

**TRIBHUVAN UNIVERSITY**

**Scientific Determinism in Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts***

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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
Masters of Arts in English**

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This thesis entitled **Scientific Determinism in Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts***, submitted to the Central Department of English, Tribhuvan University, by Tara Kumar Prasai, has been approved by the undersigned members of the Research Committee.

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### **Abstract**

The present research tries to explore the influence of science in Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts*. It analyzes the inevitability of science in the life of the characters who are the victim of contaminated heredity and environment. The play deals with the power of ingrained moral contamination to undermine the most determined idealism. Even after lecherous Captain Alving is in his grave, his ghost will not be laid to rest. In the play, the lying memory that the conventional minded widow has erected to his memory burns down, his son goes insane from inherited syphilis and the illegitimate daughter advances inexorably toward her destiny in a brothel. The play, therefore is a grim study of contamination spreading through a family under the cover of the widowed Mrs. Alving's timidly respectable views.

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## I. INTRODUCTION

This research is an attempt to analyze scientific determinism in Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* in which most of the actions are unavoidably determined by science. *Ghosts* may not be technically as accomplished as Ibsen's other plays, but its theme bites far deeper. The research, therefore has little to do with style, techniques, aesthetics and other qualities of the play.

The research is the testing of hypothesis that the protagonist Oswald inherits syphilis and all the attempts to resist the influence of debauched father go in vain. It analyzes the inevitability of science in the life of the protagonist who is a victim of contaminated heredity. It is also clear that the inevitability of heredity is the inevitability of science.

*Ghosts* deals with hereditary insanity and the conflict of generations. It creates even more dismay and distaste in worse consequences of covering up of ugly truths. In 1898, at a dinner organized in Ibsen's honour at the Royal Palace in Stockholm, King Oscar II expressed that *Ghosts* was not a good play and that Ibsen shouldn't have written it. After a moment of silence, the playwright replied, "Your majesty I had to write *Ghosts*" (McFarlane 52). Ostensibly the play's theme is congenital venereal disease, but on another level it deals with the power of ingrained moral contamination to undermine the most determined idealism. Even after lecherous captain Alving is in his grave, his ghost will not be laid to rest. In the play, the lying memorial that conventional minded widow has erected to his memory burns down, his son goes insane from inherited syphilis and his illegitimate daughter advances inexorably toward her destiny in a brothel. The play is a grim study of contamination spreading through a family under the cover of the widowed Mrs. Alving's timidly respectable views.

Mrs. Alving's husband was an immoral Philanderer but she is bound to protect her late husband's reputation. Because of this concern, she not only ends up 'living a lie' and building a memorial to her husband's false reputation but also ruins the life of her husband's two children- Oswald and Regina. Mrs. Alving wants to keep her son Oswald far from the immoral traits of his father, but in spite of all her efforts, Oswald commits the same crime that was committed by his father. The sins of father visit the son. Oswald wants to marry Regina, an illegitimate daughter of his father. Mrs. Alving feels that all people are haunted not only by their inheritance from specific people but also by general superstitions that exist within a community. Oswald and Regina are 'the ghosts' of inheritance and Mrs. Alving, being bound to protect her husband's false reputation, also considers herself the ghost of superstitions. They want to be free from being ghosts, all along the play they struggle to be free from this 'ghostness', but the tragic end of the play shows that it is impossible to go beyond the influence of heredity and environment.

Most of the plays written by Henrik Ibsen are revolutionary in their themes. He became the most influential modern dramatist using the new style of realism, and the subject that had been ignored on the stage became the center of his work. His plays often center on social problems of the individual struggling against the demand of society. His full influence was not felt until the early decades of twentieth century but the revolutionary doctrine that was implied in realism of his works became influential in the domain of drama after him. Direct, honest and unsparing treatment of characters and themes has now become the normal mode of serious drama.

In *Ghosts*, Ibsen treats a subject that had been a taboo on the stage, syphilis. *Ghosts* introduced a family, the Alving, who harbour the secret that the late father contracted the disease and passed it onto Oswald, his son. In addition the theme of

incest is suggested in the presence of Alving's illegitimate daughter Regina who falls in love with Oswald. This kind of love was so new to the 19<sup>th</sup> century stage that Ibsen was isolated by the literary community in Norway. He choose exile for a time in Rome, Amalki and Munich.

In *Ghosts*, Mrs. Alving struggles against the demand of society. Pastor Manders persuades Mrs. Alving to be a conventional wife and protect her dead husband's reputation. Mander's view about what is required of a wife and mother in contemporary society no longer functions for her as a guide in the matter of morality. On the contrary, Mander's appealing to her conscience becomes an organ of authoritarian and repressive social forces, an internalized control mechanism which conflicts with the newly won insights of the individual. It is thus that the conflict is between an individual and a socially determined conscience. Ibsen himself defined conflict in the letter he wrote on the subject of his play *Rosmerholm* but Bjorn Hemmer's ideas on Ibsen's use of such conflict can be relevant here. Hemmer says:

The acquisitive instinct rushes on from one conquest to the next. Moral consciousness, however, "the conscience" is by comparison very conservative. It has its roots deep in tradition and the past generally.

From this comes the conflict within the individual. No social being is yet free from this conflict, and the conflict engenders all the actions of human being. Thus, a realistic literature should be based on this inevitable part of society. (447)

It is this kind of 'conscience', a persistent and recurrent element in Ibsen's work with which Helene Alving has struggled for many years of her life and from which she is still unable to liberate herself. It is her "bad conscience which has driven her to build this false icon to Alving: the children home" (377). But, seen rationally, this contradicts



with the values she has herself come to believe in. The building of children's home in the memory of captain Alving undertook in the letters to her son Oswald. She herself feels that it was wrong for her to suppress the truth, but Pastor Manders – the defender of Victorian values – has no scruples in sanctioning her actions:

MANDERS. Don't you feel your mother heart prompting you not to  
shatter your son's ideal?

MRS. ALVING. But what about truth?

MANDERS. What about his idealism? (382)

She only sees her own cowardice here and she feels under pressure to behave as she did in acting out a lie. But Pastor tries to pacify her: "You have built up a beautiful illusion in your son's mind, Mrs. Alving [. . .] and reality, that something you should not underestimate" (383). What Pastor does not realize – nor does Mrs. Alving as yet – is that lies and illusion form a dubious foundation for living but there is nevertheless something in this society which favours the generation of such false idea within both the public and the private sector and the concealment of the chaotic conditions of private life. Law and order is an objective, and a rigid code of duty and the power of public opinion are the effective instruments of control.

The fluctuation of issues like sex, sexual disease, morality, taste, humour raised in this drama is very mysterious for Frank Lawrence Lucas. In his work *The Drama of Ibsen and Strindberg* Lawrence says:

For his contemporaries *Ghosts* was, if not the famous of Ibsen's plays, certainly the most infamous today, we ask in wonder what caused all the frenzy. [. . .] In the seventeenth and eighteenth century, sexual disease was talked about with the greatest freedom, usually as something unroariously comic. A pretty grim form of comedy. But then the

seventeenth century thought even lunatics comic. The eccentric fluctuation, from age to age, of morality, taste and humour remain, indeed a baffling mystery. (195)

Lawrence has indeed seen the issues raised in *Ghosts* from the power theory of Foucault. Power determines the meaning of truth. Foucault's thought explores the shifting patterns of power within a society and the way in which power determines the meaning of truth according to its convenience. He has studied how everyday practices enabled people to define their identities and systematize knowledge.

As mentioned in Gosse's *Ibsen*, *Ghosts* has also in its time stimulated some noteworthy pieces of English verse. Max Beerbohm wrote a "Drinking Song" which he sent to Henry Arthur Jones. It included the following stanza:

In days of yore the Drama throve within our storm-bound coasts;  
 The Independent Theatre gave performance of *Ghosts*  
 Death and disease, disaster  
 And darkness were our joy.  
 Ah, fun flew fast and faster when Ibsen was our Master  
 And Grein was bright Dutch boy, my boys !  
 (Chorus) And Grein was a bright Dutch boy. (253)

It shows that the play was a new shudder for the audience of late nineteenth century. All theatre companies were not ready to perform the controversial play like *Ghosts*. It was an act of extraordinary courage. The issues like death and disease, disaster and darkness were completely new to them. When we read *Ghosts* today, we cannot recapture the new-shudder which it gave a quarter of century ago. One can easily guess the revolutionary vision of Henrik Ibsen here.

Georg Brandes, Danish critic and biographer, who is regarded as one of the great systematic literary critics of modern time was alone to perceive at once that *Ghosts* was not an attack on society, but an effort to place the responsibilities of men and women on a wholesome and surer footing, by direct reference to the relation of both to the child. He also went on to say that *Ghosts* was "a poetic treatment of the question of heredity" (163).

In *Ghosts* inevitability of heredity dominates all events and actions. It does not mean that the play is totally indifferent to other social problems. Ibsen, being a severe realist, has arrived to the zone of naturalism. Thus, his works do not address the problem of particular readers, but to the problem of all human beings. William Archer's opinion is different from other critics. He analyzes the play as depicting the plight of modern man in bourgeois society. In his work *William Archer on Ibsen*, he says:

In *Ghosts*, Ibsen directs a blistering criticism at society and its annihilating forces. But it is a criticism which also targets the most agreeable representation of that milieu and who is its one rebellious element. It is precisely the presentation of Mrs. Alving's battle against the reactionary forces within herself that demonstrates Ibsen's insights into the psyche of bourgeois rebel. The rebel too bears a sense of responsibility in respect of the society which denies the new 'truth and freedom', on which thereby resists change. Mrs. Alving is a rebel who fears rebellion. (342)

According to Archer, nobody is free from the reactionary forces within. Therefore, due to the sense of responsibility in respect of society, they deny freedom and resist the change. When the sun finally rises, Mrs. Alving has come to a full realization of an individual's right to light and happiness in a natural life. She still has hope that she and

her son will be able to share that sun-filled existence, even though, she knows that he is seriously ill. R. Ellis Roberts views on the play however are different. He says:

The play is like an image of life. Characters are to be happy but that is merely an illusion. Mrs. Alving tries to protect her husband's false reputation but that is not done to admit it. Individual's right to happiness is undermined and everything is ghosts. Ibsen has imposed many inevitable forces upon the life of his characters. (467)

His portrait of life is very pessimistic. Individuals are not free to live according to their will. They have to face various obstacles like rejection of free will, influence of heredity and environment, indifferent forces acting upon the life of human beings, inheritance of compulsive instincts like hunger, desire and sexuality.

The origin of naturalism as a philosophy goes to the earliest Greek philosophers. They are sometimes called natural philosophers because they were mainly concerned with the natural world and its processes. The philosophers observed that nature was in a constant state of transformation. All the earliest philosophers shared the belief that there had to be a certain basic substance at the root of all change. The nation gradually evolved that there must be a basic substance that was the hidden cause of all changes in nature. As it is mentioned in *Sophie's World* natural philosophers took the first step in the direction of scientific reasoning, thereby becoming the precursors of what was to become science:

Natural philosophers posed questions relating to the transformations they could observe in the physical world. They were looking for the underlying laws of nature. They wanted to understand what was happening around them without having to turn to the ancient myths. And most important, they wanted to understand the actual processes by

studying nature itself. This was quite different from explaining thunder and lightning or winter and spring by telling stories about the gods. (31)

In the mid nineteenth century, the interest in realistic details, psychological motivation for characters and concern for social problems led to naturalism. Turning to science for inspiration, the naturalists felt that the goal of art, like science, should be the betterment of life. Dramatists should, like scientists, objectively observe and depict the real world. Influenced by the theories of Charles Darwin, the naturalists believe that heredity and environment are at the root of all human actions and that the drama should illustrate this. The romantic concern for spiritual values was abandoned. The leading naturalist was the French writer, Emile Zola, who compared the playwright to a doctor who must expose disease in order to cure it. The drama, therefore, has to bring social ills into the open. Unlike the Romantics, who distinguish literature from scientific practice, Zola sees the artist adopting the experimental method recommended by Claude Bernard. In an essay 'The Experimental Novel,' he says:

I shall restrict myself to irrefutable arguments and to giving the quotations of Claude Bernard which may seem necessary to me. This will then be but a compiling of texts, as I intend on all points to entrench myself behind Claude Bernard. It will often be but necessary for me to replace the word doctor by the word novelist, to make my meaning clear and to give it the rigidity of a scientific truth. (645)

The result of this was the drama that focused on the seamier elements of society rather than on beautiful or ideal. Naturalist sought, in the words of French playwright Jean Jullien, to present "a slice of life, put on the stage with art" (32). Ideally, all naturalist plays had no beginning, middle, or end or any sort of dramatic contrivance. In practice, of course, incidents were selected and shaped for dramatic effect.

Naturalism sees literary composition as something based on an objective empirical presentation of human beings. It differs from realism in adding an amoral attitude to the objective presentation of life. Naturalistic writers regard human behaviour as controlled by instinct, emotions, or social and economic conditions, and reject free will, adopting instead in large measure the biological determinism of Charles Darwin and the economic determinism of Karl Marx. The research, therefore, will be completed by relating the ideas of naturalism, realism, biological determinism of Charles Darwin, economic determinism of Karl Marx, experimentalism of Zola to scientific determinism and applying the theories on Ibsen's play *Ghosts*.

The term 'Science' as defined in *Oxford Learner's Dictionary* means "the study of structure and behaviour of the physical and natural world and society, especially through observation and experiment". Even in the writing as recent as those of Locke and Hume, the words 'science' and 'scientific' are reserved for knowledge what is "necessarily the case". Such knowledge is acquired by rational intuition or by demonstration.

Determinism, another term of the research, is derived from the verb 'determine'. The dictionary meaning of 'determine' is to cause something to happen in a particular way or be of a particular type. In philosophy, however, the word determinism is often used to designate the belief that one is not free to choose the sort of person one wants to be, or how one behaves, because these things are decided by one's background environment and surroundings.

According to Thomas Mautner "Determinism is the thesis that all events and states of affairs are determined by antecedent events and states of affair" (26). The thesis has at its core the idea that everything that happens is fully determined by what

has gone before and every event has antecedent causes which were sufficient to ensure its occurrence.

Hence, scientific determinism is an influence of science to cause events and incidents in a particular way and the play contains many such examples which directly show the influence of science. Indirectly, the play goes nowhere beyond the influence of science. The research aims at showing that the influence of science on literature is inescapable and that the play is not an exception to this case and definitely falls within the influence of science. Naturalists believe that the heredity and environment are at the root of all human actions and that the drama should illustrate this. The main theme of *Ghosts* is also an extent to which society invades personal life. Mrs. Alving believes that all people are haunted not only by the ghost of their inheritances but by general superstitions that exist within a community. She is bound to protect her husband's false reputation due to the effect of superstitions that exist in her society and due to the effect of inheritances her son Oswald commits the same crime that was committed by his debauched father.

## II. NATURALISM

### **Naturalism and its Philosophical Position**

Naturalism is an adaptation of the principles and methods of natural science, especially the Darwinian view of nature, to literature and art. In literature, it extended the tradition of realism, aiming at an even more faithful and unselective representation of reality, a veritable 'slice of life' presented without moral judgment. Naturalism differed from realism in its assumption of scientific determinism, which led naturalistic authors to emphasize men's accidental, physiological nature rather than his moral or rational qualities. Individual characters were seen as helpless products of heredity and environment, motivated by strong instinctual drives from within and harassed by social and economic pressure from outside. As such, they had little will or responsibility for their fates and the prognosis for their 'cases' was pessimistic at the outset.

The term 'naturalism' describes a type of literature that attempts to apply scientific principles of objectivity and detachment to its study of human beings. Unlike realism, which focuses on literary techniques, naturalism implies a philosophical position. For naturalistic writers, since human beings are, in Emile Zola's phrase, 'human beasts', characters can be studied through their relationship to their surrounding.

In George Backer's famous and much annotated and contested phrase, naturalism's philosophical framework can simply be described as "pessimistic materialistic". In his essay "The Country of the Blue" presented in the book *American Realism: New Essays* Eric Sundquist has given more concise definition of naturalism as:

Reveling in the extraordinary, the excessive and the grotesque in order to reveal the immutable bestiality of Man in Nature, naturalism



dramatizes the loss of individuality at physiological level by making a Calvinism without god its determining order and violent death its utopia.

(13)

Human being is merely a higher order animal whose characters and behaviors are entirely determined by heredity and environment. A person inherits compulsive instincts-especially hunger, greed, sexuality. Therefore, Naturalism reveals the bestiality of man instead of the rational behavior of human being. The Naturalistic literature usually contains tensions or contradictions and the contradictions in conjunction constitute the theme and form of naturalistic literature. Donald Pizer describes the characteristic of a naturalistic literary work in his *Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth Century American Fiction* as:

The first contradiction is the fictional world of the naturalist is that of the common place and unheroic in which life world seem to be chiefly the dull round of daily existence. [ . . . ] but the naturalist discovers in this world those qualities of man usually associated with the heroic or adventurous. The second contradiction is the naturalist often describes his characters as though they are controlled by environment, heredity, instinct and chances [ . . . ] but he also suggests a compensating humanistic value in his characters or their fates which affirms the significant of the individual and his life. (10-11)

Naturalism sees the tension between the writer's desire to represent in fiction the new discomfiting truths which he has found in the ideas and life of his world and also his desire to find some meaning in experience which reasserts the validity of the human enterprise. Arthur C. Dento, in *Encyclopedia of Philosophy* proposes naturalism as:

A species of philosophical monism according to which whatever exists or happens is natural in the sense of being susceptible to explanation through scientific methods which . . . are continuous from domain to domain of objects and events. . . thus, there cannot exist any entities or events which, in principle, lie beyond the scope of scientific explanation. (448)

The notion that every event in nature, including human choice and action, is the result of and can be explained in terms of antecedent or preexisting causes or conditions.

Scientific determinism includes both -environmental conditions, or forces outside of individual persons, such as climate, culture, history, and technology and psychological conditions, inner forces or conditions operating within the person's own "psyche", behavior or genes. Paul Kurtz in his *'Philosophical Essays in Pragmatic Naturalism'* says:

Naturalism is the philosophical generalization of methods and conclusion of sciences, or equivalently, it is a philosophical movement that wishes to use methods of science, evidence and reason to understand nature and the place of human species within it [. . .] It is the view that everything is natural i.e. everything belongs to the world of nature and so can be studied by the methods appropriate for studying that world. (12)

A synthesis of these definitions of naturalism is the philosophy that maintains that nature is 'all there is' and whatever exists or happens is natural; nature consists only of natural elements i.e. spatio-temporal material elements-matter and energy and non-material elements-minds, ideas, values, logical relationships etc. are either associated with human brain or independent of it, but are still immanent in the physical structure

of the universe. Nature operates by process, and follows natural rules, laws and it can be explained or understood by science and philosophy; and the supernatural does not exist i.e. only nature is real. Naturalism is, therefore, a metaphysical philosophy opposed primarily to supernaturalism.

### **Naturalism: A Break-away from Supernaturalism**

Denying the existence of the supernatural and de-emphasizing metaphysics or the study of ultimate reality, naturalism affirms that cause and effect relationship, as in physics and chemistry, are sufficient to account for all phenomena. Teleological conception, which suggests design and metaphysical necessities in nature, while not necessarily invalid, are excluded from consideration. The ethical implication, since the naturalists deny and transcendental or supernatural end of human kind, is that values must be found within the social context. It is impossible to determine what is best in an ultimate context, because the ultimate is beyond discovery. Values, therefore, are relative and ethics is based on custom, inclination or some form of utilitarianism, the doctrine that what is useful is good. While naturalism is the view that nature is all there is and all basic truths are truths of nature, supernaturalism, the antithesis of naturalism, includes belief in supernatural beings, their realms, activities and concerns, and belief in superstition from the highest to the lowest. *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2006) views supernaturalism as being posed by religion as it mentions:

A belief in an outwardly realm or reality that, in one way or another, is commonly associated with all forms of religion . . . In higher religions a gulf usually is created between the sacred and the profane or the here and the beyond. . . the most radical division between the natural and supernaturalism is established by those forms of religion that posit a final or ultimate coincidence between the natural and the supernatural.

Naturalism is the theory that everything in the world and life is based on natural causes and laws and not in spiritual or religious ones. Religion believes in the existence of God and the activities that are connected with the truth of faith. Supernaturalism can't be explained by the laws of science and seems to involve gods or magic. Therefore, supernaturalism is a part of religion. Arthur Strahler writes about supernaturalism in his *Science and Earth History* that:

Supernaturalism is a philosophical doctrine which refers to God's creative activity (or any sort of Divine activity) to justify the very quarries of the world . . . it includes theological propositions which are beyond the domain of science, . . . scientists have no alternative but to ignore the claims of the existence of supernatural forces or causes because supernatural forces, if they exist, cannot be observed, measured or recorded by the procedures of science- that's simply what the word 'supernatural' means. (124)

Today, we take for granted the dominance of critical thinking in all areas of intellectual inquiry, which is why supernaturalism finds itself increasingly irrelevant, attacked, unsustainable and is therefore, undergoing a reactionary resurgence to save itself. The reason is not because people claim to disbelieve in supernaturalism or because it is untrue, but because methodological naturalism is so effective, powerful and successful that it leaves no room for appeals to the supernaturalism. Methodological supernaturalism is not effective, but is positively ineffective and counter productive especially in attempts to understand the natural world. An education, which includes science and other disciplines that inculcate critical inquiry, only reinforces this perception.

## **Methodological Naturalism and Science**

Science and naturalism are not the same. Science is a way of knowing, a powerful method that uses three epistemological techniques viz. empiricism, rationalism and skepticism in a unique and systematic way to discover the secrets of nature. Science is not metaphysical, but naturalism is a philosophy, a metaphysics or ontology that posits a particular picture of reality and existence excluding the supernatural.

Naturalism existed not as a philosophy before the nineteenth century, but as an occasionally adopted and non-rigorous method among natural philosophers. It is a unique philosophy in that it is not ancient or prior to science, and that it developed largely due to the influence of science. Naturalism began with Galileo and Issac Newton, who tried to explain nature by theoretical and experimental descriptions of matter and their motions. Their correct and lasting discoveries were all made within a completely naturalistic methodology. The outstanding success of this method led others to emulate them, and a comprehensive understanding of the universe was initiated.

Galileo and Newton were not ontological or metaphysical naturalists, they did not hesitate to attribute supernatural cause to things that they thought could not be explained by natural causes. Until the late eighteenth century, most scientists agreed with them, but the influence of Enlightenment led scientists such as Lavoisier, Laplace and James Hutton to abandon all supernatural explanations in favour of natural ones. Biology was the last science to be 'naturalized' by Jean Baptiste de Lamarck and Charles Darwin. All of these men intentionally tried to emulate Newton by finding purely natural laws to explain natural processes and objects in their respective areas of expertise.

Methodological naturalism was systematized and promulgated under the influence of philosophers John Herschel and William Whewell and by the end of the nineteenth century methodological naturalism was embedded in sciences. Naturalism as a necessary part of science thus developed gradually as science developed gradually with the practice and understanding of scientists. Appreciation of the hypothetico-deductive method and empirical-skeptical testing of hypotheses required naturalism. Since one cannot make legitimate and scientific supernatural predictions, supernatural conjectures could not be tested. Scientists who persisted in using supernatural explanations were gradually abandoned intellectually by their students and colleagues, and they eventually died with no successors. There was never a single moment or event when supernaturalism was evicted from the structure of science and replaced by naturalism. However, by the turn of the twentieth century, supernaturalism had been methodologically eliminated and the scientific method came to be identified as naturalistic. The last legitimate creationist scientists died around this time as creationist pseudoscience was soon to be born. Thus, methodological naturalism became historically an essential part of science.

As methodological naturalism became a necessary part of science, it simultaneously became a necessary part of critical inquiry. Since scientific method is not an esoteric method of inquiry its rigorous, systematic application can take place across many disciplines. Procedural, methodological naturalism in all areas of intellectual inquiry (except theology) meant the procedural, methodological suspension of belief in supernaturalism, and more than anything else this led to the rise of liberal religions and the free thought of humanist movements, and to the reactions against the fundamentalist religious movements. The spread of methodological naturalism in scientific, religious, social, political and economic institutions in late nineteenth century

created the modern world and the psychological crisis of meaning in which people still find themselves today. They do not know what to believe about themselves and their universe is devoid of transcendental meaning and purpose, and therefore they attempt to find solutions in pseudoscience, the paranormal, strange cults, and extreme political, social, and economic ideologies, as much as in science and traditional religions.

### **Naturalism as an Extension of Realism**

Naturalism is an extended tradition of realism aiming at an even more faithful, unselective representation of reality. Naturalistic and realistic literature are similar in the sense that both modes often deal with local and contemporary and dissimilar in the sense that naturalism is sometimes claimed to give more accurate depiction of life than realism.

M.H. Abraham in his *A Glossary of literary terms* relates naturalism with realism as:

Naturalism is sometimes claimed to give an even more accurate depiction of life than realism. But naturalism is not only, like realism, a special selection of subject matter and a special way of rendering those materials . . . Naturalism, as thesis produced by post-Darwinian biology in the nineteenth century, held that a human being exists entirely in the order of nature and does not have a soul/nor any mode of participating in a religious or spiritual world beyond the natural world. (261)

Realist literature is often opposed to romantic literature. The romance is said to present life as we would have it. It can be more picturesque, fantastic, adventurous or heroic than actuality. Realism, on the other hand, is said to represent life as it really is.

Naturalism is similar to realism in the sense that it contradict with romanticism but naturalism is different from realism in its assumption of scientific determinism which

led naturalist authors to emphasize man's accidental and physiological nature rather than his moral or rational qualities. Pizer, in his *Realism and Naturalism in Nineteenth Century American Literature* writes:

Naturalism is an extension or continuation of realism with the addition of pessimistic determinism. It is no more than an emphatic and explicit philosophical position taken by some realists, that position being one of pessimistic materialistic determinism. (82)

Determinism bites much in naturalism. Naturalist characters do not have free will; external and internal forces, environment and heredity control their behaviour. This belief is called determinism. All determinists believe in the existence of the will, but the will is often enslaved on account of different reasons. The thesis of determinism, a product of Post-Darwinian development in the nineteenth century held that a human being exists entirely in the order of nature and doesn't have a soul or any mode of participation in a religious or spiritual world beyond the natural world; and therefore such a being is merely a higher order animal whose character and behaviour are entirely determined by two kind of forces: heredity and environment. A person inherits compulsive instincts- especially hunger, the drive to accumulate possessions and sexuality- and is then subject to the social and economic forces in the family, the class, and the milieu into which that person is born.

Naturalists tend to choose characters who exhibit strong animal drives such as greed and sexual desires and who are helpless victims both of glandular secretion within and of sociological pressures outside. Naturalistic texts often describe the futile attempts of human beings to exercise free will, often ironically presented, in this universe that reveals free will as an illusion.



## **Darwinism and Naturalism**

Charles Darwin, whose theory of natural selection and evolution became the foundation of modern evolutionary studies, at first shocked religious Victorian society by suggesting that animals and humans shared a common ancestry. However, his non-religious biology appealed to the rising class of professional scientists, and by the time of his death evolutionary imagery had spread through all of science, literature and politics. *Encyclopedia Britannica* (2006) explains the theory of Darwin as:

Evolution is essentially brought about by the interplay of three principles

1. Variation, a liberalizing factor present in all forms of life: 2.

Heredity the conservative force that transmits similar organic form one generation to another: and 3. The struggle for existence, which

determines the variations that will confer advantages in a given

environment, thus altering species through a selective reproductive rate.

Charles Darwin published a book *Origin of Species* in which he described the theory of natural selection, which is considered a milestone theory in the understanding of mankind about the evolution of organisms of the present day form. It was a serious blow to the old dogma that all the organisms that dwell on earth today were created by some supernatural power (called theory of special creation). Darwin's theory of natural selection, now popularly called Darwinism, also put an end to somewhat more materialistic belief of that time that all the living beings were formed in the same form as they are today.

Darwin's theory begins from the familiar contradictory observation that despite the enormous capacity of reproduction of organisms the population of all organisms remains fairly constant. This contradiction in nature led Darwin to think that there must be some inadequacy in nature, which cannot cope with the growth in population of the

organisms, and thus restricts the number of organisms within the fairly constant natural limit. Darwin proposed that this inadequacy in nature is non- other than limited resources of livelihood in the environment. Unlike the population of organisms, environmental resources do not keep the tendency to increase against the axis of time. The organisms are then bound to struggle with other organisms (of the same or different species) in order to fulfill the requisites of their livelihood like food shelter etc. This struggle, "the struggle for existence", as termed by Darwin, may manifest itself in direct and vigorous or in indirect way.

On the long run of this struggle with the co-dwelling organisms trying to get better access to the environmental resources, those organisms which are able to change themselves as per the requirements of changing environment i.e. those which develop superior or more advantageous character adaptive to the ground reality of changed surrounding live on earth and those which are adamant on their old fashioned way of life painfully perish. Surviving animals with their characters (may it be behavioural or structural) approved by nature pass these character to their progeny by way of biological heredity and this state of characters becomes incorporated in their genetic structure. This natural law of inadequacy, struggle and development of better-result-yielding characters over large elapse of time produces organisms, which are different and more suited to the living condition on earth.

Although Charles Darwin was highly successful in popularizing the idea of organic evolution by natural selection, he was by no means the originator of the theory as commonly supposed. Nor was Darwin the originator of even those aspects of the evolution theory for which he is most often given credit today. Organic evolution is part of the past and present culture of many nations, and is not a modern (or even an exclusively scientific) idea as is often claimed.

The popularity of modern evolutionistic worldview is not, as many assume, because modern science has replaced old superstitions about origins. Evolution's acceptance has much more to do with the use of the tools of science by multi-thousands of dedicated researchers, using the millions of dollars provided by governments to build a case for an ancient theory intended to support the atheism that now dominates both science and our secular society. This fact is important because the claim that Darwinism is a modern scientific idea is used as a major argument for its validity.

### **Experimentalism and its Relation with Naturalism**

The idea that literature is governed by science is certainly a surprise. Before Emile Zola, Claude Bernard sought to put medicine within a scientific path. According to Claude Bernard, experimental method, followed in the study of inanimate bodies in chemistry and physics, should also be used in the studies of living body in physiology and medicine. Zola continued the same path which runs from chemistry to physiology and from physiology to anthropology and sociology.

Zola views literature on the basis of Bernard's explanation of differences which exist between the science of observation and that of experiment. According to Bernard, there exists a clear line of demarcation between observation and experiment. Observation is the study of phenomena as nature offers and experiment is the process of investigation to vary and modify the natural phenomena and to make them appear under certain circumstances and conditions in which they are not presented by nature. For example, astronomy is a science of observation for astronomer can't act upon the stars while chemistry is an experimental science as a chemist acts upon chemical and modifies it. Therefore, we can say that the novelist is equally an observer and an experimentalist. The observer in him gives the fact as he observed them, displays the solid earth on which his characters are to tread and the phenomena to develop. Then the

experimentalist appears and introduces an experiment, that is to say, sets his characters going in a certain story.

The end of all experimental method, the boundary of all scientific research is identical for living and inanimate bodies. It aims at finding a relation which unites a phenomenon of any kind to its nearest cause or, in other words, in determining the conditions necessary for the manifestation of this phenomenon. Living beings, in which the romanticist had admitted a mysterious influence, were brought under and reduced to the general mechanism of matter. Science proves that the existing conditions of all phenomena are the same for the living and the non-living. According to Emile Zola:

A like determinism will govern the stones of the road way and the brain of man. The difference is simply that an inanimate body possesses merely the ordinary external environment, while the essence of higher organism is set in an internal and perfected environment endowed with constant physico-chemical properties exactly like the external environment; hence there is an absolute determinism in the existing condition of natural phenomena; for the living as for the inanimate bodies. (645)

It is necessary to start from the determinism of inanimate bodies in order to arrive at the determinism of living beings. We should operate on the characters, their passions, on human and social data, in the way a chemist and a physicist operate on inanimate beings, and as the physiologist operate on living beings. Determinism dominates everything. It is a scientific investigation, which combats one by one the hypothesis of the idealist and which replaces purely imaginary novels with the novels of observation and experiment.

The romanticist dwelt in the unknown for the pleasure of being there. The experimentalist voyages into the unknown to make in known. The nonsense and folly

of Romantic lyricism is diminished and literature becomes a form of social science. Science advances and that the conquest of unknown is fully known. According to Claude Bernard, a doctor is the master of maladies; he cures without any fail. His influence upon the human body conduces to the welfare and strength of the species. According to Zola, it is necessary to replace the word doctor by the word novelist. Novelist employs the experimental method in his study of man as a simple individual and as a social animal. Novelist desires to master certain phenomena of an intellectual and personal order. Novelist, in other words, are experimental moralist, showing by experiment in what way a passion acts in certain social conditions. When novelist gains control of the mechanism of this passion, he treats it and reduces it, or at least makes it as inoffensive as possible. The practical utility and high morality of naturalistic works lies in an experiment on man; dissect piece by piece this human machinery in order to set it going through the influence of the environment. The moral purpose of experimental novelists is clearly defined. They do not have to draw the conclusion from their works because the works carry conclusion with them. According to Zola:

An Experimentalist has no need to conclude, because, in truth, experiment concludes for him. A hundred times, if necessary, he will repeat the experiment before the public; he will explain it; but he needs neither become indignant nor approve of it personally; such is the truth, such is the way phenomena work it is for society to produce or not to produce these phenomena, according as the result is useful or dangerous.

(651)

Naturalist novelist submits each fact to the test of observation and experiment, while the idealistic writers admit everything to mysterious elements which escape analysis, and therefore remain in unknown, outside the influence of laws governing

nature. They always start from an irrational source of some kind, such as a revelation, a tradition or conventional authority. Idealist who takes refuge in the unknown for the pleasure of being there, who has a taste but for the most risky hypotheses and disdains to submit them to the test of experiment under the pretext that the truth is in themselves and not in the things. Experimental method takes man to the truth of exterior world; it is the study of natural phenomena. Emile Zola cites the line of Claude Bernard to support his argument:

Man then perceives that he can not dictate laws to nature, because he doesn't possess in himself the knowledge and criterion of exterior things; he realizes that in order to arrive at the truth he must, on the contrary, study the natural laws and submit his ideas, if not his reason, to experiment, that is to say, to the criterion of facts. (652)

In the search of truth by means of experimental method, feeling engenders the idea a priori intuition; reason develops the idea. But if feeling must be guided by the light of reason, reason in its turn must be guided by experiment. If you content to remain in the a priori idea and enjoy your own feeling without finding any basis for it in reason or any verification in experiment, you are a poet; you venture upon hypothesis which you can not prove; you are struggling vainly in a painful indeterminism and a way that is often injurious. Feeling and reason are also the indispensable guides, but to obtain the truth it is necessary to descend into the objective reality things.

### III. SCIENTIFIC DETERMINISM IN HENRIK IBSEN'S *GHOSTS*

#### **Critical Synopsis of the Play**

The play begins with the conversation between Jacob Engstrand and his supposed daughter Regina. Jacob Engstrand tries to convince Regina to come to work at the sailor's establishment that he wants to open but she is too proud of her job as Mrs. Alving's maid. The Pastor brings up the issue again and tries to convince Regina to help her father, while she pesters him to find her a position somewhere in high society. As Regina goes to call Mrs. Alving, Pastor Manders examines the book on table. Mrs. Alving and Manders discuss on Oswald's return. Oswald has been traveling in Europe since he was young and he has not been home from years. Oswald and the Pastor get into an argument over living out of wedlock. Oswald doesn't believe that the marriage must be sanctioned by the church. He leaves, and the Pastor admonishes Mrs. Alving for letting her son grow up in such an unconventional way. He also blames her for once leaving her husband. Mrs. Alving replies that her husband made her miserable and that she sent her son away to save him from her husband's debauchery. She even admits to the Pastor that Regina is the love-child of her husband and their former maid, Johana. As dinner is about to start, the two hear a cry from the kitchen. Apparently, Oswald is making advances on Regina as she cries asking Oswald to let her go.

After dinner, the Pastor and Mrs. Alving discuss that strange noise. Mrs. Alving attributes Regina's cry to ghost. Regina and Oswald are the children of a man who similarly tried to seduce a maid a generation earlier. As Pastor asks Mrs. Alving to return Regina to Engstrand, the Pastor is reminded of the wedding of Engstrand and Johana, when Engstrand was profusely sorry for his irresponsibility in impregnating Johana out of wedlock. Now the Pastor is shocked by Engstrand's hypocrisy, especially

considering the sum of money that Johana was awarded to keep quiet and which no doubt promoted him to marry her. Engstrand enters and suggests the Pastor that he hold a prayer meeting at the orphanage. The Pastor questions him, and Engstrand convinces him that it was only to save Johana's reputation that he kept the truth from him. Mrs. Alving goes to talk to her son, Oswald who is drinking. She wants to tell him the truth about his father. He tells her about the sickness he is suffering from. A doctor in Paris diagnosed it by saying that the sins of the father visit the son. He goes on to complain about misery and hypocrisy of gloomy Norway, contrasting it with the joy of life. Mrs. Alving is about to tell him and Regina the truth, but then they notice that the orphanage has caught fire.

Engstrand and the Pastor return to the house, announcing that the orphanage is lost to the flames. Engstrand convinces the Pastor that there will be a public scandal, blaming the Pastor for carelessly letting the prayer candles start the fire. He blackmails the Pastor into funding his sailor establishment, convincing the Pastor that it will be dedicated to the reform of sailor. Engstrand becomes ready to take blame over himself. They leave and Mrs. Alving finally tells Regina and Oswald the truth about their father. Regina feels cheated and goes to claim part of her inheritance. Oswald is partly relieved but reveals to his mother that he is sick beyond hope. He shows her some morphine pills and asks her to administer them in case of relapse. As the sun comes up, he melts into his chair and begins to mumble nonsense. Mrs. Alving desperately searches for the pills, having seemingly lost all hope for her son or anyone else.

### **Confutation of Supernaturalism in *Ghosts***

In the play characters are disengaged from the mode of participating in religious or spiritual world beyond the natural world. There is nothing beyond the natural world to intervene and affect the individuals' lives. There is not any god, heaven, hell,



afterlife, angel, nor any miracle. The play centers on very common issues like venereal disease, moral contamination, heredity and euthanasia. The play deal with compulsive instincts– especially hunger, the drive to accumulate possessions, and sexuality-and is then subject to the social and economic forces in the family, the class and the milieu to which Ibsen's characters are born. Characters are rendered as higher-order animals and thus the focus of the play goes not to any divine, or supernatural power but to the physiological and bestial aspect of human beings.

Jacob Engstrand wants to upgrade his economic status by opening a sailor's home in neighbouring town. He is a carpenter by profession. He is seeking for funds and tries to convince his supposed daughter Regina to work at sailor's establishment. His only target is to run his life. He gets married to a fallen woman for three hundred miserable dollar, accepts an illegitimate child of captain Alving and takes the blame of committing crime on himself. The conversation held between Manders and Mrs. Alving shows that he wants to rise above the line of poverty. For Engstrand, power of money matches to no less than the power of God.

MANDERS. But the deceit of man ! And to me ! I would honestly never have believed it of Jacob Engstrand. Well, I shall have something to say to him about that, so he can just look out [ . . . ]. The immorality of a match of that sort ! And all for money [ . . . ] ! How much did the girl have?

MRS. ALVING. Three hundred dollars. (32)

When the night before the opening ceremony, the orphanage in memory of Captain Alving burns down, Engstrand comes to a secret agreement with Mander, by which Engstrand takes the blame for the fire and in return Manders promises to fund for Engstrand's projected "sailor's home" in the town. There are no miracles in the life of

Jacob Engstrand. He labours hard to earn and survive. He is entangled within socio-economic problems.

Regina wants to go to Paris with Oswald, a painter who has come home from Paris in order to attend the opening of the children's home. As the life of Enstrand is determined not by any supernatural elements but by his socio-economic status, Oswald, who was sent to Paris to be kept far from the surrounding of his family environment, nevertheless adopts the same traits that were adopted by his debauched father. Oswald tells his mother that he is suffering form syphilis which he thinks he has contracted as a result of his bohemian life in Paris. He is still unaware about the true nature of his late father. It becomes clear that the disease is inherited from his father when he says to Mrs. Alving that he smoked the pipe of his father once before in his childhood and still he is using the pipe:

OSWALD. I can. I distinctly remember he sat me on his knee and gave me the pipe to smoke. 'Smoke, lad', he said, 'go on, lad, smoke !'  
 And I smoked as hard as I could, till I felt I was going quite pale and great beads of sweat stood out on my forehead. Then he roared with laughter. (19)

The idea of an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent God that rewards or punishes people according to their sin and virtue is rejected in the play. The disease is not a reward or punishment of deity to Oswald but an outcome of his inheritance. He is afraid of being suffered from childish helplessness and hopes that Regina will be willing to help him to take an overdose of morphine in the last stage of his illness. But later when Regina comes to know that he is ill and in fact is her step brother, she leaves Rosenlund to make her own way to the town. Oswald after the exit of Regina says to his mother.

OSWALD. Regina would have done it. Regina was so marvelously light hearted. And she'd soon have got bored with looking after an invalid like me.

MRS. ALVING. Regina is not here.

OSWALD. Well then, now you will have to give me this help hand, mother.

MRS. ALVING (With a scream): Me !

OSWALD. There is nobody with a better right than you.

MRS. ALVING. Me ! Your mother.

MRS. ALVING. Me ! Who gave you life. (72)

There is no hope, no helping hands but instead taking refuge in the realm of the God Oswald asks Mrs. Alving to provide helping hands to him. The play ends as the sun rises and Oswald has succumbed to the last stage of his illness. The tragic ending of the play shows that characters are bound to live within the rules of nature. Human beings are treated merely as animals. They are not equipped with any supernatural power and their character and behaviour are entirely determined by two kinds of natural forces: heredity and environment.

Mrs. Alving tries to keep her son Oswald free from his contaminated heredity. But when Oswald returns to his home, Mrs. Alving and Pastor hear Regina call out from the kitchen, asking Oswald to let her go as his father Captain Alving had tried to seduce their maid Johana before. They are horrified and Mrs. Alving says that it is the ghost:

MRS. ALVING. Ghosts, when I heard Regina and Oswald in there, it was just like seeing ghosts. But then I am inclined to think that we are all ghosts, Pastor Manders, everyone of us. It is not just what

we inherit from our mothers and fathers that haunts us. It is all kinds of old defunct theories, all sorts of old defunct beliefs, and things like that. It is not that they actually live on in us; they are simply lodged there and we can't get rid of them. (36)

All the actions and events of the play are determined by ghosts. Superstition that exists in the society of Mrs. Alving compels her to protect the reputation of her husband. She knows the truth i.e. the true face of captain Alving. But what is required of a wife in Mrs. Alving's society makes her bound to protect her husband's false reputation. Mrs. Alving's notion of ghosts gets at the heart of the play. Not only are there ghosts of specific people coming back to life in new forms – as one could figuratively say that Regina is a ghost of Johana – but also there are ideas that haunt generation after generation. In this sense, the *Ghosts* deals with the conflict between generations. They cannot overcome the influence of earlier generation and are engaged in the conflict until their death. It indicates that characters in *Ghosts* are not free to think about supernatural elements because all over the play, they are struggling to be free from inescapable ghosts. In the play, Pastor is the purveyor of these ghosts. His emphasis on ideas of familial loyalty is a plague on all characters in the play. Regina does not want to return to Engstrand; Oswald does not believe that the marriage must be sanctioned by the church and Mrs. Alving does not believe that she should have been loyal to her husband. The Pastor, however is not the only source of these ideas. Mrs. Alving makes herself unhappy out of a sense of duty.

The subject matter and problems of the play hover over a community. Like the non-existence of God and supernatural power, there is nothing mysterious. Every event is an effect of antecedent causes which were sufficient to ensure its occurrence. Even Pastor Mandor is ruled by the public opinions. He too is not free from superstitions. His

concern for public opinions lead him to much foolishness, to the extent that he is eventually tricked into funding Engstrand's sailor saloon. In Pastor, we see the connection between public opinions and duty. It is because of Pastor's principles that he does not give in to the mutual attraction that he and Mrs. Alving share and that would have made them both happy.

The play mainly deals with familial issues as Ibsen has subtitled *Ghosts* with 'A Domestic Drama in Three Acts'. As we analyze the play *Ghosts* it is a 'a family drama' where the treatment is no longer ambiguous but women and men are presented as "tragically unfree" within an oppressive society where the family is perceived as 'the nucleus of society'. But it is only on the surface that this nucleus seem to be healthy. Family is an unit of society and thus belongs to nature.

### **An Exploration of Underwear and Dirty Pyzama**

The playwright has not presented life as– picturesque, fantastic adventurous and heroic. Instead, characters are portrayed as they really are. The play gives the sense that its characters might, in fact, exist and that events within play might well happen. As the play begins, Oswald has returned home to visit his mother on one of the occasional visits he has made since leaving home as a young boy. His mother had sent him away to prevent him from being influenced by his morally contaminated father. This time, however he intends to stay and marry the maid Regina; he is unaware that Regini is his half sister, sired by the profligate Captain Alving.

The entire play takes place in a space in Mrs. Alving's home overlooking the garden. It consists of a large room in the foreground and a smaller room in the background, which looks out onto the long narrow strip of sea between high cliffs covered with mist. The play is written to give the effect that it represents life and the social world as it seems to the common reader. As we look at the setting and the

development of actions, we can find that they are rendered in ways that make the reader feel the very stuff of ordinary experience. The common setting and everyday aspects of life are represented in minute details. Pastor Mander visits and reprimands Mrs. Alving for not living a more conventional life. He blames Mrs. Alving for not rearing her son Oswald conventionally. In the play's climax, Oswald reveals that he too is suffering from syphilis and will inevitably develop dementia. To make up for the past and to prove her love, Oswald asks his mother to give him a fatal dose of morphine when the signs of dementia appear. At the end of play, it is not clear what he will do.

The playwright has not limited himself in a depiction of outer reality. The play brings an issue of amoral aspects of life. Human beings look civilized by their appearance but in fact their true and hidden nature is like that of beasts. Human instincts like greed, hunger, death, sickness, violence never seem to come when they are fully dressed. This play is not a portrait of a fully "dressed aspect" of human beings but an "exploration of underwear or dirty pyjama".

When the play starts Engstrand requests Mrs. Alving to go with him and work in the sailor establishment. He hints that she could find a husband or even prostitute herself. He even eludes to the \$300, her mother, Johana, allegedly earned for sleeping with the yachtsman who impregnated her with Regina. Engstrand compares his daughter to a prostitute. On the other hand Engstrand's language is vulgar, containing curses; and it reveals that he is a common rough man. He says, "this world is full of temptations", and speaks of "what a child owes its father" (6).

The play consists of many such events and actions which reveal the character and behaviour of human beings. In the play, Mrs. Alving says to Manders that she caught her husband trying to seduce their maid Johana. Regina is a product of captain Alving's debauchery. Mrs. Alving says:

I had to put up with a lot in this house. To keep captain Alving at home in the evenings [. . .] and at nights [. . .] I had to join him in secret drinking orgies up in his room. I had to sit there with him, just the two of us drinking, and listen to his Obscene, stupid remarks, and then struggling with him to get him dragged into his bed [. . .]. (28)

Mr. Alving spent nights coaxing himself to drink so that he would not go carousing. Hence Captain Alving as shown by playwright is not a civilized person but wilder than a beast.

Characters in play are pessimistically determined by compulsive human instincts. When captain Alving finally got his way with Johana, Mrs. Alving was horrified and she sent the seven year old Oswald abroad, so that he would not have to witness his father's debaucheries. She continued to maintain the captain's reputation, however, especially in her letters to Oswald. She sent Johana away with a large sum of money to keep her quiet. The memorial orphanage is another attempt to make sure that the truth will never come out. It is also a way of Mrs. Alving to make herself pure and healthy by investing all undesirable black money of Captain Alving into the memorial orphanage. Her son's inheritance will be only her money. Mrs. Alving says to Manders:

MRS. ALVING. There was also one another reason. I didn't want

Oswald, my son, to inherit a single thing from his father.

MANDERS. So its Alving's money that . . .

MRS. ALVING. Yes, the money I have donated, year by year, to this orphanage add up exactly – I have calculated it very carefully – exactly to the amount that made Lieutenant Alving such a good match in his day. (29)

But Mrs. Alving cannot make her son free from the debaucheries of captain Alving. Suddenly Manders and Mrs. Alving hear Regina call out from the kitchen, asking Oswald to let her go. They are horrified. Mrs. Alving says that they are ghosts. Characters are not governing their own life, but everything is 'ghostly'.

Moral and rational aspect of life is less important in the play. Characters in the play measure things and life from economic point of view, rather than moral. In the play Pastor is shocked by Engstrand's hypocrisy, especially considering the sum of money that Johana was awarded to keep quiet and which no doubt prompted him to marry her. Mrs. Alving reminds Pastor that she herself married a fallen man for his money and that indeed her heart wanted to marry someone else and according to Mrs. Alving, it is not an act of great surprise that Engstrand got married to a fallen woman 'Johana' for miserable three hundred dollars. They act against happiness for the sake of money:

MANDERS. Fancy going and getting married to a fallen woman for  
three hundred miserable dollars.

MRS. ALVING. What do you say about me, then going letting myself  
be married to a fallen man. (33)

As the orphanage burns down, once more the baseness of Engstrand character is revealed. Not only does he practically blackmail the Pastor, he is pretentious enough to compare himself with Jesus Christ. Most surprisingly, the Pastor accepts his entire campaign. He may have no choice but to accept it and yet he sees it as a favour on Engstrand's part for his sake.

When the Pastor decided not to buy insurance for orphan asylum, he was acting under an obsessive concern for public reputation. But now because of his same concern for public opinion, he has lost little money he would have salvaged from the uninsured



disaster. He gives in to Engstrand's deceitful persuasions and agrees to finance a saloon with the remaining money. Hence the most virtuous character Pastor is also under an obsessive concern for public opinion and money. Even for Pastor, truth is determined by money and public opinion. Engstrand decides to open sailor's saloon by the name 'Captain Alving Home'. The irony in the name 'Captain Alving Home' is fairly obvious as Engstrand says:

Good bye, my girl. And if you are even in any difficulty, you know where to find Jacob Engstrand. [In a low voice.] Little Harbour street, h'm . . . ! [To Mrs. Alving and Oswald.] And this place for seafaring men, its going to be called the 'Captain Alving Home'. And if I can run it my way, I think I can promise it will be a place worthy of the Captain's memory. (62)

Engstrand means that it will be the house of debauchery, but the Pastor will fund it because it will be a house of public service, just as the memorial was set up to honor the captain's reputation. Thus, we can say that not only Captain Alving is debauched but those who want to set the memorial of Captain Alving's false reputation are also equally debauched.

Right from the very first scene *Ghosts* deals with conflict between generations. The relation of blood has been used to fulfill things like hunger, sexuality, money, greed etc. Filial piety for the idea that child should respect his or her parent, is an issue from the start. Regina makes Engstrand exist as soon as possible as he wants her to come and work with him. She does not want to be seen with Engstrand. Engstrand too wants Regina to use for the sake of money.

Another instance in the play is that when Regina realizes that Oswald is ill and in fact is her step brother, she leaves Rosen Lund to make her own way in the town.

Oswald, on the other hand wants to marry Regina with the hope that she would care him and administer an over dose of morphine in his last stage of illness.

At the end of the play Oswald is mildly shocked with the debaucheries of his father and reminds his mother that he did not know his father and, indeed is just indifferent as before. When his mother tells him that child should love his father, he asks how she can believe in such a superstition. She asks whether he loves her and he says at least he knows her and that he is very thankful for all her help.

Hence two things are very important in the play, first special selection of subject matter and second a special way of rendering those materials. Regarding selection of subject matter the playwright has gone to that extent of reality that no human being can ignore in his or her life. Characters are exposed with their compulsive instincts like sexuality, desire to accumulate possession, greed etc. Their life is determined by some extra forces and they are bound to live as their life is determined. On the other hand, Ibsen has adopted a special way of rendering his subject matter. He looks trustworthy to reader. Ordinary things, common place, everyday aspect of life presented in minute details is a way of playwright to make his reader believe that his characters in fact exist and that such thing might well happen.

### **The Network of Causes, Events and Effects**

The end of the play is tragic not because of heroism but because of the losing struggle of the individual mind and will against nature. The protagonist of the play, a pawn to multiple compulsions, is wiped out or disintegrated. When Mrs. Alving hears Oswald and Regina in the next room, her exclamation 'ghost' interprets the event as the re-enactment of the scene between captain Alving and Regina's mother. Mrs. Alving tells the Pastor that once she caught captain Alving and Johana, she immediately took over complete control of all household affairs. Her entire life is marked by this sort of

control: control over her husband's reputation, keeping her husband home at night, keeping her son ignorant of his father's failing and keeping Regina ignorant of the identity of her real father. Mrs. Alving made two important decisions regarding her husband. The first is her decision to maintain his reputation. The second is her decision to completely protect Oswald from his father.

These strategies are connected. Her son couldn't remain ignorant of his father's fault if he had a bad public reputation. Mrs. Alving goes to great lengths to keep Oswald in the dark about his father, she lies to him in her letters and she sends him away as soon as he is old enough to ask such embarrassing questions. Just as she tries to be the perfect wife of her husband-sticking by him and enduring most of his faults, all the while improving his reputation – she tries to give Oswald a perfect pair of parents. But all her attempts go in vain and are revealed in Oswald's flirting with Regina. He wants to marry her. Hence, it is proved in the play that one can not change the life which is already determined by some extra forces like heredity and environment.

What is required of a wife and mother in the contemporary society of Mrs. Alving is another thing that determine her actions. The superstitions that exist in Mrs. Alving mind do not permit her to go against her husband's reputation. She took control over everything and has taken advantages of Mr. Alving's shortcomings.

MRS. ALVING. I had to bear it for the sake of my little boy. But then came that final humiliation when my own servant girl [. . .] then I swore to myself that this would have to stop ! So I took control in the house [. . .] complete control [. . .] over him and everything else. Because now I had a weapon against him, you see, and he did not dare say anything. (28)

Oswald is struck down in his youth and innocence, but ultimate cause of his ruin is the cause that drove his father from Mrs. Alving's bed— societal perversion of the institution of marriage, which forced Mrs. Alving to marry captain Alving for his money and taught her to think of marriage as a form of duty. This shows that her life is determined by many forces.

Ibsen is explicit in the famous passage in which Mrs. Alving identifies the dead ideas of past as ghosts:

MRS. ALVING. It is not just what we inherit from our fathers and mothers that haunts us. It is all kinds of old defunct theories, old defunct beliefs and things like that. It is not that they actually live on in us. They are simply lodged there and we cannot get rid of them. I have only to pick up a newspaper and I seem to see ghosts gliding between the lines. Over the whole country there must be ghosts, as numerous as the sands of sea. And here we are, all of us, abysmally afraid of the light. (36)

Society here is represented as hypocritical one that conspires with itself to maintain the semblance of tranquility and in which mutual deception goes hand in hand with self deception. Moreover this process has gone on for so long that the web of falsehood enjoys the status of a long-established truth.

The books that shock Pastor Manders are evidences that Mrs. Alving's quest for the truth has been a long standing matter. But she has not yet acknowledged to herself the full extent of her share in Alving's dissolution; and of course, to society at large she has revealed nothing that would damage the reputation of her family. On the contrary, she is engaged in a desperate undertaking that is intended to wipe out the past forever. On the one hand, the public memory of Alving as a social benefactor, enshrined in the

name of the orphanage, is to wipe out the private memory of the dissolute rake. On the other hand, the endowment for the orphanage, which is exactly equal to the capital for which she married Alving, is to protect her son from his father in that he will inherit nothing from him. There is a mistake in this arithmetic; for what right does Mrs. Alving have to the property of Captain Alving by which her present fortune exceeds the amount of the original capital, even if the balance is due to her prudent management? Her attempt to dispose of the capital once it has done its work points to more serious errors in her calculation regarding the past. Mrs. Alving is plainly a divided creature. Long years of solitude have taught her to think for herself and to question the conventional wisdom of society. But she shrinks from the consequences of such thought. Her enlightenment is of a theoretical nature and contrasts strangely with the absurd plan by which she proposes to bury the past and obliterate the truth.

The catalyst that translates her theoretical and evasive liberalism into a radical confrontation with her own predicament is the encounter with Pastor Manders. Mander's accusations are not based on knowledge, but on philistine conceptions of the role of women in society. To Manders, Mrs. Alving has failed as wife and mother, and his sense of truth and duty makes it incumbent upon him to tell her so. Stung by Mander's accusations, Mrs. Alving sets out to disabuse him of her life with her late husband and in thus uncovering the past thwarts her own purpose of concealment. In the end she is ready to acknowledge Regina's paternity in public: even before the orphanage goes up in flames, it has been spiritually abandoned by Mrs. Alving. Her defence to Pastor Manders is a doubled-edged sword. She is endowed with extraordinary intelligence and resolution, and because, unlike Manders, she is no longer protected, if she ever was, by the complacency that shrouds morally troublesome connections in convenient darkness, she cannot ignore the evidence where it points at

her own guilt. When Manders expresses his indignation at Engstrand's marrying Regina's mother for \$300, she shocks him even more by turning his indignation against herself and pointing to the similarity between Engstrand's action and her own marriage with Alving for the sake of a fortune.

In the encounter between Mrs. Alving and Manders one sees with particular clarity the dependence of the modern tragedy of knowledge on the 'will to see things as they are not'. One year after her marriage Mrs. Alving had run away and had sought refuge with Manders whom she loved and who liked her well enough. He lacked the courage to accept her. He argues that he had won a victory over himself in ordering her to return to her husband. Pastor Manders says, "Precisely for that reason [. . .] yes, you should thank God I possessed the necessary strength of mind [. . .] that I managed to dissuade you from your hysterical intentions, and that it was granted to me to lead you back into the path of duty, home to your lawful husband" (24). She calls it a lamentable defeat and calls it a crime to obey the forces of "law and order". When Manders protests that they do not understand each other, Mrs. Alving corrects him by saying, "Not any more, at least" and he emphatically states, "Never once . . . not in my most secret thoughts have I ever regarded you as anything other than another man's wife" (37). To which Mrs. Alving dryly replies, "It's so easy to forget one's own past", and she changes the topic of conversation when Manders asserts that he is the same man he always was. She clearly understands the ironic sense not perceived by Manders. The plight of Oswald goes much further than Manders' provocative obtuseness in guiding Mrs. Alving towards the recognition of the truth:

MRS. ALVING. When you forced me to submit what you call my duty  
and my obligations. When you praised as right and proper what my  
whole mind revolted against some loathsome things. It was then I

began to examine the fabric of your teachings I began picking at one of the knots, but as soon as I'd got that undone, the whole thing came apart at the seams. It was then I realized it was just tacked together. (37)

Whereas in the scenes with Manders she was not free from the vanity of martyrdom in dwelling on the sacrifice of personal fulfillment, in the encounter with her son she convicts herself of the responsibility for the dissolution of the father. She herself emerges as the culprit to the extent to which she conformed to the demands of a hypocritical society. The error of her financial calculation about Oswald's inheritance from his father is brutally demonstrated by the revelation of Oswald's other inheritance. Mrs. Alving's error extends not only to the concealment of the past but more importantly to the effort to contain it. Her behaviour after her return to her husband was to keep herself within the moral premises of the society and to follow what is required of wife in contemporary society which she had come to condemn before. She sought to protect the reputation of her family, and because she was a woman of unusual energy and competence, she succeeded remarkably well. But the fear of scandal had not been for primary motive, at least in later years. She tried to protect her son and hoped to save the future by sacrificing the present to the past.

The news of Oswald's disease brings home to her the failure of her policy of containment and makes irrelevant the strategy of concealment epitomized in the plan for the orphanage. But worse than that she recognizes that her policy not only failed to protect Oswald but had indeed contributed to his ruin. Oswald's yearning for the joy of life, naively symbolized in the bohemian life of Parisian artists, recalls to her mind the gaiety and exuberance of his father, and she recognizes that her contribution to their

marriage had only tightened the restrictions that a provincial society had imposed upon him. Her success in the ways of the town was built on the wreck of their marriage.

There is no satisfaction to be gained from the recognition of such truths. The orphanage and Oswald both burn up, leaving behind a despairing Mrs. Alving, whose plan to obliterate the past was impotent before its destructive nature. There are diverse opinions about the nature of the poison that Mrs. Alving holds in her hands to administer to Oswald. It is morphine, the symbol of a powerful antidote to truth. The poison throws an ironic light on Mrs. Alving's earlier statement, "I'm not putting up with it any longer, all these ties and restrictions. I can't stand it ! I must work myself free" (34). Only death or oblivion are remedies to the corrosive disease of truth.

### **Experiment on Passions and Temperaments of Characters in *Ghosts***

The plot of each and every text is designed in a certain pattern. Each text is defined entirely in terms of its difference with other texts. It designates that the author sets his characters in a certain direction. Thus, all texts are unique and provide an idea, different from other texts. Zola uses the term 'experiment' to indicate the uniqueness of a text. The play '*Ghosts*' deals with issues like hereditary, insanity, conflict of generation, moral contamination, euthanasia etc. The general fact observed by Ibsen is the power of contaminated heredity to victimize the determined ideal life. As soon as the subject is chosen, Ibsen starts from the known facts, then he experiments to expose characters to a series of trials placing them amid different conditions in order to exhibit how the power of heredity works. In the play, the protagonist Oswald inherits syphilis and all the attempts to resist the influence of his debauched father go in vain. It is then evident that Ibsen didn't remain satisfied with photographing the facts, but he interferes directly to place his characters in those conditions.



According to Emile Zola, inanimate as well as animate things are liable to experiment and are governed by the laws of nature. In other words, writers experiment on characters, their passion, and human and social data in the same way chemists and physicists operate on the inanimate, and physiologists on the animate. In the play, *Ghosts*, the protagonist is merely a higher order animal whose life, character and behaviour are entirely determined by nature and he doesn't have any soul or any mode of participating in religious or spiritual world. He inherits compulsive instincts, i.e. syphilis and bound to live under the laws of nature. Ibsen's characters do not have any influence of supernatural power, instead they are entirely determined by nature. When Mrs. Alving hears the sound of chair being overturned and simultaneously the voice of Regina, she stares wild-eyed towards the half opened door of the dining room and replies to Manders' curiosity over the matter:

REGINE (in a sharp whisper). Oswald ! Are you mad ? Let me go!

MRS ALVING (stiffening with horror). Ah [...] !

(she stares wild-eyed towards the half-opened door. Oswald can be heard coughing and humming. A bottle is uncorked).

MANDERS (agitated). What on earth was that! What's the matter, Mrs. Alving?

MRS. ALVING (hoarsely). Ghosts! Those two in the conservatory [...] come back to haunt us.

MANDERS. What do you say! Regine [...]? is she [...] ? (30)

When Mrs. Alving hears Oswald and Regina in the next room, her exclamation 'ghosts' refers to the event as the re-enactment of the scene between Captain Alving and Regina's mother. It designates that Oswald's behaviour is entirely determined by heredity and environment. He is bound to live under multiple compulsive instincts

imposed by nature. Hence, the characters are brought under and reduced to a general mechanism of matter.

The play deals with the truths of the real world. It centers on common issues like venereal disease, moral contamination, heredity, euthanasia etc. The text is a site for the dialogic interaction of multiple voices. Mrs. Alving was horrified when she caught her husband trying to seduce their maid Johana and sent the seven year old Oswald abroad so that he wouldn't have to witness his father's debaucheries. She continued to maintain Captain's reputation. She sent Johana away with a large sum of money to keep quiet. Building a memorial on her husband's reputation is another attempt to make sure that the truth never comes out. Pastor, on the other hand, confesses that it will be difficult to give speech in false reputation of Captain Alving. Jacob Engstrand marries with a fallen woman Johana for three hundred miserable dollars, accepts an illegitimate child of Captain Alving and takes the blame of committing crime on himself. Characters in the play, face diverse situations and struggle accordingly. They have multiple feelings. But, the playwright finally subordinates to experiment the voices of all the characters to prove the truth of the real world.

By setting his characters in a certain direction, experimenting with their passions and feelings, Ibsen has proven the fact that an attempt to resist the influence of inevitable natural forces brings ruin in our life. Hence, the experiment results in showing the failure attempts of Mrs. Alving to keep her son free from the influence of Captain Alving. Because of this concern, she not only ends up living a lie and building a memorial to her husband's false reputation but also ruins the life of her husband's two children Oswald and Regina. As the play ends, Oswald is sick beyond hope. The conversation below concludes the experiment with a pathetic result:

OSWALD [sits motionless in the armchair, with his back to the view;  
suddenly he says]. Mother, give me the sun.

MRS. ALVING [by the table, looks at him startled]. What do you say?

OSWALD [repeats dully and tonelessly]. The sun. The sun.

MRS. ALVING [across to him]. Oswald, what's the matter with you?

[Oswald seems to shrink in his chair, all his muscles go flaccid, his face is expressionless, and his eyes stare vacantly. Mrs. Alving quivers with terror.] What is it? [Screams.] Oswald ! What's the matter with you ! [Throws herself down on her knees beside him and shakes him.] Oswald ! Oswald ! Look at me ! Don't you know me?

OSWALD [tonelessly as before]. The sun [. . . ] The sun. (73)

In the search of truth by means of experimental method, feelings engender the apriori idea. In the play, feelings have become indispensable guides. But to obtain the truth it is necessary to descend into the objective reality of things. The practical utility of the play, lies in going through the influence of the inevitable natural forces on human beings and making such forces as inoffensive as possible for them.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

The research has been completed by applying naturalism to prove scientific determinism in Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts*. Naturalism affirms that nature is the whole of reality and can be understood only through scientific investigation. The playwrights experiment on 'dangerous wound' which poisons society and proceed in the way an experimentalist doctor does. Ibsen tries to find the simple cause in order to reach the complex to which the action is the result. The final result, the denouement of the play is tragic. An entire family is destroyed under the action of Captain Alving's amorous temperament. It is there in Captain Alving's temperament that the initial cause is found. One member Captain Alving becomes rotten and immediately all around him are tainted, the social flow is interrupted and that the health of the society is compromised. The experiment deals with him, because its objective is to master the symptom of his passion in order to govern it. If Captain Alving were cured or at least restrained and rendered inoffensive, the equilibrium or more truly the health of the body would be again established. The social circulation is identical with the circulation in human body where a solidarity unites the different organs in such a way that if one organ becomes rotten many others are tainted and a very complicated disease results.

Science is a system of knowledge that is concerned with the physical world and its phenomena and is usually applied to the organization of objectively verifiable sense experience. The play deals with familial issues as Ibsen has subtitled '*Ghosts*' with 'A Domestic Drama in Three Acts'. The play is 'a family drama' where the treatment is no longer ambiguous but women and men are presented tragically unfree within an oppressive society where the family is perceived as 'the nucleus of society.' Bjorn Hemmer, on the other hand, has subtitled his essay "Ibsen and the Realistic problem Drama" with "Three Dramas-Three Stages of Development." He regards Ibsen's two

earlier dramas "*Pillars of Society*" and "*A Doll's House*" as being on a developmental stage on the road to his more realistic drama '*Ghosts*'. According to Hemmer, "Ibsen played down his role as a critical interpreter of reality. His strategy has been rather to get reality itself to speak" (75).

Viewed retrospectively, one can see more clearly Ibsen's path to realistic drama led him through earlier stages in his development as a dramatist. In the play, characters are disengaged from the mode of participating in religious and spiritual world, they are rendered as higher order animal and thus the focus of the play instead goes on to physiological and bestial aspect of human beings. '*Ghosts*' is not only the portrait of the 'dressed aspect' of human being but also an exploration of "under wear and dirty pyzama." Human instincts like greed, hunger, sexuality are never seen to come out when they are fully dressed. The playwright has not limited him with a depiction of outer reality. Instead, the play deals with determinant and inevitable facts like heredity, moral contamination, venereal disease, euthanasia etc. Mrs. Alving's strategies to ignore the influence of debauched Captain Alving have ruined her family. The sin of father, however passes down to his son. Her son Oswald inherits the disease syphilis. It designates how powerful, determinant and inevitable the contaminated heredity is.

In the play, choices and actions of the characters are the result of their pre-existing conditions. They do not have free will or the capacity to choose between alternatives. One can't change the life which is already determined by some extra forces like heredity and environment. Mrs. Alving's strategies fail to keep her son free from the influence of his father Captain Alving. On the other hand, what is required of a wife and mother in the contemporary society of Mrs. Alving is another thing that determines her actions. The superstitions that exist in Mrs. Alving's mind do not permit her to go against her husband's false reputation. Minor characters in the play are also

subject to social and economic forces in the family, class, and the milieu to which they are born. For instance, Engstrand gets married to a fallen woman for three hundred miserable dollars. Regina, an illegitimate daughter of Captain Alving, goes to claim the part of her inheritance and advances inexorably toward her destiny in a brothel.

Therefore, actions of the play mostly depend upon causes and effects, though in some cases, readers do not directly experience causal relations. Every seemingly independent event in the drama has its roots upon its very materialistic background thereby being merely a natural consequence of some pre-occurred antecedent. The play invites us to see “an iceberg in the sea” in its every events of which only a small portion protrudes above water with the major part remaining submerged in the depth of the sea like their vast and intricately interwoven circumstances.

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