

Hedda gabler's beautiful illusion



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Henrik Ibsen depicts Hedda Gabler as a woman who is trapped in her own life. Hedda has a thirst for life which she has not satisfied. She prefers a life filled with excitement, thrills and courageous situations: " There was something really beautiful and fascinating - and daring, it seems to me - about our secret closeness" (265). However, Hedda is reluctant to step outside her boundaries and experience the world the way she desperately wants to. Fantasy is the only way for Hedda to escape the realities of her life: " Of this beautiful illusion" 298). Ibsen uses Hedda as a vehicle to show that people need something in life to live for. Hedda Gabler's " beautiful illusion" is a life where the mind and body can be set free to live a life which is meaningful, exciting, and distinct. Hedda Gabler wants a meaning to her life. In her present situation, Hedda is not satisfied with her life: " I often think I have talent for only one thing in life... boring myself to death" (257). She is desperately searching for something that has meaning in her life, something to live for. Hedda discovers Mrs. Elvsted and Lovborg share a " child" between one another, something that is significant to the both of them. Even though Hedda and Tesman may have a child of their own, she does not see it as meaningful. Hedda is jealous of Mrs. Elvsted and Lovborg's " child" because it is meaningful to the both of them. Mrs. Elvsted and Lovborg both live for their " child". Hedda's jealousy deprives them of their " child": " Now I'm burning - I'm burning the child" (288). Hedda's rash actions show that she has no meaning in her life. These actions show Hedda is willing to commit deeds that hurt and offend people, in an attempt to excite herself by seeing their reactions. This is Hedda's way of creating a momentary situation to live for. Hedda's " beautiful illusion consists of a life with significance and meaning. However, she has no reality to base it on: " What you do is jump

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out - and stretch yourself a little" (252). Hedda believes she has no meaning in her life: " And the train goes on" (252). Her " beautiful illusion" is a way for her to free her mind, and give her hope that someday she may find a meaning in her life. Hedda wants to live a life full of excitement. She wants to experience a life that is fun and intriguing. Hedda is unable to do this because she is afraid of being close to anything: " Oh-! Let me go" (231). She is even unwilling to be close to her own feelings: " Love? You are absurd!" (264). She is a coward who has to feel excitement through other people: " And the confessions I used to make - telling you things about myself that no one else knew of then" (265). Seeing other individuals live exciting lives is apart of her " beautiful illusion". It gives her hope that one day she may also be able to live an exciting life, one that is on her own terms. The illusion of Lovborg dancing around with vine leaves in his hair is a major part of Hedda's " beautiful illusion". This illusion portrays Lovborg as living similar to the Greek god Dionysus. It shows Lovborg living a life full of excitement and without any restraints: " With vine leaves in his hair - fiery and bold" (271). This is the kind of life Hedda has a thirst for. Hedda's illusion of Lovborg ties into her " beautiful illusion" of life because it shows an individual living a daring life full of excitement. Hedda's " beautiful illusion" consists of a unique path in life. Something that is out of the ordinary and has distinction. Hedda thinks her perfect life will always have something unique to talk about: " And can talk about all kinds of lively things" (252). Ibsen portrays Tesman as being a dull individual. In the play, Hedda ponders a unique career for her husband: " I was thinking - if I could get Tesman to go into politics" (256). The contrast of Tesman's actual boring career with Hedda's ideal career show Hedda's " beautiful illusion" only has

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unique and exciting events within it. Events that are bold and distinct play a major part in Hedda's "beautiful illusion". Hedda likes things that stand out, and are distinct: "In the chest you say... Not the temple?" (296). Bold and unique events make Hedda's "beautiful illusion" tick: "Of a world that - that she's forbidden to know anything about" (265). The reason Hedda Gabler kills herself is because she realizes her "beautiful illusion" will never become a reality. Judge Brack deprives her of a unique and distinct life: "So I'm in your power, Judge. You have your hold over me from now on" (302). This deprivation proves that Hedda's "beautiful illusion" must have distinction to it, because she is no longer willing to live a life that has no hope of being unique and not free. Henrik Ibsen proves Hedda Gabler's "beautiful illusion" consists of excitement, distinction and a will to have meaning in life. Hedda wants excitement and freedom in her illusion, this was shown by the way she was drawn towards Eilert Lovborg's fascinating adventures: "And the confessions I used to make - telling you things about myself that no one else knew" (265). Hedda's desire for something that is distinct and stands out was shown by the way she committed suicide: "Shot herself in the temple!... People don't do such things!" (304). Ibsen shows Hedda Gabler's "beautiful illusion" consists of a life with meaning, this was shown by Hedda's search for something she could live for: "Is there nothing the two of you could use me for here?" (303). The purpose of the "beautiful illusion" enables Hedda to experience life the way she wants to: "It was the hunger for life in you!" (266). Works Cited Ibsen, Henrik. "Hedda Gabler." Four Major Plays: Volume I. Translated with forward by Rolf Fjelde. Signet Classic: New York, 1965