Ibid.8).

The accurate and deep reality Ibsen and Shaw presented in theatre has never been a brushed one. Thus, the shocking response to his plays should be the right one by the society that neglects such realities. Conversely, Andrade indicates that the shock regarding women's situation and representation in such a realist playwright's works is more manifested by men rather than by women.

Andrade's study approaches the current work since they both look into the social reform; particularly that of women. Andrade's study emphasizes the role Ibsen played to reach a better understanding of women's situation and rights. Her intention focused on the life of actresses, who played the roles of the protagonists in these plays. The current study on the other hand is to prove the role and accuracy of the realism of Ibsen through the analysis of the realistic female character of Hedda Gabler. Investigating this character as being an integrated human being should help express the reform message in women's issue by Ibsen.

In general, Ibsen, the playwright, and his social drama have proven to be the core of social and humanistic concern of studies and criticism. The controversial opinions that have been poured on and drew from his dramatic works can only prove the complexity and depth of his dramatic creation. Ibsen's accuracy in depicting reality in setting and character facilitates the humanistic approach of the current study.

The story of *Hedda Gabler* play starts with a description of a happy event in a gloomy setting. The setting is so important in the play. Some descriptions of the setting go as: "reception room, decorated in dark colours", "oval table, covered with a heavy cloth", "a large, dark, porcelaine stove", and "floor of both rooms covered with thick carpets". It was autumn and all these dark, heavy, and thick items of the setting combined with a big picture of the late general Gabler together give the sense of death (Ibsen:1981. 167). The play then is more about death than life because the air and sunlight are kept behind the glass door and the flowers is such a dim setting suggesting a

¹ Andrade labels realism that is expressed in all kinds of art as 'aesthetic realism'

funeral atmosphere. Among the characters introduced to be related to that house, only Hedda seems to fit in it. Even her hair and eye colour are matched with the setting background.

Stereotyping as Manifestation of Politics of Gender

The male/female role distinction made according to patriarchal politics of gender leaves Hedda, as a woman, confined by typical models. Such typical models of woman, wife, and mother deprive Hedda, just like any other woman within the same limits, from a life of free will and/or free choice and impose on her a relative, soulless existence. Using De Beauvoir's existentialist feminism, the researcher discusses how such typical models prevent Hedda from acquiring an essence in order to live a human existence experience.

Hedda Gabler does not have as wide range of stereotypical. However, the most recurrent typical model that Hedda struggles against throughout the play is that of the wife and mother. This is presented in the exposition of Act One and is seen tenser in the rising action of Act Two. People around Hedda including Aunt Juliane and Brack suggest to Hedda that sooner or later she will have the responsibility of motherhood. They associate this event with a reason for life and describe as sacred duty as in Brack's comment: "... perhaps a little pompously ... refer to as a sacred ... and exacting responsibility?" (Ibsen: 1981.209). This typical model of motherly response to the sacred call of motherhood is rejected by Ibsen through Hedda. It is a rejection to the illusion of gender natural duties. That illusion is best expressed in Shaw's *The Quintessence of Ibsenism* as the "idealist illusion that a vocation for domestic management and the care of children is natural to women, and that women who lack them are no women at all" (Shaw: 1976.44). For this reason, Hedda's response to such hints of pregnancy is almost always enraged. She does not want to be stereotyped as a traditional wife and mother who lives for others². According to Beauvoir's existentialist feminism a woman has no right of property even on her body in patriarchy. Thus, Hedda, who rejects patriarchy, rejects this kind of limitation. Consequently, Hedda is seen as unwomanly by critics who are still misled by the illusion of gendered natural duties. In politics of gender, each of the two sexes has predetermined duties that are carefully projected by social construction to the degree that they are taken for granted as natural to each of the two genders. Men are given ample freedom while women are loaded with grounding duties and unbreakable limitations. Man's breaking into women's zone is degrading to him, and woman's breaking into men's is disgracing to

² Hedda's rejection to admit pregnancy has another justification which is to be discussed under the subdivision of 'objectification' in this chapter.

her. Hedda who is so much longing to a life of total freedom does not find herself capable of surrendering to the patriarchal typical model of 'good woman' as wife and mother. However, Hedda seems to have already submitted to the typical model of dependent woman anticipated by politics of gender. She declares to Brack that she decided to marry Tesman "when he came along and was pathetically eager to be allowed to support me" (Ibsen:1981.203) Thus, Hedda has accepted the typical model of the depended woman who marries off to find someone to support her. But one may ask, what alternative did she have? After the death of her father, Hedda was not allowed, like any other woman at that time, any chance of a decent work without being exploited. For her and other working women in most jobs at a patriarchal society an unmarried women is a project of seduction and chase by equally married and unmarried men. When Hedda's father died, he did not leave her much to live on, she was left to choose between the two patriarchal options premeditated for woman; to surrender to man in marriage as a dependent being or to surrender to man as a sexual object also as a dependent being. Hedda, terrified of scandal, has chosen marriage! This left her with the type of existence which is of the 'other', and the 'relative' as described by De Beauvoir. She was General Gabler's daughter and she is Dr. Tesman's wife now. Otherwise, she could be Mr. Lovborg's mistress! Whether she likes it or not, all her options as a woman are rendered dependent, relative, soulless, and thus anchored in 'otherness'.

Hedda struggles against another kind of stereotyping during the 36 hours of the play. She tries to destroy the typical models of the controlling man and controlled woman. She wants to reverse the reality of men's manipulation of women's lives. Hedda is considered coward by Lovborg when she refused to surrender as a secret mistress to him yet he claimed she had power on him. Then he refuses to surrender to her request to drink again after having given up alcoholism. However, Hedda, unable to use her claimed power on him provokes him to drink in a manipulating way. This gives her a satisfying feeling in succeeding to reverse gender roles. Her justification for pushing Lovborg to drink is: "For once in my life I want to feel that I control a human destiny" (Ibsen:1981.226). In this fashion, Hedda, by the end of Act Two seems more in grasp of some others' existence, but not hers, however. She never had control on her destiny and is not even now, but she has over Lovborg who claimed her love but wanted her the cheapest way which he, though, refers to as freedom and courage. However, Hedda lost the battle of controlling Lovborg's life. He did not die the way she wanted him to. She is still cornered by the politics of gender that impose a stereotypical model of woman as negative, passive, dependent which consequently transform her into some soulless creature totally controlled and absolutely shaped by man according to his own desires. It is the process by which a woman, who is born



as a human is forced into a regress towards a mere body in the dark dungeon of patriarchy where she is forced to give up existence beyond that female body.

The above argument can lead to the realization that Hedda is aware of her limited existence. She is more convinced that it was caused by the gender roles enforced by the politics of gender. It is the task of those patriarchal politics of gender to mold and shape women in soulless relative existence models suitable for masculine consumption.

Objectification as a Manifestation of Sexuality

The theme of objectification covers both looking at woman as a sexual body and through the functions of her reproductive female body. It is also about how woman is utilized by man as if she were a commodity. This theme has many examples in *Hedda Gabler*. The first incident of Hedda's objectification is in Act One at the exposition and unfolding of characters. It is in Aunt Juliane's congratulations to her nephew on having won the one woman who many other men would want to have. She points out: "And to think you'd be the one to walk off with Hedda Gabler! The lovely Hedda Gabler. Imagine it! So many admirers she always had around her!" (Ibid.171). This suggests that Hedda is perceived as an object. It seems that Tesman has got her into his possession to compete other men with what many a man would want to possess; Hedda Gabler. The use of Hedda's name as 'Hedda Gabler' suggests that the name in this context has a special indication. Aunt Juliane refers to Hedda not only as 'Hedda' but as 'Hedda Gabler' with indication that she makes a more valuable possession in this way than being merely 'Hedda'. Despite the fact that Hedda is not being possibly referred to as a sexual body by Aunt Juliane, she is still being looked at as a commodity that men may compete to possess.

Still in Act One and not far from Aunt Juliane's reflection on Hedda's objectification, Tesman tells his aunt: "But Aunt, take a good look at Hedda before you go! Charming is the word for her, eh?" (Ibid.178) This statement by Tesman is meant to complete showing off his affect on Hedda and on her as a body in particular and thus he states: "I declare she's filled out beautifully on the trip" (Ibid.178). And in response to her nephew's claimed affect on Hedda, Aunt Juliane calls Hedda by the name 'Hedda Tesman' for the first time. This is a very vivid example of patriarchal concept of sexuality revealed through the theme of objectification. Hedda is looked at not only as a valued possession of Tesman, but also a female body upon which celebrates Tesman his masculinity that blossoms in the deepest effect of impregnating her. Millett's theory conveys that men celebrate their sexual influence on the female body as a proof of their subjugation of woman. It must be such a great triumph for Tesman to feel capable of subjugating 'Hedda Gabler' to his

powers. Tesman even shows off his sexual power on 'Hedda Gabler' in front of Brack as: "But what do you say to Hedda, then! Isn't she blossoming?" (Ibid.192). This Tesman's remark is surely meant to refer to Hedda's surrender to her female body functions that satisfy his desires and fulfill its reproductive role for carrying and breeding man's off spring. From the above incidents from *Hedda Gabler*. It seems that Hedda has been perceived as a body in two images; a valuable possession (the sexually attractive body), and as the reproductive female body that is subjugated to bear man's future generation.

A great deal of the dialogue in Hedda Gabbler reveals about two of the male antagonists' perception of Hedda as a sex object, namely Brack and Lovborg. The Dialogue between Brack and Hedda at the beginning of Act Two is full of Brack's flirting to Hedda.

Brack. And Tesman's is not in either, perhaps?

Hedda [...]. No. [...] He didn't expect you so soon.

Brack. Hm...and I didn't think of that. Stupid of me.

Hedda [turns her head and looks at him]. Why stupid?

Brack. Because then I could have come out here...even a little earlier.

Hedda [*crosses the floor*]. And then you'd have found no one at all.

I've been in my room, changing after lunch.

Brack. And isn't there the minutest chink in the door that would have permitted communication? (Ibid.200)

This dialogue reveals about Bracks intentions towards Hedda who he finds asexual body. It is clear that all the flirting is a clear interest in her female sexual body which Brack would like to enjoy in an immoral way as Hedda states. During the course of the play, Brack is seen most the time skipping the front door of the Tesmans and "sneaking round the back" (Ibid. 199) in an indication that he has immoral desires. Thus, while Brack makes it clear with rising action of the play that he is interested in Hedda as a female companion whose company he enjoys in the absence of her husband, Hedda expresses that she finds him scary and threatening as in the dialogue:

Hedda [*looks at him with smile*]. So ... you want to be the only cock in the yard, is that it?

Brack [*nods slowly and lower his voice*]. Yes, that's what I want. And I'll fight for that end...with every means at my disposal.

Hedda [*her smile fading*]. You're quite formidable person...when it comes to the point.

Hedda. Yes, I'm beginning to think so, now. And I'm content...so long you don't have any sort of hold over me. (239)

This example of the dialogue between Hedda and Brack exposes the daring revelation of Brack's sexual interest in Hedda. At the same time, it

shows Hedda's comprehension to the reality that Brack is looking at her as if he were a vulture waiting to feed upon her body. However, Brack is still the foil character through which the reader/audience obtains insight into the protagonist's life. Thus, later in Act Two and in the dialogue with Brack, Hedda discusses the reasons behind her selection of a boring man like Tesman for a husband. She reveals that Tesman was willing to marry her which, as she indicates: "was more than any of my other gallant friends were prepared to do" (Ibid.203). This is especially important for a beautiful aristocratic woman who admits: "I'd really danced myself tired" (Ibid.202) which shows that she has tried all her options. Again, Hedda is aware of her options and she chooses the least harmful which yet to prove unsatisfactory for her. She is still dissatisfied with this marriage because it is boring to share life with a naïve person who lacks the shrewdness of the aristocratic lively young men who used to surround her. Despite the fact that many a man would want to be with Hedda but it was Tesman who wanted her in marriage. Others, including Brack and Lovborg would want to have her as a sexual playmate without any commitment towards her. Hedda is unhappy in her marriage because it is still a means of objectification. It connotes to woman's identity that is defined by sexuality and female body function. It still subjugates her to man through a sexual relation. It still limits her freedom as it comes with its sets of patriarchal rules that can by no means be fair to a woman or admitting her anything beyond her female body. Hedda expresses her dissatisfaction and boredom in marriage to Brack who enjoys a carefree life that Hedda yearns to have a taste of. She describes marriage like a stopping station in her journey of life which she finds herself obliged to endure. It is due to the norms of Victorian patriarchal society that man enjoys all the freedom and power to manipulate woman as a sex object without being sanctioned or restrained. Thus, Brack tries to seduce her to brake off the commitments of marriage in allegorical language of the dialogue extracted below:

Hedda [*shakes her head*]. The journey'll be a long one...along one yet. I've just come to a stopping-place on the line.

Brack. Well, then you jump out. And move around a little, my lady.

Hedda. I'll never jump out.

Brack. Are you quite sure?

Hedda. Yes. Because there's always someone there who'll ...

Brack [*laughing*]. ... who'll look at your legs, you mean?

Hedda. Exactly. (Ibsen:1981.203-204)

This dialogue shows that Hedda is consent with the unsatisfactory marriage because the alternative is evil and scandalous. Yet, with improper sexual implications, Brack tries to seduce her to be a playful wife, to 'jump out' and wander around where she may meet people who break the dullness of

her marriage. However, Hedda expresses her realization that there is always somebody preying on such wandering wives. Eventually, Brack's insinuations prove her right because upon her rejection to the suggestion of a playful wife, he offers himself as a companion to both her and her husband. This offer later proves to be an implicit attempt into a sexual relation with Hedda. Nevertheless, Hedda's understanding that all what men see in her is a sexual body to utilize for their own pleasure in or out of marriage makes her more convenient that her surrender to this objectification in marriage though may be bad, is not the worst option she chooses. In this way, woman does not seem to be able to escape sexuality. It has been explained in Millett's theory of patriarchy that a woman is meant by patriarchy to be only a sexual body which men can only feel satisfied when they subjugate using sex. It is Hedda's case where she finds herself a body which either surrenders to a husband to subjugate through the use of sex that she 'blossoms' with his offspring or she is a body that is looked at as a cheap meat which is humiliated and scorned by men using sex on her.

Ibsen is so intended on showing what preys on woman's sexuality in the patriarchal world even in the name of love. Thus, *Hedda Gabler* yet reveals another antagonist; Lovborg, who only sees Hedda as a sexual object. When he meets her as a married woman, he still calls her 'Hedda Gabler' which is her maiden name. This indicates that he does not intend to confine to the moral commitment imposed on a stranger's relation to a married woman. His insistence on using her old name is a reminder to himself of the lovely 'Hedda Gabler' whose company he used to enjoy and whom he tried to seduce into a sexual relationship. In sum, Lovborg still finds Hedda a sexual body that can be subjugated through sex. He tries his best to convince her return to the kind of relationship they had when he used to tell her about his adventures as a carefree young man who drinks and parties and who spends time with prostitutes.

In fact, Hedda admits to Lovborg that she did enjoy that companionship but it was not for the sexual fantasy it provokes. She used to enjoy it rather for the opportunity it was offering Hedda to get a glimpse of the masculine world that is a taboo for her as woman. While the world of free careless life Lovborg used to reveal to Hedda allows man to be active, women in that world are passive and acted on as prostitutes and mistresses. Hedda who is eager to be free and active can only live a secondhand fantasy adventures that are only open to men. Nevertheless, even that secondhand imagined adventure was forbidden to Hedda. Lovborg misinterprets Hedda's interest in his carefree stories. He intended telling those full of sexual connotations adventure stories to pull Hedda under his influence and into his world, not as active but as a passive sexual female body which he means to subjugate by sex in the name of love. While Lovborg accuses Hedda of

ending their old companionship, she blames him for distorting it. She explains that she broken it “because there was an imminent danger that the game would become a reality”. (Ibid.219) Hedda wouldn’t accept that reality in fear of moral deformity and scandal. Then she accuses him of introducing violence to their friendship when she states: “Shame on you Ejler Lovborg, how you could offer such violence to ... to your confidential companion!” (Ibid.219). By offering a sexual relation to their friendship, Lovborg shattered the fancy Hedda was living through his secret masculine stories. She used them to gain satisfaction of living an imaginary masculinity. Consequently, patriarchy wins because women fail to live masculinity even though in fantasy. Man does not offer woman anything without return and because he is the holder of power and the financial support, he can only expect her to pay in sexual gratitude in return. For this reason when Hedda indicated to Lovborg that she was coward twice; at failing to shoot him and at some other thing, Lovborg only thought of sexual relation. He thought Hedda was coward by not letting herself in a sexual relationship with him (Ibid.220). However, what Hedda was referring to is that she was coward at failing to shoot herself too when she realized that the man she loved and lived her most exciting moments of life with was only seeking sexual gratitude from her.

Towards the end of Act Two and all through Act Three Hedda was in the swirl of a whirlpool of men’s sexual desires of her as a body facing her own desire to escape from the patriarchal limits of a woman’s life without having to submit to the patriarchal traps of immoral scandalous options. Her plans to avenge upon Lovborg who deprived her from the masculine fantasies coincided with Brack’s determined plan to have her submit to his sexual desires in an extramarital relation. These two decadent masculine desires in Hedda’s sexuality coincided with the triumph of patriarchy on her female body in a pregnancy that she does not want to admit. The three men she has around her only see her as a female body to take, control, and enjoy. Any attempt for an escape from this masculine siege of Hedda as a sexual body proves to be beyond her reach. If she can escape Lovborg and Brack, she is already pregnant with Tesman’s child! According to Kate Millett, woman cannot escape patriarchy that set sex as a political tool to subjugate, humiliate, and control woman. This is exactly the situation in which Hedda finds herself confined and helpless.

In Act Three, Hedda reaches the recognition that she has no escape from patriarchal power that reduces woman to sexuality. She is left no space in life but that of a body utilizable by man. Threatened by a scandal brought about by her plotting and leading to the death of Lovborg, Hedda finds herself under the mercy of Brack. She realizes that he now has full power on her and all that he wants of her is her body. She rhetorically, more to herself than to Brack, asks him: “And so now I am in your power, Mr. Brack. From now on I



am at your mercy.” (Ibid.262) This exposes the dreadful destiny of a woman who dared to play a different gender role than she was expected as a woman.

Oppression as Manifestation of Power Relation

Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* presents little evidence of oppression. Almost all oppression in the play is presented in the form of sexuality where the character of Hedda struggles against endless advances and attempts of men around her to have advantage on her body. These attempts of Brack and Lovborg are only made possible through power relations where man has the upper hand in the patriarchal man-woman relationship. However, Hedda's decline to submit to both men's attempts seems to thwart their threat to her security. Consequently, nothing seems to be standing the way of Hedda's natural psychological development. Thus, the next stage of natural psychological development is to move towards self-actualization. The truth; however, is that this can only be a false first impression of oppression in *Hedda Gabler*.

In self-actualization, as has been explained in Maslow's theory, when the four lower basic needs are satisfied to some degree, which is supposed to be the case of Hedda, the person should be able to be all that he/she can be. Yet, Hedda cannot reach self-actualization. For this reason, it is important to ask whether the fact that Hedda is a woman has anything to do with her being unable to reach self-actualization? The answer is definitely 'YES'. The power relations of the two genders of men and women which places all power in the hand of man stands the way of woman's natural healthy psychological development. An indication of Hedda's oppression is comprehended from the fact that she could never choose what she really wanted throughout the play and even earlier to the beginning of the play as understood from flashbacks. Her desire for a free romantic life ends in a traditional marriage. Her rejection to be defined by her body functions ends in her admission of pregnancy. And the worst is her conscious attempt to avoid being trapped in scandal ends into a dead end of either infidelity or scandal. This can only indicate that Hedda has been oppressed under the firm fist of patriarchal power relations. Everything went against Hedda's desire because of her being a powerless woman in a patriarchal society that entails the entire power in the man-woman relation to man and man alone.

Hedda is trapped in an everlasting struggle against having to satisfy her basic needs within the terms of being the weaker sex. If she weren't a woman, she might have had her security needs satisfied through a stable financial income probably as a military person following the father line. If she weren't a woman, she might have had her love needs satisfied as love of equals not as love of a dependent daughter and then wife. If Hedda were not a woman, her self esteem might have been satisfied much more and she might

have admitted esteem of others as equals rather than masters. For these reasons, Hedda's basic needs might have seemed gratified for a woman by the patriarchal norms. However, in their reality, her basic needs were force/false gratified for a human being. At least they were not gratified in the way that makes them settled as no more urgent needs. Hedda's problem lies in her attempt to satisfy her human basic needs beyond the limitations of gender role.

It is clear, then, that Hedda is driven neurotic by the continuous struggle with basic needs that are force/false gratified for a woman who hates to be a woman because that keeps her under the power and mercy of man. As neurotic as she could not avoid being, her actions seem uncontrolled even for her. In response to Brack's exclamation of how Hedda could be unfair to the nice aunt Juliane, Hedda indicates: "these things just suddenly come over me. And then I can't resist them" (Ibsen:1981.206). Thus, Hedda's unfair treatment of the women around her can simply reflect her abhorrence to their weakness as women because they remind her that she belongs to that gender which she finds pathetic.

In conclusion, Hedda has lost the struggle against oppression simply because she rejected to play her female gender role. She is oppressed rather as a human than as a woman because man's dominance on power declined her any chance to develop as a normal human being. It is because when she tried to live as a woman she could not find herself a living human. She realized that living as a woman is living a degraded sub-human life which did not suit Hedda who fought for a normal human life. For this reason she ends up her own life in a final statement of objection to being a woman. She shoots herself in a brave way that was even too masculine to be achieved by Lovborg. She does not resolve to the conventional suicide methods of women such as drowning or poisoning. She rather uses a masculine method of suicide shooting herself in the temple using a pistol which is definitely a masculine weapon. However, her bravery in rejecting femininity is cowardice in gaining humanism.

Conclusion

Hedda was found in this paper to have attempted to play the wrong gender role and to lead, even though through fantasy, to lead a masculine life. Ibsen has presented Hedda in a struggle against the patriarchal society which is saturated with gender inequality. This struggle has placed Hedda in a tragic situation. It seems that the 'breach' between Hedda and the patriarchal society which discriminates against women starts as early as before the inauguration curtain of the play. Hedda does not believe in gender roles or any stereotypical typical models patriarchy imposes on woman. The 'crises' occurs when Hedda, as a married woman, finds herself in total loss of control. She is being haunted by Brack as a sexual body, she is being imprisoned in a

boring marriage, and she even lost control on her secret window at the masculine world; Lovborg. But Hedda tries to compromise that situation and after a fit of anger fueled by her desire to avenge herself upon that patriarchal society, she shows submission. She declares the long denied pregnancy and then she offers to be of use to her husband. However, results were against her desire again. She is announced of no use to her husband, Brack has seize over her haunting her like she were a crippled pray soon to be endeavored by a sexually starving beast. Hedda is left with one of two options; either to 'reintegrate' into the gender biased society and thus accepts all that she finds unfair and becomes a dependent, sexually abused, and oppressed woman, or to take the other option of 'cleavage' with that society. Despite the fact that the other option does not necessarily mean her death, Hedda's committing suicide in a masculine way is her most furious and most satisfying a manifestation of departure that denies her men exploiters any satisfaction.

Hedda Gabler is one of Ibsen's most strong and integrated characters on the surface. However, she, in fact, is found conquered by stereotyping, objectification, and oppression, as discussed earlier under each theme. Throughout the play, Hedda lacks the ability to have absolute possession and control over her body. She is unable to maintain an existing free soul fragment. Finally, she fails to maintain survival through the struggle of needs gratification necessary for a normal development. Hedda could not achieve integrity of human elements necessary for her to transform from the sub-human to the human status. She fought the wrong war when she believed that human is man and thus tried hard to forge a man's life. She thought that all what is masculine and active is beautiful and all that is feminine and passive is ugly. She failed to get her human elements integrated as a woman in order to achieve the rebirth as a human. Instead, she accomplished one last masculine achievement in a free will of controlling her life and destiny choosing death in a masculine way.

The character of Hedda Gabler gained the reputation of unwomanly woman. In this, critics are just to define the unjust attribute. The patriarchal social construction of the typical and atypical womanly woman is the basic derive behind Hedda's confusion that led to her gloomy destiny. When the politics of gender, sexuality, and power relations devoted all that is good, active, and powerful to man, then,, woman is left with all that is passive, negative, and helpless. At the time Nora Helmer succeeded to overrule that construction as a woman, Hedda failed because all she wanted to be is to be a man. Having accepted her destiny as a woman who fights for her humanness, Hedda would have succeeded in leading a balanced lifemade the rebirth, but she was too afraid to try. Confused of what she wants to be, has to be, and needs to be, she kept her struggle within herself thus fought against her woman identity not against the unfair patriarchy towards women. Perplexed

within herself, she left herself in the womb of patriarchy till death just like she kept her baby in her womb to death!

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