

Ibsen is afraid of
taking charge of her



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Ibsen once said, “ Find out who you are and become that person,” because, “ To realize yourself is the highest goal a person can attain.” Self realization was Ibsen’s super-objective. To find self-realization was the main theme of his play Hedda Gabler. Hedda, Tesman, and Thea, all live their lives through others, therefore never reaching self-realization. Their deficiencies entail cowardice, lack of imagination and validation. They make up for it by manipulating, borrowing and dependency.

Searching for themselves in each other. Hedda lives through others by manipulation. Hedda is a coward, she is afraid of taking charge of her life and making something of herself. Since she feels a lack of control over her life, she controls others.

She is unhappy because she has no control and tries to make everyone else unhappy. In the opening scene Aunt Julie comes over and places her hat in the living room, Hedda then purposefully remarks on how rude it was for the maid to leave her hat around the house. Aunt Julie’s feelings are hurt deeply, since she bought the hat brand new.

Hedda is also very condescending and sarcastic towards Tesman; he is completely unaware of it. She plays him like a deck of cards. When he asks her why she burned Lovborg’s manuscript; she says she did it for you dear, since you envied it. He believes her not seeing her real motives, then he later exclaims, “ Oh, I’m beginning to understand you, Hedda!” Hedda’s feeling of being out of control also effects how she interacts with the other characters.

This is why she is manipulative. She manipulates the people around her to do things that they normally wouldn't do. When Lovborg and Thea are with her, she offers Lovborg a drink, but he refuses because he quit drinking. Then she spills a bit of information about Lovborg that Thea had told her and Lovborg is outraged. In his anger, he accepts the drink. She makes both Thea and Lovborg angry but she got satisfaction from effecting their actions. Hedda is also pregnant but refuses to recognize it because again that would mean less control for her.

Towards the end of the play Judge Brack tells her, he knows it was her gun that Lovborg shot himself with. He knows she is afraid of the scandal. Hedda replies, " So I'm in your power, Judge. You have your hold over me from now on." Shortly after saying this and seeing Tesman and Thea working together, she buries herself in a room with her fathers' picture and the piano. (Sentence about room and escape and how she fails when she kills herself) Then shoots herself. Tesman lives through others by borrowing ideas.

He lacks any imagination, so he uses others ideas in place of his own. He lacks control over his work, because none of it is really his. It seems that anytime anyone mentions an idea he remarks, " Imagine that", in a bewildered sort of way. He can't even carry on an interesting conversation because he has no ideas or original thoughts to share. Tesman wants to be recognized and respected for his work, but his work and research is nothing new, meaningless.

Tesman's book would be filled with regurgitated facts. He spent his entire honeymoon in a library. (What does this show us about his character) He is

very ambitious; almost everything he does is used to further his recognition. Even his marriage to Hedda; he married her because she is a trophy to him. (Why does he need a trophy)? Thea Elvsted is closest to self-realization but doesn't quite make it because of her dependence on men.

She gets much farther than anyone else in play, because she is taking herself to another level by writing the book with Lovborg and later Tesman. She leaves her husband to cling to Lovborg. One could argue that it isn't her fault to be dependent on men because there was no other way of having an income back then.

Therefore, her dependence is not completely her fault but a pressure from society. Thea is Hedda's opposite because she works for moral improvement but not only for her, for Lovborg and later Tesman. When Lovborg tells her