

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Hjalmar, the victim of ideology

The present research is an inquiry into the impact of ideology, as a social construct truth, upon the characters, Hjalmar, his family and Gregers. Hjalmar Ekdal suffers throughout his life. He is the subject living under the ideology. Since their positions, roles obligations and responsibilities are determined by the existing ideology, all pervasive in their society, they feel like puppet and void. So they suffer from a radical sense of alienation. They are two characters who feel at odd with the existing social ideology. Though they know the interest of the ruling class lurking behind the dominant social ideology, they are doomed to practice the same ideological rituals and practices spread through various kinds of Ideological State Apparatus—government, court, religion, university and others.

Hjalmar leaves his home and take recourse to addiction, unconscious and madness, whereas Gregers leaves his home and take shelter in Hjalmar's house. But the alternative ways they hope to be more comfortable turns rather terrible to confront with the death of Hedvig. So at last they are destined to return to the same ideology and they are compelled to return with its periphery by the ideological state apparatuses.

Henrik Johan Ibsen was born in 1828 in Skein, Norway to the family of wealthy merchant. He slowly and painfully became the most influential modern dramatist using new style of realism. Subjects that had been ignored on the stage became the centre of his work. But his rise to fame was anything but direct. In 1850, at the age of twenty-two, he

left Grimstad for Oslo(then called Christiania) to become a student, but within a year he joined the New National Theatre and stayed for six years, writing and directing.

His breakthrough came with the publication in 1866 of the verse play *Brand*, which was written to be read and not performed (It was first produced in 1885). It is the portrait of a clergyman who takes the structure of religion so seriously that he rejects the New Testament doctrine of love and accepts the Old Testament doctrine of the will of god. *Brand* made Ibsen famous. He followed it with another successful closet drama. *Peer Gynt*(1867), about a character, quite unlike Brand, who avoids the rigors of morality and ends up unable to know if he has been saved or condemned.

Despite these successes, Ibsen still struggled for recognition. It was not until 1887 that he had his first success in a play that experimented with the new realistic style of drama. *The Pillars of Society* (1877), in which a wealthy and hypocritical businessman almost unwittingly causes the death of his son. This play gives Ibsen a reputation in Germany where it was frequently performed. Then came the proto-feminist *A Doll House* (1879), more fully realistic, the tale of the housewife who walk out on an apparently perfect marriage when she realizes it is destroying her.

His next play, *Ghosts*(1881) followed, taking up the extremely controversial issue of heredity, venereal diseases. Ibsen's last years were filled with activity. He wrote some of his best known plays in rapid succession: *An Enemy of the people* (1882), *The Wild Duck* (1884), *Hedda Gabler*(1890), *The Master Builder*(1892), and *John Gabriel Borkman* (1896). Ibsen came to the strand for new individualism in the rest of the world. In particular George Bernard Shaw, one of Ibsen's most famous disciples, canonized him to this effects with series of lecture delivered on the occasion of Ibsen's seventieth

birthday, a series ultimately published as "*The Quintessence of Ibsenism*". Ibsen died on May 23, 1906.

Ibsen was the most influential European dramatist in the late nineteenth century. He inspired emerging writers in the United States, Ireland, and many other nations. But his full influence was not felt until the early decades of the twentieth century, when other writers were able to spread the revolutionary doctrine that was implied in realism as practiced by Ibsen and Strindberg. Being direct, honest, and unsparing in treating character and theme became the normal mode of serious drama after Ibsen.

Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* published in 1884, is divided into five acts. Hjalmar Ekdal, a photographer, lives with his wife Gina and daughter Hedvig in a combined studio and apartment with a large adjoining loft where they keep chickens and rabbits. Living with family is old Ekdal, a former lieutenant who was earlier imprisoned for a financial offence for which Werle, a wholesaler, was actually responsible. Gina was Werle's housekeeper earlier. At the beginning of the play Gregers Werle, the idealist son of Hakon Werle, a wealthy businessman, has returned home from seventeen years of self-imposed exile. At the party thrown for him by his father, he meets his childhood friend Hjalmar Ekdal. Gregers discovers that Gina Ekdal was his father's mistress before she married Hjalmar, and that his father had brought the two of them together and helped them financially. Gregers now considers it his duty to get Hjalmar see the truth behind his marriage so that he and Gina can live together in a marriage based on truth. Hjalmar confronts Gina with her background and asks her whether he is Hedvig's father. Gina replies that she doesn't know and in the distraction Hjalmar rejects Hedvig as his daughter. Meanwhile Gregers has convinced Hedvig that she can win back her father's

love by sacrificing the wild duck that lives in the loft and to which she is deeply attached. But Hedvig shoots herself instead of wild duck and the play ends with general despair at the death of the child.

The Wild Duck has been able to draw attention of many critics since its publication in 1884. Different critics have interpreted the text differently and have opened many new avenues of approaches commenting on *The Wild Duck*. It presents the sorry result of psychopath's idealistic dedication to a self-assumed mission of truth. The play is neither a tragedy nor a farce but a little bit of both, and as a result its tone is both unique and puzzling. One can understand why even admirers of Ibsen found it vaguely irritating on its first appearance. It is least "edifying" play Ibsen ever wrote and certainly least sublime.

Ibsen published *The Wild Duck* in 1884, and the following winter, it was produced on stage for the first time. Initially most of the critic did not respond to Ibsen's humble setting and characters, his sense of humor, and what they saw as his pretentiousness. While some viewer greatly enjoyed the play, they were, at that time, in the distinct minority. Playwright George Bernard Shaw wrote in 1897 after viewing the play, "where shall I find an epithet magnificent enough for *The Wild Duck*!" He found the play to be "a profound tragedy," yet one that kept the...

Gregers Werle, like Parson Brand is a man with mission. But he is idealist even more fatally run to seed than Brand's distorted image, the regenerated Elinor. So Brain W. Downs states:

The mission which he conceives to have been laid upon him is almost as nebulous as Hjalmar's great invention, though it may possess the merit for

what is worth of being self imposed. He is 'superior' person who, whenever he sees his fellow-man going the common rounds of their daily lives, immediately thinks that they ought to be doing something different and, of course, 'better'.(qtd. from Downs 7)

If in one way *The Wild Duck* serves to hold together the play called after her, in another way Relling does so too. For he has next nothing to do with the sphere of which Hakon Werle forms the centre: his activities are confined to Ekdal household. But for *The Wild Duck* Mr. Tennant, overstate the case.

Not like Gregers Werle, he is a man with mission. Though he would probably have repudiated any such ascription to him other than the good physician's principle to do his best for his patients, for each according to his diathesis and complaint. In the play he is called in to examine Hedvig after her suicide; but otherwise, his ministrations belong entirely to the psychological and moral realm; and though he proceed with professional empiricism, he acknowledges a therapeutic principle.(47)

They who scan a work of art for ideals are themselves idealist in the popular accepted meaning of the term; they attribute the best motives and await the highest mankind. A conclusion like that to which Relling attains, in much of which Ibsen himself seems also to concern, is profoundly repugnant to them or if not repugnant, at least grieving. On this account Brain W. Downs quotes, "It is on that account, no doubt, that *The Wild Duck* has been called the most pessimistic of Ibsen's plays and that pessimism vulgarly attributed to all tragedies is confirmed in his case."(37)

What has not clearly been recognized is that images of sight and blindness occur throughout the play, constituting a substratum of ironical values beneath the naturalist surface. The images helps to define the plays action as Otto Reinsert writes.

The struggle between Gregers Werle and Dr. Relling for control over Hjalmar Ekdal's destiny becomes a conflict between two views-one "idealistic", dim and distorted; one "realistic", clear and accurate- of modern everyman's diminished nature. In the strict economy of Ibsen's art the validity of Relling's realistic view is stated only by negative implication. It is vindicated by the setting of Gregers idealistic view of Hjalmar and Hjalmar's view of himself in the context of imagestic irony. (87)

A softer reading of Ibsen's intention suggests that Gregers represent only the eternal interfering busybody, but this reduces the play to a platitude— on object lesson in which what happens when an outsider tries to tell married people how to run their lives. Shaw's opinion was that Gregers was particularly dangerous case of idealism and the duty on the rampage, and according to Shaw's thesis Ibsen spent his life doing doughty battle against the point forces of duty of idealism— the vested interest of the day. But Ibsen was a more nature than Shaw allowed for, and the battle was within.

It is interesting to see how Ibsen arrived at the novel effect of *The Wild Duck*. He began with the theme on which he had always played several variations. Thus Maurice Velency writes:

Driven by the exaggerated sense of guilt, the idealistic Gregers come as a servitor to set the Ekdal family through the truth. In precisely this manner,

Julian came to liberate the world, and Brand to save it. The Ekdal family, however, has no use for the truth. It has managed in its misery to find a way of life which approximates happiness, and it would prefer to be left in peace.(122)

It has always seemed to Dounia B. Christiani that Gregers shaking horrors upon Hedvig's death attest to his inward recognition of what he really wished of her when he suggest that she sacrifice the wild duck. Hedvig understands that she is wild duck, writes Ingjald Nissen, "she guesses instinctively that Gregers wants to kill her because she is his father's child....Being an idealist, he naturally does not do it himself, but kills symbolically." According to Nissen, already the "depth of the sea" scene in act III shows that he conceives of Hedvig as the wild duck, and by his demand of the sacrifice Gregers shows that she is the wild duck, for "the child understands symbolism."(66)

The critic most serious reservations about *The Wild Duck* concern Gregers overestimation of Hjalmar. As Otto Reinert puts it, "It is hard to accept Gregers Werle's continuing faith in the greatness of a man who almost without stop reveals his phoniness (sincere phoniness through it is). Gregers may be sick but he is not supposed to be stupid"(42). And indeed, if Gregers' misguided determination to enlighten that egregious ham is the basic action of the drama as well as its principal business, the very structure of the play is open to criticism: Act 1, already censured for its trite expository opening, becomes a mere prologue.

What is behind the blind determination with which he sets about "purifying" the Ekdals' marriage? This, of course, he can only act symbolically; Haakonsen in his essay concludes:

Werle's sin must never be forgotten and all his gift's must be rejected- including, the perhaps especially, the gift of life. At this level of interpretation, Gregers' stubborn faith in Hjalmar ceases to be unrealistic, serving as it does a passion beyond the reach of reason. And Hedvig's death no longer looks like "a meaningless and uninteresting little part of blood" unrelated to the central action, a contrived intrusion of specious pathos. Her suicide becomes the vicarious fulfillment of Gregers' repudiation of his father.(63)

"Like *Hamlet*, *The Wild Duck* can be interpreted by each man in his own image," Writes Muriel C. Bradbrook. "One day it will be read as tragedy, the next as the harshest irony; parts of it are clumsy, in other parts are embedded old controversies that time. So searching yet so delicate is the touch, that these flaws and vagaries seem themselves to strengthen the work. In this play....Ibsen perfected his own special power...to infuse the particular, drab, limited facts with a halo and a glory."

However, the above responses from the various critics display the richness of the drama. A drama can have multiple interpretations. However, studying the text from ideological perspective will help the better understanding of the characters and their conditions. So this research will focus upon the impact of ideology on the characters, and an endeavor will be laid for its discussion in detail.

The present research "the Ideological impact upon the characters and their lives" is divided into four chapters. The first chapter is an introduction to the present research, and it presents the hypothesis, a general introduction to the author and the drama against the backdrop of different critic's commentaries on the drama. The second chapter is the

discussion of theoretical tool elaborates the methodology employed to study the text. The principal theoretical tool employed in this study is ideology. The third chapter, discussion of textual tool analysis, presents a detailed textual analysis with textual citations so as to expose how the drama documents the instance of repercussion of dominant ideology upon the characters living under it. This chapter presents the analysis for showing many mental as well as physical ups and down undergone by the characters, esp. Hjalmar Ekdal, his family and Gregers Werle, because of the effects of their society's dominant ideology. The final chapter, conclusion, concludes the study with a belief recounting observation of the work affirming the hypothesis.

CHAPTER II

IDEOLOGY

Hjalmar, the victim of existing ideology, fails to sustain itself and leads him to the tragic consequences as he is incapable of critiquing his common sense and activities determined by the existing social ideology on the one hand and living with new values on the other. Hjalmar ideology fails to sustain by the interference of his idealistic friend Gregers Werle, who reveals Gina's secret to Hjalmar and Hjalmar assumes the appropriate posture and speaks the time honored lines. Thus Hjalmar and Gregers live in a world which he feel odd with devoid of meaning. Hjalmar tries to escape from the predicament but the prevailing social ideology brings him time and again in the dark cave of exploitation, domination and submission prevalent in the social ideology. The death of Hedvig leads him to the tragic consequences. Thus Hjalmar dream of the ideal world is shattered time and again.

The term ideology has a whole range of meanings. It is a text woven of a whole tissue of different conceptual strands; it is traced through by divergent histories. Some early definitions of it are related with the interest of the dominant social or political class or power as a distorted and illusionary body of ideas. In this regard, it is defined as a body of ideas characteristic of a particular social group or class; ideas or false ideas, which help to legitimate a dominant political power; as a forms of thought motivated by social interests; as socially necessary illusion. Some later definition of ideology see it as a form of discourse with related power, identity and meaning in social life. It is defined as a process of production of meanings, signs and values in social life; as that which offer a

position for a subject; as identity thinking. Finally, it is defined in relation with the linguistics and semiotic on the one hand and with natural reality on the other hand.

There are two dissonant traditions inscribed within the term ideology. One central lineage, from Hegel and Marx to George Lukacs and some later Marxist thinkers, has been much preoccupied with the ideas of true and false cognition, with ideology as illusion, distortion and mystification; whereas an alternative tradition of thought has been less epistemological than sociological, concerned more with the function of ideas within social life than with their reality or unreality. While defining it, Eagleton writes:

To claim in ordinary conversation that someone is speaking ideologically is surely to hold that they are judging a particular issue through some rigid framework of preconceived ideas which distorts their understanding. Viewing things as they really are also involves an oversimplifying view of the world-that is to speak or judge ideologically is to do so schematically, stereotypically, and perhaps with the faintest hint of fanaticism. So the opposite of ideology, here, then, would be less absolute truth than empirical or pragmatic. (3)

Ideology as concept has flourished in particular within MARXIST tradition, although even here no single and unambiguous usage can be charted. Raymond Williams point out that at the time that Marx and Engels wrote their *The German Ideology* the term was generally taken to mean 'abstract, impractical or fanatical theory'. *The German Ideology* was written in 1845 and 1846, but failed to find a publisher on completion and was, as Marx puts it, abandoned to 'the gnawing criticism of the mice'. C.J. Arthur, editor of the modern English translation of the text, points out that this comment turned out to

be literally true, and the text of the work had to be reconstructed from a damaged manuscript.

There is no doubt that the whole thrust of *The German Ideology* is towards seeing ideology as a form of false consciousness. The following words of the preface gives a reliable indication of the tone and attitude of the subsequent pages.

The first volume of the present publication has the aim of unclenching these sheep (the German Young Hegelian philosophers), who take themselves and are taken for wolves; of showing how their bleating merely imitates in a philosophic form the conception of the German middle class; how the boasting of these philosophers commentators only mirrors the wretchedness of the real condition of the Germany (qtd. in Engels 37).

Here we see an important complex of assumptions central to one Marxist usage of the term ideology: (1) an ideology reflects the ideas, living conditions, or interest of a particular social class; (2) those in the grip of ideology are not aware of this, but think that their ideas are correct because they seem to accord with reality, not realizing that the reality in question is particular not general, and that it has itself created the seeming true ideas; (3) the ideology may be lived by, and may control, individuals other than those whose interests it reflects or expresses.

The term false consciousness derived incidentally, from a letter written by Engels to Franz Mehring, dated 14 July 1893. In this letter Engels states that: ideology is a process accomplished by the so-called thinker consciously, it is true but a false consciousness. The real motive forces impelling him remains unknown to him; otherwise it simply would not be an ideological process. (497)

According to the earlier *The German ideology*, if in all ideology men and their circumstances appear upside-down as in a *common obscura*, this phenomena arises just as much from their historical life-process as the inversion of objects on the retina does from their physical life-process. (47)

The implication is clearly that just as effective visual perception requires that the break reinvert the image on the retina, so effective understanding of one's social, material and historical reality requires that one reinvert the distorted images produced by the particularities of one's living conditions: in short, de-ideologize one's view of reality by starting with facts rather than ideas.

We do not set out from what men say, Imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set out from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-process as demonstrated the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. (47)

This advice involves us in the potential paradox, of course, that it assumes that 'we' are 'real, active men' and not just what we 'say, imagine or conceive': everyone else is in the grip of ideology but us. The paradox is, however, only potential if we assume that Marx and Engels an ideology is never as all-embracing as is, for example, Michael Foucault's EPISTEME; if so, one can always escape from the grip of ideology on grounding one's inquiries in the investigation of 'real life-process'.

The rigid and inflexible view of ideology was elevated in the post-war period. For the American political theorist Edward Shils, ideologies are explicit, closed, and resistant to innovation. They require total adherence from the devotees. The 'end-of-ideology'

ideology tend to view ideology in two contradictory ways: On the one hand it takes ideology as some pseudo-religious faith which the technocratic world of modern capitalism has outgrown, on the other hand it is considered as an arid conceptual system which seek to reconstruct the society. Alvin Gouldner, in his *The Dialectic of Ideology and Technology*, writes "ideology is the mind-inflating realm of the doctrinaire, the dogmatic, the impassioned, the dehumanizing, the false, the irrational, and of course the extremist consciousness" (qtd. in Eagleton 4). So he define ideology as consisting of ambivalences.

There is an objection to this designation of ideology as rigid sets of beliefs. It refers not only to belief but also to the question of power. It legitimizes the power of a dominant social group or class. According to John B. Thompson, "To study ideology is to study the ways in which meaning (or significance) serves to sustain relation of domination" (qtd. in Eagleton 4). So he views it in term of relation domination. The process of legitimation seems to involve at least six different strategies. A dominant power may legitimate itself by promoting beliefs and values congenial to it. To render themselves evident and apparently inevitable, it tries to universalize them. It denigrates the ideas which social reality. Such mystification masks or suppresses social conflict, from which arises the conception of ideology as an imaginary resolution of real contradictions. The political philosopher Seliger define ideology as set of ideas by which men posit, explain and justify ends and means of organized social action, specifically political action, irrespective of whether such action aims to preserve, amend, uproot or rebuilt a given social order. So the legitimation theory of ideology concern the nature of

power. Michel Foucault replaces ideology with more spacious "discourse". Ideology is a matter of discourse rather than language.

Some theorists of ideology drop the notion of epistemological sense of it in favor of a more political or sociological sense as a medium in which social and political battles are fought out at the level of signs, meaning and representation. Ideology denotes the ways in which the power process gets caught up in the realm of signification.

The false consciousness view of ideology seems unconvincing. Aristotle held that there was an element of truth in most beliefs. Ideology must communicate a version of social reality to its subjects. However, ideologies quite often contain important propositions, which are absolutely false. Many ideological statements may be true in their surface but false in their underlying assumptions.

For Althusser, the criteria of truth and falsehood are thus largely irrelevant to ideology. Ideology, he says, represents the way "I live" my relation to the society as a whole. Ideology, for him, is a particular organization of signifying practices which goes to constitute human beings as social subjects, and which produces the lived relation by which such social subjects are connected to the dominant relations of production in the society.

Althusser rejects the notion of ideology as a distorting representation of reality. On the contrary, ideology, for him, alludes to our affective and unconscious relations with the world, and to the ways in which we are pre-reflectively bound up with social reality. He claims that ideology expresses a will, a hope, a nostalgia rather than describing the reality. According to him the ruling ideology is realized in the ideological state apparatuses. He has listed a relatively large number of ideological state apparatuses in

the contemporary capitalist social formation; "the educational apparatus, the religious apparatus, the family apparatus, the political apparatus, the trade-union apparatus, the communication apparatus, the cultural apparatus, etc"(115).It is in J.L. Austin's terms, "Performative" rather than "Constative" language. Its utterance are the expressive of the speaker' attitude or lived relation to the world. Ideological statements, then, would seem to be subjective, as close to the Kant's aesthetic judgment, but not private. It constitutes our very identity. It is set of view points one happens to hold.

"Althusser notes that the family has functions other than those associated with being an ideological state apparatus, and that the law of both Repressive State Apparatus and Ideological State Apparatus(136-37). This clearly could be taken to mean that the educational system of a capitalist society has the exclusive function of disseminating bourgeois ideology: indeed, Althusser states that:

If the Ideological State Apparatus 'function' massively and predominantly by ideology, what unifies their diversity is precisely this functioning, in so far as ideology by which they function is always in fact unified, despite its diversity and its contradictions, *beneath the ruling ideology*, which is the ideology of 'the ruling class'. (139)

In her *Psychoanalysis and Feminism* Juliet Mitchell has suggested an interesting link between an essentially Marxist concept of ideology and Freudian concept of unconscious.

The patriarchal law speaks to and through each person in his unconscious; the reproduction of the ideology of human society is thus assured in the acquisition of the law by each individual. The unconscious that Freud

analysed could thus be described as the domain of the reproduction of culture or ideology.(139)

According to Terry Eagleton, Ideology can be defined in six different ways. It can mean the general material process of production of ideas, beliefs, and values in social life. Here, it denotes the whole complex of signifying practices and symbolic process in a particular society. It would allude to the way individuals lived their social practices. It involves the relation between the signifying practices and processes of political power. It symbolize the conditions and life experience of a specific socially signifying group or class. It refers to the promotion and legitimation to the interest of such social groups in the face of opposing interests. Dominant ideologies help to unify a social formation in ways convenient to the rulers. The false or deceptive belief of ideology arises from the material structure of society as a whole.

Terry Eagleton, in his *Ideology* (1990), observe the meaningless material life in the advanced capitalistic system as:

Ideology is essentially a matter of meaning; but the condition of advanced capitalism is one of pervasive non-meaning. The way of utility and technology bleach social life of significance, sub-ordinating use-value to the empty formalism of exchange-value. Consumerism by-passes meaning in order to engage the subject subliminally libidinally, at the level of visceral response rather than reflective consciousness. (37)

So, from overwhelms content, signifier lords over signified. This hemorrhaging of meaning triggers pathological symptoms in society: drugs, violence and mindless revolt. The lack of meaning keeps us in peace.

For the British sociologist Paul Hirst, it is not illusion but a complex network of empirical and normative elements. Raymond Geuss distinguishes two other forms of falsity highly relevant to ideological consciousness-Functional and genetic. He says, "consciousness may be false because it functions in a reprehensible way or because it has a tainted origin- Epistemic, functional and genetic forms of false consciousness may go together" (qtd. in Eagleton 21).

Ideology is not baseless illusion, but a solid reality, an active material force which might help the organize the practical lives of the human beings. Zizek, in his "*The Spectre of Ideology*," writes: Ideology has nothing to do with the illusion, with a mistake, distorted representation of its social content" (7). All ideological language does not necessarily involve falsehood. All commitment to the dominant social order does not involve falsify. The dominant ideology may falsify social reality, suppressing and excluding certain unwelcome features of it. Ideological statements may be true at present but false for blocking off the possibility of transformed state of affairs.

In advanced capitalist societies, the communication media are often felt to be potent means by which a dominant ideology is disseminated. N. Abercrombie, S. Hill, and B.S. Tuner, in *The Dominant Ideology*, doubt that dominant ideologies are an important means for lending cohesion in the society. Such ideology may unify the dominant class but they are usually much less successful in filtering the consciousness of their subordinate. They further say that the dominant ideologies in advanced capitalist societies are internally fissured and contradictory. The everyday discourse of the dominant classes is formed largely outside the control of the ruling class, and embodies significant beliefs and values at odds with it. Abercrombie says that the advanced

capitalist order is not successfully achieved unity, but consists of conflicts and contradictions. The consent of the dominant to their master is won by economic than by ideological means. So Seyla Benhabib, in his "The Critique of Instrumental Reason," writes, "The Marxian critique of capitalism exposes the internal contradictions and dysfunctionalities of the system in order to show how and why these give to oppositional demands and struggles which cannot be satisfied by the present" (qtd. in Eagleton 70).

The capitalist system survives on account of the social division between social groups it exploits. As Gramsci argues the consciousness of the oppressed is usually a contradictory amalgam of values imbibed from their ruler, and notion which spring more directly from their practical experiences. Purely technocratic forms of management play central role in the public values to the advanced capitalist societies. The German philosopher Jurgen Habermass, in his *Towards a Rational Society* (1970) and *Legitimation Crisis* (1975), writes that ideology is synonymous with the attempt to provide rational technological scientific rationale for social domination. The complex system operations weld the capitalist system. So Marx insists on the commodity as automatically supplying its own ideology. The routine material logic of everyday life keeps the system on.

According to Nicholas Abercrombie, Stephen Hill and Bryan S. Turner, "Ideology constitutes and patterns the lives of human in the world. It qualifies them to fulfill their positions in society. They writes, "The main burden of ideology is to construct human subjectivity, so that to search for the structure of the ideological universe is to seek the dimension of human subjectivity" (153).

So the advanced Capitalism oscillates between meaning and non-meaning. The new kind of ideological subjects knows exactly what he is doing. It keeps us in place through material techniques; among them the coercion of economics is far more effective.

Marx and Engels, in the *German Ideology*, comment that the ruling ideas of each epoch are the ideas of ruling class. Ideologies are often thought to be unifying, action oriented, rationalizing, legitimating, universalizing and naturalizing. An important device for achieving legitimacy is universalizing and eternalizing itself. In the *German Ideology* they argue:

Each new class, which puts itself in the place of ruling before it, is compelled, merely in order to carry through its aim, to represent its interests as the common interests of all the members of the society, that is expressed in ideal form: it has not given its ideas the form of universality and represent them as the only rational, universally valid ones. (qtd. in Eagleton. (65-66)

They remark that the interests of an emergent revolutionary class really are likely to be connected to the common interests of all other non-ruling classes. Ideology in its classical sense is superfluous; politics is a matter of technical management and the manipulation; form rather than content; Education is absorbed into the technological apparatus which provides certification of one's place with it. The work of Jean Baudrillard captures this nihilism, "it is no longer a question of a false representation of reality (ideology), but of concealing the fact that the real is no longer real [...]" (qtd. in Eagleton 172). The citizens are expected to be at one level the mere function of this or

that act of consumption or media experience and at another level to exercise ethical responsibility as autonomous, self-determining subjects. So, late capitalism requires a self-disciplined subject responsive to ideological rhetoric as father, juror, patriot, employee, etc. engaged in its consumerist and mass-cultural practices. So Althusser in his essay "Ideology Interpellates Individuals as Subjects," writes:

[...] shall then suggest that ideology 'acts' or 'functions' in such a way that it 'recruits' subjects among the individuals (it recruits them all), or 'transforms' the individuals into subjects (it transform them all by that very precise operation which I have called *interpellation* or hailing, and which can be imagined along the lines of the most commonplace everyday police (or other) hailing: 'Hey, you there!'.(131)

The emergence of the concept of ideology has the most intimate relation to revolutionary struggle and figures from the outset as a theoretical weapon of class warfare. It arrives on the scene inseparable from the material practices of the ideological state apparatuses, and is itself as a notion a theatre of contending ideological interests.

Ideology originally meant the scientific study of human ideas. But soon it came to mean a system of ideas themselves. An ideologist was then someone who expounded them. In fact, the early French ideologues did believe that ideas were at the root of social life. Its root lie deep in the enlightenment dream of the world entirely transparent to reason, free of the prejudice, superstition and obscurantism of the ancient regime. The early ideologues of the eighteenth century France drew heavily on John Lock's empiricist philosophy in their war against metaphysics. The aim of enlightenment ideologues, as spokesmen for the revolutionary bourgeoisie of eighteenth century Europe, was to

reconstruct society from the ground up on a rational basis. They inveighed fearlessly against a social order which fed the people on religious superstition in order to buttress its own brutally absolutist power.

Karl Marx's theory of ideology is probably best seen as part of his more general theory of alienation, expounded in the *Economics and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844) and elsewhere. The theory of ideology embodied in *The German ideology* belongs with the general logic of inversion and alienation. consciousness is in fact bound up with social practice; but for German idealist philosophers, it becomes separated from these practices fettered to a thing-in-itself, and it can be misunderstood as the very source and ground of historical life. If ideas are grasped as autonomous entities, then they help to naturalize and dehistoricize them; and this for the early Marx is the secret of all ideology.

Marx and Engels were not in fact the first thinker to see consciousness as socially determined: in different ways Rousseau, Montesquieu and Condorcet had arrived at this view before them. For Marx and Engels, social illusion are anchored in real contradictions, so that only by practical activity of transforming the true idea can the false idea be abolished. A materialist theory of ideology is thus inseparable from a revolutionary politics. The young Hegelians, whom they are assailing, regards idea as the essence of material life.

A particular historical system of beliefs (religious, juridical, political) are called by Marx, 'superstructure' in contrast to the economic 'base'. Such superstructure are indeed estranged from their practical productive 'base'. The *German ideology* (1844) appears at estranged from their practical productive 'base'. The *German ideology* (1844) appears at once to argue that consciousness is indeed always practical consciousness. So

that to view it in any other light is in an idealist illusion; and that ideas are secondary to material existence. According to them, 'it is not consciousness that determines life, but life that determines consciousness' (32). Marx and Engels famously proclaim in *The German Ideology* (1844) "The idea of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas; the class which is ruling material force of society, is at the same time its ruling intellectual force" (qtd. in Eagleton 47).

The superstructure is necessary because the material base is self-divided. In a full communist society, there would no longer be any need for a political state which sets itself over against civil society. Once the contradictions of the class society have been surmounted, they would wither away along with the test of the superstructure. So, there are contending senses of ideology in Marx. It denotes illusionary or socially disconnected beliefs which are the ground of history and serve to sustain an oppressive political power. Alternatively, ideology can signify those ideas which directly express the material interests of the dominant social classes. Finally, it can be stretched to encompass all the conceptual forms in which the class struggle as a whole is fought out.

In his *The Fetishism of Commodities* Marx argues that in capitalist society the actual social relations between human beings are governed by the apparently autonomous interaction of the commodities they produce.

Lukacs, in his great work *History and Class Consciousness*(1922), writes, "It is true that reality is the criterion for the correctness of thought. But reality is not, it becomes- and to becomes the participation of thought is needed" (qtd. in Eagleton 204). All form of class consciousness are ideological, but some are more ideological than others. The bourgeoisie ideology can't grasp the social structure as a whole because of the

reification effects. Reification fragments and dislocates our social experience, so under its effect we come to see society as an isolated object of or institution. Karl Korsch takes ideology as a form of synecdoche. But the capacity to totalize the social order, the proletariat can understand and transform their condition.

Based on the commodity fetishism, the self consciousness of the proletariat is the commodity form coming to an awareness to itself. The self knowledge of the exploited class is an emancipatory force. In Lukacs' view, truth is relative to particular historical situation rather than being metaphysical affairs beyond history. But the proletariat can unlock the secret of capitalism because of the historical positing within it. The proletariat consciousness is universal.

In his *History and Class Consciousness*, Lukacs argues that in capitalist society the commodity form permeates every aspect of social life. It takes the form of a pervasive mechanization, quantification and dehumanization of human experience. The wholeness of the society is broken into so many discrete, specialized and technical operations. Purely formal techniques of calculation suffuse every region of society. The human subject is rendered incapable of recognizing its own creative practice. For Lukacs as well as for Marx, commodity fetishism is an objective material structure of capitalism.

Gramsci's theory of hegemony is tied to his conception of the capitalist state which, he claims, rules through force plus consent. He divides the state between 'political society' which is the arena of political institution and legal constitutional control, and 'civil society', which is commonly seen as the 'private' or non state sphere, including the economy. The former is the realm of force the latter of consent. The intermediary institutions in the civil society-school, church, family, newspaper etc count as hegemonic

apparatus binding the individuals to the ruling power by consent. Coercion is reserved for the state for the legitimating of violence.

Gramsci normally uses the word hegemony to mean the ways in which a governing power wins consent to its rule from those it subjugates. Since ideology may be forcibly imposed that it is different from hegemony. Hegemony is a broader category than ideology. It may be discriminated into various ideological, cultural and economic aspects. Ideology refers, specifically, to the way power-struggles are fought out at the level of significations. It is also carried out in cultural, political and economic forms in non- discursive practices as well as in rhetorical utterances. Gramsci associates hegemony with civil society. The dominant power is diffused throughout habitual daily practices intimately interwoven with culture itself. Capitalism, Gramsci suggests, maintains control not just through violence, and political and economic coercion, but also ideologically, through a hegemonic culture in which the values of the bourgeoisie become the "common sense value" of all. Thus a consensus culture develops in which people in the working class identify their own good with the good of the capitalist system. Lenin held that "culture was ancillary to political objectives" but for Gramsci it is fundamental to the attainment of power. Intellectual and moral leadership is necessary for any class to be a dominant class. Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebooks*(1971), writes.

That the supremacy of a social group manifest itself in two ways, as "domination" and as "intellectual and moral leadership." A social group dominated antagonistic groups, which it tend to "liquidate", or to subjugate, perhaps even by armed force, it leads kindred and allied groups. A social group can, and indeed must, already exercise "leadership" before

winning governmental power; it subsequently becomes dominant when it exercise power, but even if it holds it firmly in its grasp, it must continue to "lead" as well. (58)

Gramsci gave much thought to the question of the role of intellectuals in society. Famously, he stated that all men are intellectuals, in that all have intellectual and rational faculties but not all men have the social function of intellectuals. He claimed that modern intellectuals are not simply talker, but directors and organizers who helped build the society and produce hegemony by means of ideological apparatus such as education and media. Further more he distinguished between 'traditional' intellectual and organic ones. The traditional intellectuals are professional, literary, scientific, intellectuals. The organic intellectuals are distinguished less by their profession than by their in directing the ideas and aspiration of the class to which they organically belong. Gramsci, in his *Prison Notebook* (1971), further says:

Every social group coming into existence on the original terrain of an essential function in the world of economic production, creates together with itself, organically, one or more strata of intellectuals which give it homogeneity and an awareness of its own function not only in the economic but also in the social and political fields. The capitalist entrepreneur creates alongside himself the industrial technician, the specialist in the political economy, the organizer of new culture, of a new legal system, etc. (5)

For the Frankfurt School Marxist Theodor Adorno the mechanism of abstract exchange is the very secret of ideology itself. Commodity exchange effects an equation

between things which are in fact incommensurable and so does ideological thought, Frederic Jameson has suggested that the fundamental gesture of all ideology is exactly such a rigid binary opposition between the self or familiar, which is positively valorized, and the non-self, or alien, which is thrust beyond the boundaries of intelligibility.

For the later Frankfurt School Philosophers Jurgen Habermas, ideology is a form of communication systematically distorted by power- a discourse which has become the medium of domination, which serve to legitimate relations of organized force. For the hermeneutical philosophers like Hans George Gadamer, misunderstanding and lapses of communication are textual blockages to be rectified by sensitive interpretations. Habermas says extra-discursive forces affects discourse. Ideology marks the point at which language is bent out of communicative shape by the power interest which impinge upon it. Such domination inscribe itself on the inside of our speech. Dominative social institutions are for Habermas some-what akin to neurotic patterns of behaviors since they rigidify human life into compulsive set of norms and thus block the path to critical self – reflection. In both cases, we become dependent on hypnotized power, subject to constraints which are in fact cultural but which bear upon us with all the inexorability of natural forces. The gratificatory instincts which such institutions thwart are then either driven underground in the phenomenon Freud dubs 'repression' or sublimated into metaphysical world views, ideal value system of one kind or another, which help to console and compensate individuals for the real-life restriction they must endure. These value system thus serve to legitimize the social order channeling potential dissidence into illusionary forms; and this is the Freudian theory of Ideology.

Ideology, for Adorno is thus the form of identity thinking. On this account, the opposite of ideology would be not truth or theory, but difference or heterogeneity. Ideology homogenizes the world, equating distinct phenomena, and to undo it thus demand the negative dialectics. Identity is, in Adorno's view is the primal form of all ideology. The aim of socialism is to liberate the rich diversity of sensuous use-value from the metaphysical prison-house of exchange-value to emancipate history from the false equivalences imposed upon it by ideology and commodity production. The identity principal strives to suppress all contradictions. This process has been brought to perfection in the reified, bureaucratized and administered world of advanced capitalism.

Habermas regards psychoanalysis as a discourse which seek to emancipate us from systematically distorted communication, and so as sharing common ground with the critique of ideology. Just as the neurotic may vehemently deny a wish which nevertheless manifests itself in symbolic form on the body, so a ruling class may proclaim its beliefs in liberty while obstructing it in practice. To interpret these deformed discourses means not just translating them into other terms but reconstructing their conditions of possibility and accounting for what Habermas calls the genetic conditions of the unmeaning. We need to explain the causes of textual distortion itself. As Habermas writes: "The breaks in the text are places where an interpretation has forcibly prevailed that is ego-alien even though it is produced by the self [...]. The result is that the ego necessarily deceives itself about its identity in the symbolic structure that is consciously produced" (qtd. in Eagleton 277). So, it is necessary to analyze a form of systematically distorted communication whether dream or ideology. As Marx puts the point in *Theories of Surplus Value*, "Adams Smith's contradiction are of significance because they contain problems which it

is true he does not solve but which he reveals by contradicting himself" (qtd. in Eagleton 147). Both psychoanalysis and 'Ideology Critique' focus upon the points where meaning are force intersect. Both dream and ideology are in this sense doubled texts, conjectures of signs and power. If dreams cloak unconscious motivation in symbolic guise, then so do ideological texts.

There is a parallel between ideological and psychical disturbance. For Freud neurosis is the confused glimmerings of a kind of solution to whatever is awry. Neurotic behavior is a strategy for tackling, encompassing and resolving genuine conflicts even if it resolves them in an imaginary way. The behavior is not just a passive reflex of this conflict, but an active form of engagement with it. Just the same can be said of ideologies which are no mere inner by-products of social contradictions but resourceful strategies for containing, engaging and imaginarily resolving them. Etienne Balibar and Pierre Machery have argued that works of literature do not simply take ideological contradictions in the raw and set about lending them some factitious resolution.

After the linguistic revolution of 20th century, there was a shift from thinking of words in term to concept of thinking in terms of words. Instead of holding on empiricist vein that words stand for concepts, we now think to see having a concept as the capacity to use words in particular ways. A concept, is thus more of a practice than a state of mind. But Louis Althusser had tried to reduce the concepts to special practices. There is a third way between thinking of ideology as disembodied ideas on the one hand, and as nothing but a matter of certain behavior patterns on the other. This is to regard ideology as discursive or semiotic phenomenon. This emphasizes its materiality and concern with meanings.

Ideology can be viewed less as a particular set of discourses than as a particular set of effects within discourses. What is bourgeois about this mixed bunch of idioms is less a kind of languages they are than the effects they produce: effects, for example, of "closure" whereby certain forms of signification are silently excluded, and certain signifiers are 'fixed' in a commanding position. These effects are discursive, not purely formal features of language: what is interpreted as closure will depend on the concrete context of utterance, and is variable from one communicative situation to the next.

The Soviet philosopher V.N. Voloshinov in his *Marxism and The Philosophy of Language* (1973) developed the first theory of ideology. He proclaimed that without signs there is no ideology. In his view, the domain of signs and the realm of ideology are coextensive. Consciousness can arise only in the material embodiment of signifiers, and since these signifier are in themselves material, they are not just, reflection of the reality but an integral part of it'. Voloshinov writes: "The logic of consciousness is the logic of ideological communication, of the semiotic interaction of the social group. If we deprive consciousness of its semiotic ideological content, it would have absolutely nothing left" (qtd. in Eagleton 9).

Voloshinov's work yields us a new definition of ideology, as the struggle for antagonistic social interest at the level of sign. He is father of discourse analysis which studies the play of social power within language itself. The French Althusserian linguist Michel Cepheid, in his *Language, Semantics and Ideology* (1975) tries to go beyond the celebrated Saussrean distinction between *Langue and Parole*. A discursive formation can be seen as a set of rules which determine what can be and must be said from a certain

position within social life; and expression have meanings only by virtue of the discursive formation within which they occur.

Every discursive process is thus inscribed in ideological relations. Language becomes the medium of ideological conflict. Discourse analysis examines how the inscription of social power within language can be traced in lexical, syntactic and grammatical structures.

The word is the consciousness *par excellence*, and consciousness itself is just the internalization of words, a kind of "inner speech". So, consciousness is less something 'within' us than something around and between us, a network of signifiers which constitute us through and through. If ideology can't live without sign, then neither can the sign be isolated from concrete forms of social intercourse. The sign and its social institution inextricably fused together and this situation determines from within the form and structure of utterance.

A quite different style of thought about language and ideology came to characterize avant-garde European thought in the 1970s. It fixes the process of signification around certain dominant signifiers with which the individual can identify. The productivity of language is here arrested to "closure". Signs are hierarchically ordered. As Rosalind Coward and John Ellis, in *Language and Materialism*, put it, "Ideological practice works to fix the subject in certain positions in relation to certain fixities of discourse" (qtd in Eagleton 73).

My reading of ideology and its key issues will be clearly analyzed in the next chapter, discussion of textual tool , as it presents a detail textual citation so as to expose how the drama documents the instance of repercussion of dominant ideology upon the

characters living under it. This chapter presents the analysis for showing many mental as well as physical ups and downs undergone by the characters, esp. Hjalmar Ekdal, his family and Gregers Werle, because of the effects of their society dominant ideology.

CHAPTER III

Victim of ideology: Ibsen's characters in *The Wild Duck*

Henrik Ibsen's *The Wild Duck* presents the contemporary life situation of Ekdal's family, who was sent to prison over some scandal by Werle. The victimization of the characters esp. Hjalmar Ekdal is the man concern of this analysis. Along with the domination and exploitation of the character under the ideology will be the key to such an analysis.

The disintegration of the Ekdal's and Werle's families, Ekdal's economic failure and the decay of human relationships got momentum in the tragic death of Hedvig and the fragmented and alienated condition of Hjalmar Ekdal's last fading days.

In this 1884 masterpiece by "the father of modern drama", the idealistic son of a corrupted merchant exposes his father's duplicity, but in the process destroys the very people he wishes to save. Led by his conviction that reality is superior to illusion,, Gregers Werle forces his friend, the Ekdal, to confront the truth about their lives. Unfortunately, these truths, involving scandals, illegitimacy, imprisonment and madness, only serve to wound the Ekdals further. In the play, the wild duck is the symbol of this injured family, and perhaps of the loss of Ibsen's youthful idealism. Moving and powerful, this thought-provoking tragedy offers ample testimony to the justice of Ibsen's status as one of the giant of modern drama.

The question of Hakon Werle's marriage ideology, of which Gregers was the fruit was an unhappy one. The spouses were at odds, and Gregers took his mother's side. She had weakness and according to the testimony of a former maid occasionally had 'crazy fits', if she was an alcoholic addicted, that would fit the descriptions. Her husband, on the

other hand, expose to unending domestic scenes, ran after the said maid with dishonorable intentions, but whether he was actually unfaithful to his wife is not made explicit.

Hjalmar's ideology fails to sustain itself and leads to a tragic consequences as he is incapable of critiquing his common sense and activities determined by the existing social ideology on the one hand and living with new values on the other. When Fru Werle died, the widower continued his pursuit of Gina Hansen-through the comparatively decent intermediacy, it may be noted, for her mother- and 'had of his will of her'. Soon after this she married Hjalmar Ekdal, who also had enjoyed extra-marital relations with her and who his university career broken off by his father's disgrace, had recently been trained as photographer and installed in his own studio at Hakon Werle's expense. That later furthered the marriage of Gina and Hjalmar in any other way is not stated. Gina's child, Hedvig, born in Wedlock, had been conceived before, but the paternity is left uncertain; Gregers unquestionably assumes that she is his half-sister, and the assumption is supported by the fact that both she and Hakon Werle suffer from serious affliction of the eyes.

In *The Wild Duck* there is an "idealist" Gregers Werle, who continually talks as though he had been reading Ibsen's previous plays. He returns to his home town after an extorted exile and meddles in the affairs of a strange family, producing disastrous results. Living in a house whose closets are chock-full of skeletons. Over the course of the plays many secrets that lie behind the Ekdals' apparently happy home are revealed to Gregers, who insists on pursuing the absolute truth, or the "summons of the ideal". This family has achieved a tolerable *modus vivendi* by ignoring the skeleton (among the secrets: Gregers'

father impregnated his servant Gina then married her off to Hjalmar to legitimize the child, and Hjalmar's father has been disgraced and imprisoned for a crime the elder Werle committed). And by permitting each member to live in a drama world of his own— the feckless father believing himself to be a great inventor, the grandfather dwelling on the past when he was a mighty sportsman, and a little Hedvig, the child, centering her emotional life around an attic where a wounded wild duck leads a crippled existence in a make-believe forest.

To the idealist all these appears intolerable. To him as to other admirers of Ibsen it most seem that the whole family is leading a life "based on a lie"; all sorts of evils are "growing in the dark". The remedy is obviously to face facts, to speak frankly, to led in the light. However, in this play the revelation of the truth is not a happy event because it rips up the foundation of the Ekdal family. When the skeletons are brought out to closet, the whole dream world collapses; the weak husband thinks it is his duty to leave his wife and the little girl, after trying to sacrifice her precious duck, shoots herself with the same gun. One of the famous quotes from the doctor Relling who built up and maintained the lies the family is founded on is "if you take away the lie of life from an average human, you take away his happiness at the same time."(67)

The idealist Gregers, like Parson Brand, is a man with a mission. The 'mission' which he conceives to have been laid upon him is almost as nebulous as Hjalmar's great invention, though it may passes the merit— for what that is worth of being self-imposed. He is the 'superior' person who, whenever he sees his fellow-men going the common rounds of their daily lives, immediately thinks that they ought to be doing something different and, of course, 'better'. He does not stop at thinking, but proceeds to

exhortations, which, as far as one can judge, are of the negative or very nebulous character: his victim are to rouse themselves, give up their old habits and assumptions, search their hearts, take moral surrounding, judge themselves and their neighbors all in the name of 'ideal' which is not further defined. In the end as Gregers himself comes to admit, his mission amounts to no more than being self-invented thirteen round the dinner table, a cause of discomfort at the time and of calamity thereafter.

Gregers fastens on the parallel between this story and the carefree, naive life of Old Ekdal, which was shattered by the action of his old partner, but continued in a kind of twilight, amid filth and rubbish, barely conscious, half dead. He sees himself as the incredibly clever dog who dives down and restores submerged creatures to light and renewed utility above. He does more than perceive analogies of this order, he voices them:

GREGERS: My dear Hjalmar, I almost think you have something of wild duck in you.

HJALMAR: Something of wild duck? How do you mean?

GREGERS: You have dived down and bitten yourself fast in the undergrowth.

HJALMAR: Are you alluding to the well-nigh fatal shot that has broken my father's wing and mine too?

GREGERS: Not exactly to that. I don't say that your wings has been broken; but you have strayed into a poisonous marsh, Hjalmar; an insidious disease has taken hold of you, and you have sunk down to die in the dark.

HJALMAR: I? Do die in the dark? Look here, Gregers, you must really leave off talking such nonsense.

GREGERS: Don't be afraid: I shall find a way to help you up again.(57)

It is clear that, Gregers, Hedvig's wild duck is a symbol, which can possess, as the most through-going symbolist seem always to hold, an active property of its own in relation to what is held to symbolize. For, in inducing Hedvig to kill her pet, he intends to destroy the bogus, 'lying' make-believe which poisons the atmosphere of his family.

The Wild Duck is all but unique among Ibsen's plays. Almost too obviously the lofty tower which sole ness has constructed bears the 'responsibility for the final catastrophe': The catastrophe, Hedvig's death, is brought about by Hjalmar unkindness to her, which Gregers doctrinaire interference unnaturally stimulates, and a play ending similarly could have been constructed by omitting the wild duck altogether or by, so to speak, putting its various functions in commission instead of concentrating them in a single focus.

If in one way *The Wild Duck* serves to hold together the play called after her, in another way Relling does so too. Whatever it is, he has somewhat more limited function. For he has nothing to do with the sphere of which Hakon Werle forms the centre: his activities are confined to the Ekdal household. Not unlike Gregers Werle, he is a man with mission, though he would probably have repudiated any such inscription to him other than the good physician's principle to do his best for his patients, for each according to his diathesis and complaint. In the play, he is called in to examine Hedvig after her suicide; but otherwise, his ministrations belong entirely to the psychological and moral realm.

GREGERS: Oh, indeed! Hjalmar Ekdal is sick too, is he!

RELLING: Most people are, worst luck.

GREGERS: And what remedy are you applying in Hjalmar's case?

RELLING: My usual one. I am cultivating the life-illusion in him.

GREGERS: Life-illusion? I didn't catch what you said.

RELLING: Yes, I said illusion. For illusion, you know, is the stimulating principle. (V-63)

The dialogue towards the beginning of Act V introduces the motives of the "Livslogness" or "life-illusion". It takes place between the play's rival "doctors", two men in conflict over the Ekdal fate. Relling opposes Gregers's continuous appeals to the "claim of the ideal" with a quasi-medical or psychological discourse. This turns to discourse of psychology is one of the defining aspect of Ibsen's drama. For Relling, Hjalmar suffers not from spiritual tumult but illness. He requires a remedy; the "stimulating principle" of illusion. The ideal does not figure as some moral or spiritual imperative but is yet another pathology.

He has contrived to keep some glimmer of self-respect alive in his companion, the debauched theologian Molvik, by persuading him that his alcoholic out breaks are the manifestation of the 'demonic nature' in him craning for satisfaction from time to time. He has not invented the notion of the 'hunting-ground' in the attic for Lieutenant Ekdal's benefit—the old hit it on himself—but he encourages and approves of it. It is he, however, who has put into Hjalmar's head the belief that he has it in him to make a great discovery in the science of photography and thereby to redeem the decayed family honor. Relling's only concern is the happiness of his patient—though it may be noted that the happiness

nowhere involves the unhappiness of others: but concepts like the good of society or the moral efficacy of the individual are not only excluded but repudiated.

Relling accordingly stands as the poles apart to the man of principle, Gregers Werle, who is in everyway antipathetic to him. He rejects ideals in themselves;

RELLING: While I think of it, Mr. Werle, junior- don't use that foreign word: ideals. We have the native excellent native words: lies.

GREGERS: Do you think the two words are related?

RELLING: Yes, just about as closely as typhus and putrid fever. (IV-57)

And particularly because the impossible demands which they make as the direct cause of individual dissatisfaction and unhappiness. 'Life would be quite tolerable; he exclaim at the very end of the play: 'Life would be quite tolerable, after all, if only we could be rid of the confounded duns that keep on pestering us, in our poverty, with the claim of ideal'. Pragmatically he is justified: as long as it was in control of the situation in Hjalmar's house, all went well; but, from the moment he is ousted by the idealist, malaise, unhappiness and disaster ensure.

Relling being thus justified according to the most reliable test available, how far may we identify Ibsen's own attitude with his? 'Ideals' are seen as the hostile agent, standing in the way of human happiness. Has Ibsen finally come round to this view? If we make the identification to Relling and Ibsen, is there not a grave inconsistency between the position which the later takes up in *The Wild Duck* and that to be inferred from the earliest plays, where truth, honesty, candor, straight-dealing, the resolute facing of facts, everything indeed repugnant to the 'life-lie', seem to be exalted? Undoubtedly there is a great difference.

They who scan the work of ideal are themselves idealist in the popular accepted meaning of the term; they attribute the best motives and awaits the highest in mankind. A conclusion to which Relling attains, in much of which Ibsen himself seem also to concur, is profoundly repugnant to them or if not repugnant, at least grieving. It is on that account, no doubt *The Wild Duck* has been called the most pessimistic of Ibsen's plays and that the pessimism vulgarly attribute to all tragedies is confirmed in his case.

If Hjalmar be regarded as a diminished, even less heroic, Peer Gynt and Gregers Werle as a smaller Brand who has fostered his idealism is similarly remote and barren tracts, the tragedy of *The Wild Duck* proceeds from an impacts of these two characters, and the smash-up of Hjalmar's domestic felicity, with the death of Hedvig, has a two-fold cause. The catastrophe is most obviously induced by Gregers, who, presenting the demand of the ideal, first undermines the mutual confidence on which the Ekdal household is reared, replaces its security by disquieting doubts about its past and future, turns a collectively and individually happy family into unhappy one, and also puts the idea of a blood sacrifice into Hedvig's head. In the second place and more particularly, however, as we have seen, Hedvig's substitution of herself for the wild duck as the sacrificial victim is due to the Hjalmar's thoughtless cruelty towards her. Such cruelty does not seem an obvious attribute of easy-going, comfort-loving nature like his; but in the circumstances it proceed naturally from his complete egoism, his inability to realize the bearings of the situation in which he finds himself and from the angry malaise engendered by his uncertainty.

Gregers had a great chance of the sort for which he had been waiting the chance to have justice done to his old friend family, which, rightly or wrongly, he believes to

have been outrageously treated, and to raise at any some of his fellow men to his high moral level on which he thinks that all should have their being; and nothing but evil has ensued upon these selfless efforts cannot, therefore, *The Wild Duck* be construed as the idealist's tragedy? Undoubtedly it can. But it seems as if Ibsen wished to minimized the aspect of *The Wild Duck*– and by so doing to refrain from casting a justifying glow around those activities of his own which resemble Gregers Werle's.

Gregers is animated by no real love for the mankind in general, and no one cares for him. In the second place, important as he is in scheme of *The Wild Duck*, he never holds the centre of the stage: as he is an ominous rather than a sinister figure, standing at the side, fatally involving others in the darkness of his personality of assuming heroic stature: he expresses no regret– beyond the apology that he always acted with the best intentions– no contrition or repentance.

A number of critics have noted how Relling and Gregers compete over Hjalmar's fate. What does Relling think of Gregers's appeals to the ideal? He change the term of discussion of Hjalmar's situation as he opposes Gregers's Salvationists gospel with a psychological discourse. This turn to psychology is one of the defining aspect of Ibsen's drama. He does not only deploy this discourse as a competing ideology but uses it to diagnose Gregers's "quackery" as well. Thus Gregers suffers from an "integrity-fever" and a "delirium of hero-worship". His "claim of ideal" becomes a disorder rather than a moral or spiritual imperative. Rather than leads one to the truth, the ideal is like the lie in the fact they both diseases of the mind. What is imperative for Relling then is not the soul's attainment to truth but the treatment of these mental disorders. This treatment is an inoculation with the "life-illusion" that makes existence possible.

RELLING: Would it be impertinent to ask what it is exactly you want in this house?

GREGERS: I want to lay the foundation of a true marriage.

RELLING: So you don't think the Ekdals' marriage is good enough as it is?

GREGERS: It's probably good marriage as most, I regret to say. But a true marriage it has yet to become. (IV -52)

Relling also criticizes the heady Gregers by replacing his appeal to the ideal with an economic metaphor. Relling Gregers's "Claim of the Ideal" is not moral/spiritual but pecuniary. Gregers has come to cash in at the Ekdals only to discover that residents are insolvent. As we have seen, the appeal to economics, as in (Oikos) or management of the household, has fractured to deflate the characters' grander claim.

It is common place in Ibsen criticism to regard the theme of *The Wild Duck* as a corrective to the themes of Ibsen's earliest social problem plays. *The Wild Duck* presents the sorry results of the psychopath's idealistic dedication of a self-assumed mission of truth. The play is neither a tragedy nor a farce but a bit of both unique and puzzling. It is the least "edifying" play Ibsen ever wrote, and certainly least sublime. That it is also, quite possibly, his best play is something to think about for people who try to reduce Ibsen to a radical crusader whom time and events have turned respectable and a little dull. It is the sodden cynic Dr. Relling who speaks the theme of the play: "Take the life illusion away from the average man, and take his happiness too"(54). Because Gregers Werle meddles with Hjalmar Ekdal's life illusion, i.e., his concept of himself, Hedvig sacrifices herself for the sake of worthless father. Hjalmar's selfish, phrase-mongering

existence would have been pleasant enough and would have given his wife and daughter happiness enough—if only Gregers had not insisted that the Ekdal marriage need to be re-established on a foundation of truth. As usual, Ibsen propounds no general dogma here. He is not denying the value of truth. He is questioning the absolute value of truth.

What is one man's truth is another man's poison. It is this skeptical, relativistic theme that Ibsen allows ironically play in the images of sight and blindness. Hjalmar Ekdal is not the kind of man who can live comfortably with an unpleasant truth, and the ruin of Ekdal happiness is the result of Gregers Werle's mistaken view of Hjalmar's character.

But Gregers goes through the whole play thinking of himself as a man who, if he does nothing else, at least sees. His self-hatred, conditioned by a neurotic mother and a miserable adolescence, is modified on this one point only: he prides himself on his ability to see the truth and on his courage to bring it out into the open. In Act I, he turns down his father's offer of reconciliation with the words, "I have seen too much of you" (8). Gregers' choice of phrase is ironic, since there is something myopic about his view of his father, and Werle's answer suggests, at an early point in the play, the dubious validity of his son's vision: "You have seen me with your mother's eyes.... But you should remember that those eyes were clouded at times." (I – 8) In a play premised on heredity is not overly ingenious to take this to mean that Gregers' sight is affected, figuratively speaking, by inheritance from both to his father and mother. To his father's offer Gregers opposes his confidence in his clear-sightedness: "Now at last I see a mission to live for." (I -10) The mission, we soon learn, is "to open Hjalmar Ekdal's eye". Before the play is over he has reduced the Ekdal home to a similar dark and messy state. But to him it is Hjalmar, not

himself, who is living in darkness, like a wild duck that has dived down from the light of the sky. "...You are being corrupted by an insidious disease," (27) he tells Hjalmar, and you have plunged to the bottom to die in the dark." (27) But he does not apply to Hjalmar advice he gives concerning the real wild duck: "Be sure it never sees the sea and sky" (28). Rather, when he has revealed the truth about Gina's past to Hjalmar and expects to see "a splendor of revelation" surrounding husband and wife, he is both baffled and anguished when they don't proceed to put the shattered pieces of their lives together.

The obtuse idealist is unaware of the portentous implications of the symbols he employs to enforce his own vision Hjalmar moral plight. When he at last succeeds in having Hedvig "open [her] eye to what gives life its worth", the result is her pointless suicide. Coming from the lips of blind bungler Gregers proves himself to be, his rejection of Relling's realistic estimate of Hjalmar character marks a climax of irony: "After all, I don't consider myself completely blind."(28)

It is interesting to see how Ibsen arrived at the novel effects of *The Wild Duck*. He began with a theme on which he had already played several variations. Driven by an exaggerated sense of guilt, the idealistic Gregers comes as a savior to set the Ekdal family through truth. In precisely this manner, Julian came to liberate the world, and Brand to save it. The Ekdal family, however, has no use for the truth. It has managed its mystery to find way of life which approximate happiness, and it would prefer to be left in peace. As old Ekdal demonstrates, the human soul has considerable ingenuity; it can construct a forest in an attic; it can build, if necessary, a world in a shoebox. The illusion serves quite as well the reality so long as it is not disturbed. Consequently, nobody thanks Gregers to his idealistic efforts. On the contrary, his meddling results only in irreparable misfortune.

The eruption of the Gregers into the tranquil world of the Ekdal is very skillfully managed. There is a very charming family scene reminiscent of a contemporary genre painting—the father playing a Bohemian dance on the flute, the mother and the daughter grouped happily about him. We are vaguely aware of discordant elements in this scene; nevertheless, it is a *tableau* situation for farming. Now comes Gregers, a disagreeable man, advancing "the claim of ideal", and he reveals their life for what it is—a patchwork of lies and pretenses, a tissue of illusion as pathetic as the intimation forest in the attic.

His motives are decidedly more questionable than Dr. Stockman's in *An Enemy of the People*; but they are of the same order. Ostensibly he is interested only in one truth and justice. In reality, he is sadistic busybody, and he has personal reason, besides, for wishing to embarrass his father. Whatever his inner motives may be, however, he has rationalized them in terms of his missionary zeal. He thinks of himself as a rescuer of fallen souls, "a really absurdly clever dog; the sort that goes in after wild ducks and when they dive down and bite themselves into the weed and tangle" at the bottom of the sea. It is in the furtherance of this mission, with its attendant requirements of All-or-Nothing, that asks little Hedvig to sacrifice the thing she loves most in order to show Hjalmar how much she loves him.

Gregers, however, is unsympathetic. He has, moreover, a rival *raisonneur* in Dr. Relling, who is very likeable. Neither, of course is trustworthy of the two manipulators of the plot, the one is fanatic, neurotic, sadistic and perhaps mad; the other is a drunkard and a disgrace to his profession. These two angles battle for the soul of the hero, which is worthless:

GREGERS: Hedvig has not died in vain. Didn't you see how grief brought out what was noblest in him?

RELLING: Most people feel some nobility when they stand in the presence of death. But how long do you suppose their glory will last in the case?

GREGERS: Surely it will continue and flourish to the end of his life!

RELLING: Give him nine months and little Hedvig will be nothing more than the theme of a pretty party piece.... (V-68)

Dr. Relling was destined, unhappy, to become a theatrical cliché, and in concerning him as he did, Ibsen did what he could to dissociate himself from the doctrine. But there can be no doubt that his estimable quack speaks for that side of Ibsen which had now supplanted Brand as the Ibsen "of the finest moments," an Ibsen who viewed the world from the standpoint somewhere between contempt and compassion, but always with a certain amusement. This is the Ibsen we see in his play henceforth; until we are confronted suddenly with the Agony of *The Master Builder*.

The Wild Duck, like its relatives and descendants, *The Playboy of the Western World*, and *The Iceman Cometh*, indicates the use of illusion in a world of unbearable realities, but we cannot from this that Ibsen advocate self deception as a panacea for the ills of humanity. In *The Wild Duck* the priest is drunk, the soldier is broken, the idealist is mad the doctor is ill. They all have, metaphorically, fallen into the ooze at the bottom of the sea. In it nobody is capable of going beyond the initial stage, but even in the climate of despair it is possible to create a world in which one can live in something like joy.

In *The Wild Duck* all the characters are formulated in terms of despair: but the source of emotion is the despair of the author, not the despair of the characters. The characters do not complain. It is the author who, by implication, bewails them. The pleasure of the play derives, accordingly, not from the identification of the audience with the protagonist, and in tragedy, but from a feeling of intimate communion with the contemplation of the action, a feeling akin to the pleasure of poetry. *The Wild Duck*, thus marks a subtle, but important step away from the illusionism which specially characterizes realist drama, and it points the way toward conception of theatre in which the author, rather than the characters, becomes the centre of attention, a conception which Strindberg and, after him, Pirandello developed rapidly in the next decades.

The Wild Duck, on the other hand, like *The White Horses* of Rosemersholm, or *The Rat-Wife* of Little Eyolf, completely eludes this sort of approach: it prefers not to be defined. As a metaphor, the wounded bird serves to characterizes the lives and souls of almost all the character in the play from Old Ekdal to Gregers Werle; it refers to Hedvig still in another way; and it is used emblematically to describe in general the therapeutic role of illusion in life. In the end *The Wild Duck* serves to unify in a single figure the entire action of the play: so much meaning radiates from this symbol that anything that serves to define it, serves also to restrict its efficacy.

Indeed, Ibsen has been criticized for understanding his point all too well—a charge which might be valid could he have counted on an ideal performance of the play before an ideal audience. In the study, it must be admitted, this pointing often does seem excessive. Hjalmar's "Don't touch the pistol, Hedvig! one of the barrels is loaded; remember that"(66) is like a traffic signal. There has been no objection to his climatic

speech to Gregers, "If I then asked her: Hedvig, are you willing to turn your back life to me? Thanks a lot, you'd soon hear the answer I'd get"(60) immediately followed by the pistol shoot—but one deploras to need to make even a self-dramatizing egoist like Hjalmar express such an outrageous notion in order to provide Hedvig with the direct clue to pull the trigger.

The critics' most serious reservation about *The Wild Duck* concern Gregers oversentimentation of Hjalmar. "It is hard to accept Gregers Werle's continuing faith in the greatness on a man who almost without stop reveals his phoniness. Gregers may be sick but he is not supposed to be stupid." And indeed, if Gregers' misguided determination to enlighten that egregious ham is the basic action of the drama as well as its principle business, the very structure of the play is open to criticism: Act I, already censured for its trite expository opening, becomes a mere prologue.

But suppose now we shift the focus from Gregers' concern for Hjalmar to his passionate father? Or rather—since the interpreter's right to shift the focus may be debatable—suppose we look beyond Gregers' involvement with Hjalmar to its underlying motivation. This approach might perhaps confute the major objection to the play. For if the primary action is the revenge of the son on the father, revenge in which his "best and only friend" (whom Gregers has not kept in touch for some seventeen years!) serves not only as a handy tool but as the only available one, then Gregers' continuing faith in Hjalmar is not so much stupidity as a stubborn refusal to give up what serves his ends. And the Hedvig's death becomes the tragic climax of the primary struggle, the accomplishment of an insane reckoning, rather than 'the ricochet of a fumbling idealist's

misaimed fire. "I knew it. Restitution would come through the child,"(68) says Gregers when the shoot in the attic disposes of Hjalmar's doubt; Hedvig is not accidental victim.

To give full value to the forces of Gregers' will on Hedvig—subconscious though his aim may be—should not only settle all doubts about the relevance and realism of Hedvig's suicide but minimize her rather dated innocence as well. For while it is evident that Hedvig is wise to Hjalmar(Ibsen makes it abundantly clear that she knows Hjalmar to be the baby of the family, to be soothed and indulged), her ignorance of the so-called facts of life is rather difficult to believe in these days of elementary school sex education.

GREGERS: On the contrary, there's everything in the world to think about. You three must stay together if you are to win through the sublime spirit of sacrifice and forgiveness.

HJALMAR: I don't want to! Never! Never! My hat! [Takes his hat] . My house lies in ruin about me. [Burst into tears] Gregers, I have no child!

HEDVIG: What are you saying! [Up to him] Father! Father!

HJALMAR: Don't come near me, Hedvig. Get away from me. I can't bear to look at you. Oh, those eyes...! good-bye. [He makes for the door].

HEDVIG: [Clinging to him, cries out]. No! No! Don't leave me! (IV-58)

This is not to say, of course, that her talk about being "found" is disingenuous, that her rejection by Hjalmar is any less devastating even if she sees through him, or that her suicide is a conscious submission to Gregers' will. But on the other hand, she is no naïve as to suspect, however dimly, some connection between her birthday gift from Werle senior and Hjalmar's immediate repudiation of her? To admit the Hedvig's drawing suspicion that she is Gregers' half sister into an interpretation of the role would not only

rescue the forth-act scene between them from the danger of mawkishness but communicate its power, not to say horror. It might quicken audience response to the sublime orchestration of Act IV—surely without equal in realist drama.

Squaring account with his father, Gregers destroys the only valuable extension of Werle's self (incidentally proving himself to be his father's son, for now he too has "shattered a life"). At the same time, Hedvig plays the last act in "the tragedy of the house of Ekdal; she fires the pistol by which, according to Hjalmar, his father was too cowardly to die and he himself too brave. Hedvig thereby redeems Hjalmar, who never really returned to life after her suicide attempt and never got over the shame of accepting the false and diminished existence which his father's archenemy provide for him. Hjalmar is consciously playing a role to cover up his guilt—which would make him a deeper character than the surface caricature suggests; and indeed, Ibsen wrote that "his sentimentality is genuine, his melancholy charming in its way—not a bit of affection."

But if Gregers has accepted a sort of rebirth from Hakon Werle, then he is not only victim but also in a sense of his son. And Ekdal: did he not cripple Hjalmar's life, even as Gregers accuse Werle of crippling his? Hjalmar evidently resents his father's failure to expiate his crime (it was his duty to redeem the family honor) and that in his emotional turmoil after the catastrophe Hjalmar must often have wished him dead. But to Gregers one might add, Ekdal is his father's blameless victim; he compares Hjalmar's disolation on his father's imprisonment with his own upon the death of his mother—the first and the archetypal victim of that terrible man. His difference and consideration for Old Ekdal are singularly touching, and coming from a blind idealist who in all

his other human contacts exhibits a total lack of compassion, an only son who absented himself during his mother's last illness, not even home for her funeral.

The widespread assumption that Mrs. Wrele's "tragic failing" was drink, since Gina says that she had ("physical fits," but Gina means psychic ones) just like Gregers; the son's feeling for his mother, whether of contempt or pity, were nowhere so strong as his fear of his father. From the exchange between Gregers and Werle in Act I, it appears that this fear was implanted in him by his mother; Gregers arrived at the "idealism"—the recognized sublimation of an aversion to sex by—the exemplary route.

What is behind the blind determination with which he sets about "purifying" the Ekdals' marriage? In this, of course, he can only act symbolically; Werle's sin must never be forgotten and all his gifts must be rejected—including, and perhaps especially, the gift of life. At this level of interpretation, Gregers' stubborn faith in Hjalmar cease to be unrealistic, serving as it does a passion beyond the reach of reason. And Hedvig's death no longer looks like "a meaningless and uninteresting little pat of blood" unrelated to the central action, a contrived intrusion of specious pathos. Her suicide becomes the vicarious fulfillment of Gregers' repudiation of his father, as in Haakonsen's view it redeems Hjalmar's treachery towards his.

For Hedvig Ibsen seems to have drawn on his recollection of his sister with the same name, the only member of his family with whom he maintained some sort of friendly relations and who followed his own career with sympathy. She is no childish heroin. There is nothing very unusual about her individuality or ways, except that she is, perhaps, a little young for her years in her continual absorption in make-believes and completely uncritical acceptance of her environment.

The pathos of Hedvig's fate has lead for whom it is the most moving and the most arresting thing in *The Wild Duck* to look upon her as the heroin of the play and, as a not unnatural corollary, to identify her in some measure with the wild duck itself: for, after all, it is not unusual practice to name a drama after its foremost character. Hedvig may be the most admirable personage presented in the play, but that in itself does not guarantee the validity of the theory; neither it can rightly be maintained that the play fundamentally is 'about' Hedvig, that her fate is the constant preoccupation either of the other personages or of the spectators: she is victim like Ophelia in *Hamlet*, and almost an accidental victim.

Why does Hedvig shoot herself? Accident, as has been noted, should be ruled out. Hers is an intentional act, induced by the notion of sacrifice which Gregers has put into her head: to regain her fathers love she is to offer up what she holds dearest in the world.

GERGERS: [drawing closer to her]. But supposing now that your own free will sacrificed the wild duck for her sake?

HEDVIG: [raising]. The wild duck!

GREGERS: Supposing you were ready to sacrifice for him the most precious thing you have in the world?

HEDVIG: Do you think that would help? (III-47)

She does not hasitate in designating the as the sacrificial victim her pet, the maimed wild duck: she will get her grandfather, Old Ekdal, to shoot it dead. The construction that, on further reflection, as conscious perseverance in Greger's idea, Hedvig considered her own life to be even more precious than the wild duck must, I think, be rejected, even if unconsciously her act may conform to it. The act is a violent,

perhaps hysterical one of the self destruction, the cause of it despair at Hjalmar's rejection of her as an interloper and the manner suggested by the mocking rhetorical question she overhears: 'Hedvig are you willing to renounce that life for me?' (58)

Hjalmar has been very suddenly thrust into this situation through the interference of Gregers, and the situation from which the tragedy ensues is therefore fortuitous. It is not even Peer Gynt who runs up against a Brand, and most of Peer Gynts of this world proceed happily to their obscure graves. If the second phase of Gregers interference—his action upon Hedvig—had not supervened upon the first, all might have still have been well, especially if the practice healer Relling had remained at hand to sooth and guide. In fact we see the reintegration of Hjalmar's shattered family life taking place before our eyes at the beginning of the fifth act when he consents to sit down to lunch and to postpone his removal from the house to a more convenient reason. And Relling's bitter prophecy: 'Before a year is over little Hedvig will be nothing to him but a pretty theme for declamation; (59) from which it is impossible to dissent, indicates that in so far as he is concerned that process of reintegration will continue, through the course to a lesser completeness.

RELLING: Oh, life would be quite tolerable, after all, if only we could be rid of the confounded duns that keep on petering us, in our poverty, with the claim of ideal.

GREGERS: [Looking straight before him] In that case, I am glad that my destiny is what it is.

RELLING: May I inquire,—what is your destiny?

GREGERS: [Going] To be the thirteen at the table.

RELLING: The devil it is. (V-67)

The dialogue between Gregers and Relling closes the play. Hedvig has died to no redemptive end. The sardonic Dr. Relling thus delivers a sort of epitaph on the romantic, Salvationist hero cut here by Gregers. Life would be "quite tolerable" if missionaries left men in their poverty rather than preaching the delusion of the ideal. Thus Gregers makes a melancholic exist from the world in which he in a sense has come to have no place. His destiny is to be "thirteen at the table," that is, the guest outside the circle of dinners. His number recalls the figure of Judas at the last supper, and Relling also identifies him as the devil or Antichrist. Gregers's insistence on the ideal condemns him to a false gospel that drives him to the betrayal of his friend and brings ruin to their houses. Against the pathological effects of these delusions, an illusion that makes the patient's survival possible.

The doctrine that Dr. Relling, the *raisonneur* of the play, makes explicit in *The Wild Duck*. The superstructure, however elaborate, that is raised on a false foundation must sooner or later topple: a house built on a lie cannot stand. If one is to have stability, the lie uprooted, the house must be rebuilt; and the event that brings about this outcome, no matter how disagreeable, is prophylactic and providential. *The Wild Duck*, however depends on a less heroic concept. Dr. Relling in effect reiterates the words of Agnes when she exclaims at the folly of exacting All or Nothing from the human race in its poverty. In a world miserably patched together of lies and fancies, it is best to let thing alone. Men have no use for truth: illusion alone makes life tolerable. "Rob a man of his life lies," says Dr. Relling, "and you rob him of his happiness."⁽³²⁾ Unlike Gregers who,

pins his faith on the surgical efficacy of truth, Relling devises opiates for the incurable. Gregers demands All or Nothing; Relling speaks for the spirit of compromise.

To illuminate these ideas in the situation of *The Wild Duck* it was necessary to destroy the theatrical conventions relating to the play of the deceived husband. Gregers reveals his secret to the Hjalmar and Hjalmar assumes the appropriate posture and speaks the time-honored lines. But it is clear that he is going through the necessary formalities of the outraged spouse without real conviction, and the resulting scene are broadly comic. In the midst of the situation that rapidly becomes ridiculous, the action is brought up sharply by the sudden death of Hedvig., and the play acquires abruptly another dimension. The action has proceed unobtrusively along several levels of reality for others. For Hjalmar, the deception that has shaped his life has not even as much validity as the forest primeval in the attic. His suffering are largely heroic. But for Hedvig, his sufferings are supremely real, and must buy them with her life. The conclusion is pain: in this world it is necessary to look out above all for those who are capable of suffering. These the sensitive children of life, the nobility of the race, and there is lot tragic. The rest is drugged to life is to invite absurdity; and this truth is in its implication, perhaps, more poignant than the conventional tragedy of the theater.

Thus Hjalmar's family and Gregers Werle suffers a lot through their lives. They are ruined physically as well as mentally. In the later phases of their lives they are in an existential crises. They live in a world which they feel odd with devoid of meaning. Hjalmar feels alienation, frustration; he suffers from boredom, isolation and anxiety; He sees the ideological degradation of the society into his family. Loss of familial and social ties further aggravates the situation. Hjalmar tries to escape from the predicament but the

prevailing social ideology brings him time and again in the dark cave of exploitation, domination and submission prevalent in the social ideology. He chooses alternative method to escape from his predicament. Hjalmar leaves the house and returns back next day but to no avail.

Hjalmar share his feelings and experiences with Gregers. But his choice of life fails to exist in the society, culture and state. Hjalmar dream of the ideal world is shattered time and again. It becomes difficult for him to survive in a world but he struggles hard with social ideology to create a social unity in his last days. To get emancipation from this social ideology, Ibsen shows the need of socialistic revolution against the social ideology. My reading of Ideology and its key issues related with textual analysis will be clearly analyzed in the next chapter, conclusion with a belief recounting observation of the work affirming the hypothesis.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

It is a common place in Ibsen criticism to regard the theme of *The Wild Duck* as a corrective to the themes of Ibsen's entire social problem plays. Whereas *Pillar of Society*, *A Doll's House*, *Ghost* and *An Enemy of the People* grant, if not happiness, then at least moral insight and salvation to individuals who have the courage of their convictions, *The Wild Duck* presents the sorry results of the psychopath's idealist dedication to a self-assumed mission of truth. The play is neither a tragedy nor a farce but a little bit of both, and as a result its tone is both unique and puzzling. One can understand why even admirers of Ibsen found it vaguely irritating on its first appearance. It is the least "edifying" play Ibsen ever wrote, and certainly the least sublime. That it is also, quite possibly, his best play is something to think about for people who try to reduce Ibsen to a radical crusade whom time and events have turned respectable and a little dull. It is the sodden Dr. Relling who speaks the theme of the play: "Take the life illusion away from the average man, and you take his happiness too" (62). Because Gregers Werle meddles with Hjalmar Ekdal's life illusion, i.e., his concept of himself for the sake of her worthless father. Hjalmar's selfish, phrase-mongering existence would have been pleasant enough and would have given his wife and daughter happiness enough—only if Gregers had not insisted that Ekdal marriage needed to be re-established on a foundation of truth. As usual, Ibsen propounds no general dogma here. He is not denying the value of truth. He is questioning the absolute value of painful truth.

The dominant social ideology of the society confers several epithets upon Gregers Werle and Hjalmar Ekdal. Different subjective compete for domination upon them so

they are fragmented. They frequently feel that as a subject they are reduced to a void, to an empty place in which their whole content is procured by others, by the symbolic network of inter subjective relations. Gregers Werle feels that he is in himself nothing, his positive content seems what he sees the truth and on his courage to bring it out into the open. In Act I, he expresses his anguish by turning down his father's offer of reconciliation with the words, "I have seen too much of you"(6). So sometimes he feels a radical sense of alienation, isolation and frustration because of his personal experiences of the encounters with the various ideological prevalent in his society. So he left his home and moved into Molvik shelter and goes drunk. Gregers and Hjalmar's content what they are individually would be determined by an exterior signifying network offering them points of symbolic identification conferring on them certain symbolic mandates. Their society subjects them to the responsibilities and duties, required to be fulfilled for being particular subjects. They have to face the pain of disintegration of the familial ties. They are humiliated and estranged. Hjalmar is rendered manic, depressive and drunkard. They don't feel free in the society they are living.

Rather than loosing themselves in the status quo and its dominant ruling ideology Gregers and Hjalmar were prepared to risk everything in order to destroy the compromised system and its ideologies and replace them with their own utopian artistic and imaginative and dreamy, and unconscious worlds beyond social reality. But their sincere beliefs and insistence that they were not working for the restoration of social ideology of course proved nothing but an insubstantial illusion. And they are in the eyes of their society proved nothing but a heroic bunch of day dreamer.

They are not conformist on the ideological belief in the unproblematic non-antagonistic functioning of the social ideology. Hjalmar and Gregers harbored hope in the revolutionary outcome to come out the crisis of the ruling social ideology until the last hours of Hedvig's death. The catastrophe is most obviously induced by Gregers, who, presenting the demands of the ideal, first undermines the mutual confidence on which the Ekdal household is reared, replaces its security by disquieting doubts about its past and its future, turns a collectively and individually happy family into an unhappy one, and also puts the idea of blood sacrifice into Hedvig's head. In the second place and more particularly, however, as we have seen, Hedvig's substitution of herself for the wild duck as the sacrificial victim is due to Hjalmar thoughtless cruelty towards her.

But the paradox in the drama is that beside their continuous efforts to step out their social ideology they are enslaved by it. They are destined to practice the same ideological practices, which are disguised as a composite of ideas, beliefs, conception for serving some unavowed power. They are overtaxed by the social reality on all sides. The everyday consciousness proceeds from the assumption that social reality is an objective, law-governed natured like sphere. They are at odd with the social ideology and find the outside world too hard. The socialist conception of a free and self-determining society tries to include them in the society only on condition that they are the constitutive subjects of their social world. So Hjalmar, is enacting, in Gregers's words, life-lie.

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