

	<p><b>Annals of Social Sciences and Perspective</b></p> <p>ISSN (Print): 2707-7063, ISSN (Online): 2788-8797          Volume 5, Number 1, January-July 2024, Pages 41-53          Journal homepage: <a href="http://assap.wum.edu.pk/index.php/ojs">http://assap.wum.edu.pk/index.php/ojs</a></p>
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## Highlighting the Aspects of Women Emancipation and Liberation in Ibsen's The Dolls House and Hedda Gabler: A Comparative Feministic Approach

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ARTICLE DETAILS	ABSTRACT
<p><b>History:</b></p> <p>Received: November 15, 2023            Accepted: April 23, 2024</p>	<p>This research paper aims to investigate the aspects of women liberation and emancipation in Ibsen's <i>The Dolls House</i> and <i>Hedda Gabler</i>. <i>The Dolls House</i> largely addresses a woman's yearning to forge her individuality and dignity in a world run by men. The review section illustrates the critical comments and reviews of notable literary authors and critics. Through methodological perspective, feministic and especially a radical feministic approach in <i>The Dolls House</i> and <i>Hedda Gabler</i> has been used. To examine the types of conflict <i>Hedda Gabler</i> engaged in when battling over patriarchal worldview and to examine the types of challenges <i>Hedda Gabler</i> had in her battle with ideology. However, the study uses content analysis to conduct a qualitative investigation of textual references under the umbrella term of feministic theory. Finally, the research concludes that Ibsen's unorthodox portrayal of women in one of his most notable social tragedies; <i>The Dolls House</i> &amp; <i>Gabler</i>.</p> <p>© 2024 The Authors, Published by WUM. This is an Open Access Article under the Creative Common Attribution Non Commercial 4.0</p>
<p><b>Keywords:</b></p> <p>Feminism            Liberation            Emancipation            Women freedom            Gender Equality</p>	
<p><b>DOI:</b></p> <p>10.52700/assap.v5i1.334</p>	

### 1. Introduction

Henrik Ibsen was born on March 20, 1828. He is a dramatist and theatre director from Norway. Ibsen was one of the most important playwrights of his period and is known as the "father of realism." Some of his best-known works are *Ghosts*, *A Doll's House*, *Galilean*, *Hedda Gabler*, and *Galilean*, and *The Master Builder*. *A Doll's House* was the most produced play in history.

Ibsen has been characterized as a social realist, a revolutionary thinker, and a champion of suppressed and oppressed women in Norway and Europe during the nineteenth century by several feminist critics. *The Dolls House* talks about women's rights and individual freedom. Similarly to her spouse, Nora possesses all the innate abilities necessary to make a constructive contribution to society. In fact, her analytical mind, openness to change, sense of justice, lack of hypocrisy and openness to what is called custom, and other such positive qualities would aid her in further development and contribute to the improvement of herself, her family, and her society.

Among the most important modern dramatists, Henrik Ibsen (1828–1906) has undoubtedly attained a singular and unusual position. His profound philosophical and revolutionary views, which had an obvious influence on the development of literature in general and theatre in particular throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, are framed in addition to his plays and poetry. He is regarded as the founder of contemporary theatre and the first playwright to create a number of tragedies concerning common people. Ibsen created issue plays or dramas of ideas, whose primary focus is on the drama's presentation. In all of Ibsen's works, the social drama dilemma is present. He specifically

examined the sociological issue of the duties allocated to women in a male-oriented society in *A Doll's House* (1879). He considered Nora Helmer's predicament first, and then investigated what would have occurred had she remained at home. In *A Doll's House*, Henrik Ibsen discusses the place of women in modern society. The play's themes of personal responsibility and coming to terms with one's own identity and civil liberties are more interesting to him. In a patriarchal society where males set the rules, it is women who should fight for their rights: "By obligations do you mean? My obligations belong to myself, says Nora (Act III, p. 68). In the tragic novella *A Doll's House*, Nora exits her home by slamming a door to the world of fresh opportunities. She is leaving to learn about her obligations to herself. One of Ibsen's key concepts presented in his play is this form of self-realization, which typically results in a fresh beginning. When Nora opens her eyes, she realises that life with Torvald Helmer has stolen away her freedom and sense of self. Nora is a lady who has decided to stop basing her relationships with strange men and illusions in her life. Helmer has conducted his life in accordance with the logic and judgement of a man, and his worldview is organised around authority and order. This guy is so methodical and self-controlled that he would rather risk his reputation than give his life for his loved ones. He has come to the conclusion that, since logic is no longer helpful, he must turn to the prospect of a miracle.

In order to flourish as a person in her own right and in the sight of others, Nora needs to achieve her right to independent independence. She has come to the hard realisation that the way she has been treated is unacceptable and must change. Readers of *A Doll's House* must contend with Helmer's strict moral code and the fact that his wife must completely sacrifice herself for his sake since she cannot be herself in modern society. Nora pauses in the midst of her feelings to declare, "We have never sat down in earnest together to try to get to the bottom of anything," in a world ruled by laws that are exclusively imposed on men and devoid of any feelings (Act III, p. 66).

One of the most important statements in the feminist perspective, this claim captures Nora's epiphanic realisation that she has been treated like a lesser being and that her inalienable rights have been disregarded. The play's proclamation, which may be seen as an exordium of fresh method and topic in contemporary theatre, comes to a conclusion. *A Doll's House* is about a serious conversation between a husband and wife, which is one of the fundamental components of modern drama, even if, as in the ancient form, the rising action achieves its maximum point, based on a majestic and lofty theme. She is unable to remain in her dollhouse any longer for her own reasons. There is no need for any more feeling or giving. She no longer wants to submit to her husband and wants to face the world on her own. According to the male-dominated culture, Nora has supposedly engaged in behaviour that is unthinkable for a middle-class woman under normal circumstances. In the perspective of feminism, she wants to show that she is a self-sufficient human being even as she continues to battle for the self-realization of her true self. Individualism has benefitted few women up until that time. Before Nora, no fictional woman had ever displayed such bravery.

One of Ibsen's social tragedies, *Hedda Gabler*, features the most educated female lead. As a problematic contribution to Ibsen's stance as a social critic with provocative subjects, it was originally staged in 1890. On the surface, *Hedda Gabler* could appear to be a drama about a bad lady who wrecks not just the lives of the people she affects but also the non-living things she touches. She ultimately contributes to her own demise. *Hedda Gabler* is one of Ibsen's plays that received the greatest attention from reviewers after *A Doll's House*. Weigand (1970) notes that *Hedda Gabler* is "the last of Ibsen's plays to have the dramatic attention concentrated on a complicated woman character" in his analysis of the play. (p. 246) The character of Hedda, he continues, combines so many disparate qualities that it is simple for reviewers to misread her. The domination of males greatly influences, directs, and controls the lives of women. *Hedda Gabler's* novel opens with a description of a joyful occasion taking place in a depressing environment. Some descriptions of the environment include "a massive, dark porcelain stove," "a reception room furnished in dark colours," "oval table covered with a heavy fabric," and "the floors of both rooms covered with thick rugs" (p.167). It was fall, and the large photograph of the late general Gabler and the setting's dark, heavy,

and dense elements combined to evoke a sense of death. Hedda Gabler, a wealthy general's daughter, has just got back from her honeymoon. George Tesman, her spouse, is a young, steadfast scholar who has combined research with their honeymoon. Hedda married Tesman just to receive a social security benefit; she does not love him. The piece also makes the implication that she could be expecting a child. Their lives are turned upside down by Eilert Lovborg's reappearance. In addition to writing, Lovborg is an ex-drinker. He had wasted his abilities up to this point. Lovborg has indications of recovery and has just finished a bestseller in the same genre as Tesman thanks to a friendship with Hedda's former classmate Thea Elvsted. As a result, Tesman now faces competition from Lovborg. Tesman and Hedda learn after their first encounter with Lovborg that Lovborg has no desire to contend with Tesman for the position of university professor he had been banking on. Hedda wants him to go to the party with Tesman and his associate Judge Brack because she is envious of Thea's control over Lovborg. Tesman returns from the party carrying the manuscript of Lovborg's masterwork, which Lovborg lost while inebriated. Later, Lovborg tells Hedda he misplaced the manuscript. Hedda hands him her father's revolver and gently urges him to kill himself rather than assuring him that the manuscript is secure. In spite of her anger and resentment, she burns the manuscript, pretending to Tesman that she did it to ensure their future. When Tesman and Thea learn of Lovborg's passing, they immediately begin to update the text using his notes. Hedda is informed by Judge Brack that if she informs anybody about her handguns, a major scandal would erupt and Hedda will be implicated. Hedda shoots herself in the head because she cannot stand for anybody to have authority over her. Thea and Brack find her body at the play's conclusion.

## 2. Literature Review

Meenakshi (n.d.) highlighted that Ibsen's *The Dolls House* is a successful attempt to break the already constructed image of stereotypical heroine presented in 18th and 19th century. The protagonist of the play, Nora Helmer is the most widely analyzed personality in the world literature. Her struggle against breaking the already constructed stereotypical roles of women in the modern society and finding her true self and identifications is evident throughout the play. Similarly, in Hedda Gabler the image of woman like a "doll" is again rejected by the female protagonist, who challenged the role of married woman in a family through her strong and rigid nature. Hedda Gabler wanted to take complete control of her life and her destiny. She was also well aware of the societal roles imposed on a woman so she married Tesman in order to occupy a decent place in a society. It also shows a weak side of a woman that in order to recognize herself she has to attach herself with an identity of a man. Through that dependence, she tried to attain exercise her own will and power in order to make her life's decisions. She believes in choosing and constructing her own decisions through her choices and desires.

Hussain (2016), in one of his essay demonstrated that pessimism of the authors falls on their masculine characters. It is clear from the Ibsen's plays that mostly his male characters are imbeciles who try to rule the woman in one way or another. In *The Doll's House*, Nora's husband Torvald was a dominating man who wants to have the control of house by imposing his decisions on his life and children. Mostly, he complains about his wife's carelessness as according to him she loves to spend a lot. In the play, Ibsen explains the two kinds of conscience; one in man and other in woman. In practical life as it is seen in most of the Ibsen's plays that a woman is judged by a man's law and he loves to impose his decisions over a woman in every aspect of life. But the basic idea of the whole plays is presented at the end of the play where Nora, the protagonist finally clarifies her position, her choices and her feminine psychology in a simple way by leaving the house where she was merely treated like a doll. She said, "I must stand quite alone, if I am to understand myself and everything about me. It is for that reason that I cannot with you any longer." (p.64) Torvald tried to stop her because he felt that his honor and aposition are at stake but Nora by using her strong free conscience gave answer that, "It is a thing that hundreds and thousands of women have done" (p.66) and move away by leaving the toxic life.

Farfan (1988) mentioned that in Ibsen plays male characters e.g. Torvald Helmer & George Tesman are true depiction of patriarchal society in 18th and 19th century. In *The Dolls House*, Torvald

Helmer was only concerned about his reputation and career in front of society. Concepts of morality, duty, honor are therefore of values only in aspect when all these factors are in favour of him and he used all these factors to keep himself beyond the reach of other men. When he felt threatened, he dispensed all his moral concepts and was ready to stoop to the level of blackmailing criminal, Krogstad. George Tesman in *Hedda Gabler* turns his initial expression of horror into joy at his wife's destruction of Ejlert Lovborg's manuscript by knowing that Hedda has done this for him. In that case, he kept this whole matter a secret by thinking that he can create a career for himself by reconstructing this lost text. Despite of restrictions imposed on Hedda and Nora by her husbands' they did not suffer because of moral and aesthetic ideals and choose to live their lives according to their own choices.

Forshey (2008), in her article claimed that Ibsen's female characters are victims of mental and emotional captivity to objects, attitudes and people. In literary terms, theme of captivity especially social captivity in terms of female characters refers to those circumstances in which a female protagonist comes from bleak circumstances. Theme of social captivity is very much prominent in Ibsen's plays. Many women problems during Ibsen's days were identified by him by using masculine judicial system. This issue is explored in *The Dolls House* through Nora's experience with counterfeit loan. The issue of poverty is also highlighted by Ibsen in most of his plays. Due to lack of resources and money, married women in Ibsen's plays somehow feel enslaved in a marriage of convenience. Moreover, the theme of female captivity is very evident in *Hedda Gabler* and *The Dolls House* in which both protagonists Hedda and Nora are influenced by paternal relationships.

Ghafourinia (2014) in her article mentioned that Ibsen strongly believes that in order to develop the society there should be the equal distribution of rights among men and women. Torvald in *The Dolls House* adjusted himself in patriarchal society and wishes same for Nora but ultimately she refuses to accept the patriarchal setup and recognizes her true self and gains self-knowledge. She chooses to utilize her personal and subjective understanding of society by rebelling against patriarchal norms. *The Dolls House* highlights the situation of married women and the pressure imposed on them by the society in 18th and 19th century.

Moi (2013), stated that the play *Hedda Gabler* deals with the three significant silences. Two are enacted onstage; in which one is evoked in conversation. It is clear in the play that first silence takes place during the scene between Loevborg and Thea, where Loevborg tells her that he has lost the manuscript of his new book. The whole conversation was secretly listened by Hedda but she never reveals the truth that she has that manuscript in her desk. The second silence is Hedda's refusal to lie that Loevborg actually stole a pistol with which he shot himself. The third silence refers to a moment in which Hedda refused to respond to Lovborg's sexual advances. Infact, the nature of all three silences are quite different because through these three types of silences the readers get to know about the different traits of her character. In the first silence, Hedda's deliberate refusal to express the truth about lost manuscript shows her idea of excitement and avid curiosity. The second expresses her revolt and disgust and the third one is somehow deeply related to the first two.

Khaild (2013) in her work discussed that appearance of Hedda seems more like a monster than a woman as she likes to play with the destiny of others. Through Hedda's traits throughout the play it is evident that she is deprived of womanly qualities. She loves to hurt others and is not an obedient wife. She has no love and respect for her husband and wishes to exercise and control over others. According to Khalid, Hedda does not possess any feminine traits as Ibsen has gone out of his way to create such female character. Hedda is merely a manifestation of maliciousness, loathing and woman of foul passions. She is weaving an intricate web of foulest passions in which she wishes to strangle her victims and rule over them as she enjoys snubbing those around her.

Baseer, Alvi and Zafran (2013), in their work associated the thoughts of Kristeva with the play *The Dolls House*. According to Kristeva, patriarchy creates the concepts of empowerment of men and women on the basis of symbolic and cultural concepts rather than the natural ones. *The Dolls House* is filled with many examples where the Torvald's desire to be obeyed and exercise his orders over

Nora is clearly evident. In the 1<sup>st</sup> act, readers are informed through the dialogues that the protagonist Nora is interested to buy macaroons but due to her husband's orders she never dares to buy these items. In the entire drama we have seen her pleasing her husband and doing those things that make him happy. Nora is of believe that home is a place where her husband would be happy. When she narrated the story of her borrowing money, Mrs. Lindle explains that it is quite wrong that she has borrowed money without her husband's consent. These socially constructed thought patterns are deeply rooted in human conscience and deviation from them is totally impossible especially for Nora. Finch and Park (n.d.) associated the play *The Dolls House* with post-feminist and evolutionist perspective by saying that instead of studying Nora's life like a doll captivated by her husband's desires we should studied her life style from a Darwinist perspective, seeing her someone who has adopted the persona of a 'featherhead' as an effective strategy for existing comfortably and without responsibility in the society in which she finds herself. A post-feminist and evolutionary approach questions her actions in the final act of the play by saying that it might be possible that she might have adopted the more effective survival strategy of negotiating a 'new deal' with Helmer that is based on respect, forgiveness, acceptance, mutual trust and openness. Through this deal both Nora and her husband can justify the basic needs of survival, family and kinship. From the Darwinist perspective, it is clear that every character is interacting with his / her environment and struggling to modify it with his / her efforts. Nora has successfully contributed in framing her existence.

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

The research is qualitative in nature as it includes the textual references in order to show the concepts of feminism in Ibsen's *The Dolls House* and *Hedda Gabler*.

#### **3.1. Feminism:**

Literature is a reflection and expression of life, society, and the time period it represents. It is also intriguing since it describes the aspects of society that occur towards men and women. The study of gender politics, power dynamics, and sexuality is at the heart of feminism, which seeks to explain the origins of women's oppression. Organizational efforts focus on reproductive rights, domestic abuse, maternity leave, fair pay, sexual harassment, discrimination, and sexual violence. Discrimination, stereotyping, objectification (particularly sexual objectification), oppression, and patriarchy are all topics of inquiry within the feminist movement.

#### **3.2. Gender Equality:**

Feminists believe that gender should not be used to decide factors such as rights, advantages, position, or duties. Among the many complaints levelled against contemporary feminist theory is that it is too closely linked to the elite universities and colleges of the West. However, feminism is an activist movement that cuts beyond social and racial lines. It's tailored to the needs of the local ladies and the customs of that culture. Rape, incest, and motherhood are all too common problems that affect people everywhere. French author, thinker, feminist, and social theorist Simone de Beauvoir (1908-1986) is remembered for her seminal 1949 work, *The Second Sex*, in which she provided a thorough examination of the oppression of women. It discusses the status of women throughout history and is widely considered a seminal text in feminist thought. This piece exemplifies de Beauvoir's notion of woman as "the Other." It is not something one is born with; rather, one develops into (p. 301). It argues that traditional culture has ignored women's perspectives for too long. As Simone de Beauvoir Stated that, "[t]wo independent humans, in different circumstances, face to face in freedom, seeking justification of their existence through one another, will always experience an adventure full of risk and promise," (p. 248). For her, "our cultures are patriarchal and a woman must overcome the chains in order to be herself as a human being," (p125).

#### **3.3. Radical Feminism:**

Feminism and its radical offshoots' take on patriarchy, power, and oppression. Analytically speaking, radical feminism differs from previous directions of this theory in that it views patriarchy (the authority of males over women) as the basis of all additional oppression, inequality, and injustice. Feminists agree on the fundamental premise that patriarchal society is an unjust system in which women are categories of people subject to various forms of discrimination and exploitation; however,

different branches of feminism disagree on how to best frame this premise, its implications, and the best approaches to addressing the issues facing women today. According to radical feminist philosophy, discrimination against women is the root cause of all forms of oppression and injustice. The patriarchy is a hierarchical system of male dominance over the female gender that consists of, and is sustained by the features of, repression against women.

1. The obligation of motherhood and restrictions on reproductive freedom.
2. The production and dissemination of a subordinated image of women and girls in contemporary society.

Radical feminism's distinct stance stems from the belief that the patriarchy itself must be overthrown in order to end women's oppression. Patriarchy, power, and oppression are the three essential pillars of radical feminism's theoretical framework. Like mainstream feminism, radical feminism sees patriarchal society as ground zero for the power struggle between the sexes and a major driving force behind it. Without control mechanisms, patriarchy would crumble. It needs authority, it represses people, and it keeps them under control.

### **3.4. Feminism in the modern day:**

Now a days Feminism is the movement that seeks to ensure that women enjoy the same legal protections and civil and economic rights as men. Feminism gained steam during the '60s and '70s with the 'Women's Liberation' movement. Many feminists who support this idea think women ought to have no distinguishing characteristics from males. Feminism as it now stands is a dangerous and unproductive ideology. Actually, it belittles women by suggesting I need to prove my worth by being "manly," or equal to, men. In truth, there is no difference in the inherent value of the sexes; the difference is solely in their outward appearance.

Feminists now believe that they are capable of equaling or surpassing every aspect of male physiology and biology. Perhaps in their pursuit of parity with males, they have gone too far in rejecting their natural selves. When mothers stop fulfilling their biological duty, it can lead to family strife. Marriage is a sacred union in which one man and one woman take on the roles of husband and wife and share in each other's joys and sorrows. The male is the head of the household and the guardian in this holy union, while the wife is the source of life and nurturer of the young. Only when men and women each do their part effectively can society be built on a foundation of stability, love, and friendship. If either spouse fails to fulfill his or her responsibilities, the marriage will inevitably suffer.

Feminism in the modern day is nothing more than a hoax that promotes gender inequality by encouraging women to question their natural responsibilities. This anti-life philosophy and way of life encourages mothers to openly cut ties with their young. When wives choose to terminate a pregnancy, it puts a strain on their marriage because of the shared loss of a child. To add insult to injury, feminism caused women to reject marriage since it required them to pledge their allegiance to their spouses and to behave in a subservient and devoted manner. Many women continue to focus on their work even after they are married; these women often delay starting a family for several years and prioritise their jobs above their husbands and their children. Many modern women continue to prioritise their jobs after getting married, delaying motherhood until later in life. Marriage is viewed only through the lens of its perceived positive outcomes. Feminism's destructive roots are permeating all spheres of society, from homes to offices to classrooms to legislatures. To yet, all that so-called feminism has accomplished is to shatter the foundation of society: the family. It has done nothing but muddle things up at home, leading to hostility, mental anguish, a failure to fulfill responsibilities, and a general lack of affection between family members. Children suffer the most from these unhappy marriages since their mothers are no longer in their lives. Feminism's only real accomplishment has been to elevate ideas of servitude and subhuman status above honouring mothers. The nuclear family is crumbling under the weight of modern advancements. The time has come, now more than ever, for women to reclaim their dignity as women. They should remember

that while they are just as strong as males, they also have unique attributes that make them women, such as being lovely and gentle.

### **3.5. Research Questions:**

How does Ibsen convey the feministic concepts of gender, equality, patriarchy, and oppression in *The Dolls House*?

In what specific ways do radical feministic qualities of the protagonist Hedda are portrayed in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*?

### **4. Analysis and Discussion:**

In *A Doll's House*, the Victorian division between the public and private spheres is very much evident, which, according to Rice and Waugh (2001), "relegates women to the demesne of domesticity and deprives them of a political voice while demanding that men identify with a discourse of rationality which splits off and denies the importance of feeling." Rice and Waugh claim that this "demands that men identify with a discourse of rationality which splits off and denies the importance of feeling" (p. 143). Torvald commits the majority of his time to activities in the public realm. Even when he is at home, you can usually find him working in his study. At the very least, the performance gives the impression that he does not regularly spend time with his family since he does not connect with his wife or his children. After the children have returned from a walk with their nurse, he states that "the site will only be habitable for a mother anymore." In point of fact, he says this (Act 1: 23). Torvald gives Nora a straightforward answer of "Don't bother me" when she begs him to come see what she has purchased in Act 1, and it isn't until later (clearly after he has completed his mission) that he emerges from his hiding place. This illustrates that as a male, his major responsibility is to earn money for himself and his family. After Nora admits that she had expected Torvald to take the fall for her crime, Torvald makes it clear that his reputation is more important to him than his love for Nora by stating that "no man would sacrifice his honour for the one he loves" (Act: 94). This comes after she admits that she had expected him to take the fall for her crime.

Torvald is said to be rational, ruthless, and even emotionally emotionless to some level, according to the descriptions given of him. Nora is cautioned against indulging in sugary foods and told to adopt a more frugal lifestyle in order to preserve the health of her teeth. It would indicate that he holds the view that his wife, and all the women in general, have a lower mental capacity. As he explains to her why he does not like borrowing money and spending excessive amounts of it, he uses himself as an example and asks her how she would repay the loans to the lenders if he had an accident and passed away. He does this while he is explaining to her why he does not like borrowing money and spending excessive amounts of money. Nora states that she would not be concerned about them because she does not know who they are and does not appear to care about them. In reaction to the naïve response, Torvald exclaims, "That is so feminine!" (Act 1: 3). In the past, he had referred to her as a "featherhead" (Act 1:2) about her appearance. In contrast, his wife, Nora, devotes the majority of her time to her private life. In the play, her contact with the outside world appears infrequent and is limited to going shopping and visiting neighbours (she returns from a shopping trip in the opening scene of Act 1, and she and Torvald attend a party hosted by their neighbours in Act 3. The characteristics of illogic, infantilism, naivety, and servitude are ascribed to Nora (at least on the surface). Throughout the course of the play, Torvald will refer to her as a child on many occasions, and Mrs. Linde will do the same in Act 1. Even more shocking is the fact that he claims she has "become both wife and kid to him" (Act 3: 88). Nora justifies her illegal act of forgery by claiming that she was "sparing" her dying father sorrow and anxiety and "saving the life" of her spouse (Act 3: 93). Nora is not aware of the law and, in the words of Torvald, "does not comprehend the circumstances of the world in which [she] lives" (Act1: 32). It is crucial to note that not all of the play's female characters are given an immature and subordinate attitude. For example, Mrs. Christine Linde, a sophisticated woman, stands in stark contrast to Nora, who is naive and impetuous. Unlike Nora, Christine is far more "dejected and shy" (Act 1: 7), and Torvald even refers to her as a "frightful bore." Christine is also much older than Nora (Act 3: 77). According to Act 3 life itself as

well as the harsh and painful needs she has endured have schooled her to be smart. It would indicate that she does not agree of Nora's decision to conceal facts from her husband, since she prevents Krogstad from recalling his letter in Act 3. She believes that "this horrible secret must be limited; they must have a thorough understanding between them, which is impossible" (Act 3: 74) despite the fact that all of this lying and hiding is going on. Another thing that distinguishes Mrs. Linde from Nora is the bond that she has with Krogstad, the man who truly loves her. Even after being away for a significant amount of time, they are able to converse openly and freely with one another. Despite the fact that they have been married for eight years, Nora and Torvald do not have a meaningful conversation until the end of Act 3. Furthermore, it would appear that they are on an equal playing field because Christine describes them as "two stranded persons" who "could join forces" due to the fact that they had both lost their spouses (Act 3: 71). According to Code (2000), the "disproportionate confinement in the private world" that women experience is "connected with women's subordinate status" (p.342). Nora is fully reliant on her husband for financial support due to the fact that she is excluded from the public arena. Furthermore, even the home sphere is not solely hers because of this restriction. Torvald is the type of person who can handle both public and private matters effectively. She receives a rebuke from him for overpaying on her Christmas presents, and when he gives her two pounds, he emphasizes that it must be enough for the holiday cleaning. He then reprimands her for overspending on her Christmas presents. He, not Nora, is the head of the household at this point. Nevertheless, Nora does not rely only on her husband for financial assistance. For instance, when Torvald became ill and the couple needed to travel to Italy so that Torvald could get better, Nora was obligated to borrow the necessary amount of money from Krogstad. She was required to secretly put aside some of the money that Torvald had given her in order to reimburse him. In addition to this, she started making copies of papers or performing other traditionally female tasks such as needlework and embroidery. She tells Mrs. Linde that "it was a great pleasure to sit there working and earning money," which is an indication that she had enjoyed having the power to create her own money so much that she felt compelled to tell Mrs. Linde about it. According to Farrell (1996), the division of the public and private sectors of society gave husband and wife with "separate roles to perform, but complimentary ones" (p.14). In addition to looking after the house and the children, it is stated that women also acted as the moral and religious leaders of their husbands in addition to caring for the family. Because the general population was seen to be immoral, the only way for husbands to redeem themselves from this immorality was via their wives, who were responsible for upholding decency within the home. It is the mothers' fault when their offspring turn out badly since they failed to provide a morally upright environment for themselves and their families. Even Torvald adds that "almost anyone who has fallen on bad straits early in life has had a dishonest mother" (Act 1: 36). After discovering of Nora's dishonesty, Torvald makes the threat that he would "not allow [her] to bring up the children" because he does not dare to "trust [her]" (Act 3: 86) with the responsibility of raising their children. According to Guerin et al. (2011), this separation "puts women on a pedestal but also in a cage" (p. 255), or in the context of this play, it creates "A doll's house." At the end of the play, Nora comes to the realization that she was nothing more than her husband's "doll-wife," that she had been her father's "doll child," and that their "home had been nothing but a playhouse" (Act 3: 90). According to her partner, she had "just existed to perform stunts" (ibid.). According to Gilbert and Gubar (1997), the primary stereotypical depictions of women found in literature are "the angel of the house" and "the demented ladies in the attic." (p. 177). According to Rice and Waugh (2001), the monster-woman who poses a threat to her heavenly sister "embodies intransigent female autonomy." They went on to speculate that "the monster may not only be hiding behind the angel, she may actually turn out to exist within [...] the angel" (the monster may not only be hiding behind the angel, she may actually turn out to exist within the angel) (p. 155-60). Strangely, the female characters from *A Doll's House* may be seen in both of these photographs, both between and in between them. Mrs. Linde was compelled to seek employment in the public sector after the passing of her husband so that she could provide for her children and grandchildren. She claims that she "could not endure life



without work," but after the death of her mother and the maturation of her two younger brothers, she felt "quite alone in the world," and she discovered that there was "not the least pleasure in working for one's self" (Act 3: 72). This means that despite her independence, she yearns for a family and the traditional role of "the angel of the home." She is prepared to give up her personal pleasure for the benefit of the people who are important to her, which is one of the characteristics that gives her the "angelic" quality. This is proved by the fact that she married a wealthy guy simply to be able to support her sick mother and two younger brothers; she was not drawn to him because he was wealthy. Instead, she married him just to be able to provide for her family. On the other hand, she has a hard time understanding Nora's happiness at Torvald's success and says that it "would be wonderful to have what one needs" (Act 1: 9); yet, she is not interested in "heaps and heaps of money" due to the fact that she finds Nora's happiness difficult to comprehend (ibid.). She yearns for a family and the traditional role of "the angel of the house," and she wants "to be a mother for someone" despite the fact that she values her freedom (ibid.). She is prepared to give up her personal pleasure for the benefit of the people who are important to her, which is one of the characteristics that gives her an "angelic" quality. This is proved by the fact that she married a wealthy guy simply to be able to support her sick mother and two younger brothers; she was not drawn to him because he was wealthy. Instead, she married him just to be able to provide for her family. On the other hand, she has a hard time understanding Nora's happiness at Torvald's success and says that it "would be wonderful to have what one needs" (Act 1: 9); yet, she is not interested in "heaps and heaps of money" due to the fact that she finds Nora's happiness difficult to comprehend (ibid.). On the other hand, Nora is an exceptional case since she seems to undergo a transition from being a flawed angel to either a monstrosity or a madwoman. She projects the image of being the carefree and naive "angel of the family," but even before the story comes to a close, she reveals that she is not an angel. She lied a little bit about not eating any macaroons, and she also lied to her spouse about her forgery offence, which is proof for that. She also kept her spouse in the dark about her forgery crime. Due to the constant feeling of guilt that Krogstad instills in her as a result of his extortion, she is on the edge of going mad. This point may be made clearer by referring to the erratic dancing she does in Act 2 in an effort to divert Torvald's attention away from the mailbox. The fact that she gives serious consideration to ending her own life in order to protect Torvald's name reveals not just the depth of her anguish but also how much she cares about her husband. As a result of her realization that Torvald does not share her tremendous feelings, she undergoes a transformation. After learning the truth about her husband's personality, Torvald's "little squirrel" and "singing skylark," as he has referred to her on several occasions during the play, becomes icier and more subdued after making the discovery. She begins to have second thoughts about not only their connection but also the one she has with her father and religion in general. After coming to the conclusion that she is the only person who can fix her issues, she makes the decision to prioritize satisfying her personal requirements over those of her spouse and children.

Ironically, society no longer expects women to fulfill the traditional duties of commitment, loyalty, love, compassion, and sacrifice in romantic relationships. We can observe that feminism leads to women exhibiting behaviors that are more typical of horrible men. Hedda and other women do not deserve the appellation of "woman," and neither do other women. If a woman displays dreadful, evil, green-eyed characteristics like lying, jealousy, power over others, and meddling with the fate of other people, then she can no longer be deemed womanly. As a result, the divine qualities of women are relegated to the background. The purported liberation actually results in more suffering for everyone. If everyone is permitted to act in line with their own specific wants, wills, and ideas, then there will surely be societal breakdown everywhere. Mill (1859) writes in his work titled "On Liberty" that a person is only free provided they do not cause harm to the freedom of other people. People should have the right to freedom of speech and action, but if their expression or behavior infringes on the rights of others, then those individuals should be held accountable (p. 157).

Hedda, the primary character, is not at all portrayed as a feminine figure. She does not possess the terrifying or heavenly characteristics of a woman. As we have come to see, she is acting as a

manipulator of the destiny. After some investigation, we discover that Hedda, daughter of General Gabler, weds Tesman. Because she is bound by the norms of society, she cannot take the chance of upsetting the established order by being married to a scumbag like Lovborg. This is because she is confined. She eventually weds Tesman, but their marriage is characterized by apathy. Because of the faithless and conventional way of life that she leads, she is both tedious and ineffectual in a cruel way. She is foul-mouthed and unkind to Aunt Julia and Mrs. Elvsted, and she is in an unsavoury relationship with Brack. As we continue to read the play, it becomes increasingly obvious that Tesman just ran up debt in order to provide Hedda with the luxuries she had grown accustomed to enjoying. Because he loves and cares for Hedda so much, he works hard to ensure that she continues to get the same level of indulgence that her father enjoyed. In spite of all of this, what stands out most about Hedda is her emotionlessness and the calm indifference she shows for her husband. When Tesman tells her about his slippers, she reacts with quite a bit of hostility toward him.

My old, worn-out pair of shoes for the morning, TESMAN my nightgown.

HEDDA: That is correct. I remember that when we were travelling, you regularly brought them up in conversation.

TESMAN: I did sorely miss spending time with them. [He makes his way over to her.] You are going to see them now, Hedda!

HEDDA (making their way towards the stove) I am grateful, but I couldn't give a damn about it.

[Following in her footsteps] TESMAN: When I was feeling under the weather, my Aunt Rina sewed these for me. Oh, there is an infinite number of connotation that is attached to them.

HEDDA: [While we are seated at the table. Almost for me (Act 1:15).

A loving lady would not have such an attitude toward her partner. As a woman who loves and cares for her husband, Hedda should have shown concern for Tesman's well-being and participated in his joy together. Hedda, on the other hand, is devoid of these traditionally feminine traits. When Hedda refers to Aunt Julie's bonnet as the maid's bonnet on purpose, she is being unkind.

HEDDA has decided to [Cancel.] Tesman, as long as you are a servant, we will never get along with you.

MISS TESMAN, you don't get along with Berta, do you?

TESMAN: Why, love, what in the world would lead you to believe that? Eh?

The HEDDA system: [Points.] Look in that direction! She had thrown her old hat all over a chair before leaving.

TESMAN: [Losing his composure and throwing his slippers to the ground] Hedda, why is it the case?

HEDDA: If someone were to come in and take a look at it, it's really elegant!

But Hedda, your Aunt Julia is the rightful owner of that bonnet.

Does it exist? H. Ibsen (Act 1:29)

Hedda realises much later in the play that she has been acting intentionally all along.

Which headgear did you have in mind when you said "bonnet"?

HEDDA: This morning, there was a skirmish with Miss Tesman.

It was just a few minutes long. On the chair, she had placed the hat that she was wearing. there—[He smiles and turns to face her]—and I gave the impression that I was under the impression that the servant's was the case. Crack makes a pointing motion with his head. How is it that you, the wonderful Mrs. Hedda, were able to behave in such a manner? And to the amazing person who is a senior citizen!

HEDDA: [Muttering to herself as she walks across the room.] You know, all of a sudden I have these desires, and I have no control over whether or not I give in to them. [Takes a seat in the easy chair that's positioned near to the stove].

Oh, I'm sorry, I just don't know how to put that into words. (Act 2: 35)

To reiterate, women should not be vicious and spiteful like Hedda but instead empathetic and kind to others. Hedda is so heartless that she undermines the possibility of a woman having the kindest experience possible, which is giving birth to a child.

TESMAN: [Adjective.] However, have you taken any note of how stunningly lovely she is? How has she evolved as the adventure has progressed?

HEDDA: [Crossing the boundaries of space.] Oh, please keep quiet!

Miss Tesman is the one who has come to a stop and turned around Forms to fill out?

TESMAN: It makes perfect sense that you don't see it as much now that she's dressed in that clothing.

HEDDA: [looking anxiously at the glass door] But I, who can see—you can't see anything, I see.

TESMAN: It must be something in the mountain air of the Tyrol...

HEDDA: [Interrupting in an abrupt manner.] I have not changed from how I was in the beginning.

TESMAN: You claim that, but I have a strong suspicion that you are not. Auntie, tell me the truth: do you disagree with me? (Act 3:158).

Hedda is stunning, nice, and lovely all rolled into one. MISS TESMAN replies to her as she stands there looking at her with her hands in front of her face. [He approaches her and kisses her hair while simultaneously dragging her head lower with both hands.] For the sake of George, may God keep Hedda Tesman safe and bless her with success.

[Self-liberating in a gentle manner.] HEDDA Oh—! I'll leaving immediately. (Act 1:39)

Women make the decisions that lead to the formation of a family or its dissolution. Either they may make their homes into places that are nourishing and caring for others, or they can tear their family apart through neglect and treachery. Neither option is a good one. Hedda is on the verge of ending this relationship because of the unfaithful nature of her character. The ancient Chinese philosopher Confucius had the view that "where the woman is genuine, no bad may come." [T]hese are his famous words. The lady is the tree's root, while the male is the tree itself. A tree's robust root system is the only factor that will allow it to reach great heights. It turns out that Hedda is more of a monstrosity than a woman. She takes pleasure in playing God with the lives of others. Instead, she wants the power to force her will on the lives of other people.

HEDDA: If that were the case, maybe life might turn out to be more pleasant after all. [With a dramatic alteration in the tenor.] However, at this very moment, my darling Thea, you should actually be sipping some iced punch.

No, thank you; MRS. ELVSTED, I never consume anything even even like to that.

HEDDA: Now it's your time, Mr. Lovborg, so go ahead.

LOVBORG: I'm sorry, I don't have that information.

No, MRS. ELVSTED, he doesn't think so either.

HEDDA: [She examines him with a focused gaze.] What happens, though, if I command you to?

LOVBORG: No, that wouldn't be of any use.

HEDDA Laughs. Do you really believe that I have no power over you, you sad creature?

(Act 2:124).

Even Hedda herself admits that her desire for power is motivated by a desire to influence the destinies of other people. This indicates that, in contrast to a female who is extremely reserved, she aspires to exercise dominion over other people. Her aspirations are reprehensible.

MRS. ELVSTED: Hedda, you must have some hidden motive for the way you are behaving!

HEDDA: I have, yes. Once in my lifetime, I hope to be in a position where I can influence the course of someone else's life (Act 2:99).

When Hedda finds out that Aunt Rina has passed away, she demonstrates a lack of compassion. Because she abhors being ugly, she has decided against going to express her sympathies to Aunt Julie on the occasion of this tragic event.

TESMAN: Oh, my dearest Hedda, it would mean the world to me if you chose to come along with me. Do your best to think!

HEDDA: [She rises to her feet and moans as she dismisses the idea.] Please don't question me about it. I won't even look at those who are dying or suffering. I abhor any and all manifestations of ugliness. (Act 3:32)

Hedda is so destructive that she is able to convince Lovborg to end his life by taking his own life. She even gets him to pledge that he would do it in a beautiful fashion, all because she is more interested in finding the beauty in death than she is in motivating him to make the correct decision.

HEDDA: Which of the two paths do you want to pursue next?

NO, LOVBORG. It will be to everyone's benefit if I can finally put an end to this as quickly as possible.

HEDDA: [Gaining further proximity to him.] I want you to pay attention, Eilert Lovborg. — Do you not intend to make every effort to carry it out in an excellent manner? (Act 3:157).

Hedda is envious, vengeful, and destructive; these are her defining characteristics. It is another another indication of how unlike a mother she is. As may be noticed from her discourse when she torches Lovborg's novel while thinking it's Thea's child, she does not have any compassion for children. Thea, I'm going to burn your kid, Hedda says as she tosses a quire into the flames while humming to herself. Burn it, you mane of curly locks! [I'm going to add another one or two quires to the burner right now.] Eilert Lovborg and the child that you have. Your child is being scalded by me, as I pour in the rest of the liquid. (Act 3:167)

Hedda is fundamentally a bad person who takes pleasure in seeing other people suffer. She goes to great lengths in order to give a false impression of Thea and Lovborg. Even more heartbreaking is her decision to end her own life at the end of the play by taking her own life. No woman wants to uproot herself and leave behind her family for no cause at all. If she had been placed in a dismal and dissatisfying environment, or if she had been placed in a horrific circumstance, or even if she had been denied luxury, her decision to end her own life would have been acceptable. On the other hand, such a condition did not exist in this case; rather, Hedda had been living a life of luxury without any limitations. Therefore, Hedda's decision to end her life was entirely motivated by her own selfish desires, which was a dreadful act not just for herself but also for the child she was carrying and the man she loved.

## 5. Conclusion:

Thus, *A Doll's House* promotes women's rights, particularly the rights of wives in comparison to those of their husbands. Nora, the play's heroine, makes a choice at the end that reflects the hardships she has endured. She has no interest in sacrificing herself for the benefit of her parents, husband, and kids....and the larger culture as a whole. She had hoped for a miracle, one where he would show that he, too, was willing to give his life for her, but she has discovered that such an event is not possible. She removes her wedding ring and storms out of the house, closing the door firmly behind her. Due to the fact that modern man has lost touch with his intuitive, feminine side, the rise of materialism and machismo in recent decades is a direct result of the themes explored in *A Doll's House*. Hedda Gabler appears to be one of Ibsen's most fully realized and powerful protagonists. She ultimately succumbs to the effects of oppression, objectification, and stereotype. Hedda struggles throughout the play to feel fully in charge of her own body. She can't keep a free soul piece alive. In the end, she can't manage the internal conflict of demands satisfaction that's essential to healthy growth. Hedda fell short of her goals and essential humanism for her to rise from the level of the subhuman to that of the human. In her ignorance, she fought the wrong fight. She was unable to achieve her rebirth as a human because she was unable to successfully merge her human components as a woman. She instead chose to die in a manner befitting a man, therefore completing the final male triumph of deciding her own life and fate.

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