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MASTER'S THESIS

**The Wild Duck by Henrik Ibsen
Characters analysis and visual interpretation**

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Examiner: Prof. Martin Černý

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**Divoká kachna od Henrika Ibsena
Analýza postav a vizuální interpretace**

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Práce poradce: Prof. Nikola Tempír

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Declaration

I declare that I have prepared my Master's Thesis independently on the following topic:

The Wild Duck by Henrik Ibsen Characters analysis and visual interpretation

Under the expert guidance of my thesis advisor and with the usage of the cited literature and sources.

Prague, date:

.....

Signature of the candidate

Warning

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Abstract

The topic of this Master thesis is an in depth analysis of Henrik Ibsen's, The Wild Duck. In the beginning, an introduction to Henrik Ibsen's work and style is presented. Consequently, follows my personal analysis of the play and the characters, in order to approach a visual interpretation for the main dramatic situations and the costumes of each character with sketches and storyboards. The main aim is to present a contemporary aspect of the play through visual elements, which came through the process of my research.

Abstrakt

Tématem této diplomové práce je detailní analýza hry Henrika Ibsena Divoká Kachna. Na začátku je představen úvod do práce a stylu Henrika Ibsena. Následuje moje vlastní analýza hry i postav za účelem přiblížit vizuální interpretaci hlavních dramatických situací a kostýmů každé z postav se skicami a storyboardy. Hlavním cílem je představit současný aspekt hry prostřednictvím vizuálních prvků, které procházely procesem mého výzkumu.

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"Truth, like light, is dazzling. By contrast, untruth is a beautiful sunset that enhances everything"

Albert Camus

I. Introduction

As my final project of stage design, I decided to choose the Wild Duck by Henrik Ibsen. Wild Duck is a text which is considered belonging in theater of realism, although the play was named by one of the strongest symbols of the text. The Wild Duck.

This fact, the strong combination of realism and symbolism is a form that I am really interested in, even before I came in Damu for my studies in scenography. Through a seemingly common situation and characters, trying to discover the poetry and new ways of interpretation. For my final project I wanted to be able to research and approach this field of theater, and one of the greatest representatives is no one else than Ibsen.

My intention is to use the knowledge that I earned for two years now while attending the Masters' program of scenography, combined with my previous knowledge, my personal aesthetics and a way that I see theater. In order to present my final solution for this project I will represent all the way of thinking that I came through during this process, till I finally ended up with the visual interpretation of stage and costume design.

In the beginning, I am starting with a brief introduction about Ibsen's life, work and style. Following, I tried to place Wild Duck nowadays, mostly to see the aspects of this story in contemporary society. The play is complicated and the characters have many levels of reading. The ideas of truth, power and idealism are analyzed for the purpose of knowing better the characters and understanding their relationships. Then, all my aesthetic inspirations are presented, which led me to the final result of my visual interpretation including stage and costume design.

II. About Henrik Ibsen

Henrik Johan Ibsen (20 March 1828 – 23 May 1906) was a major 19th-century Norwegian playwright, theatre director, and poet. He is often referred to as "the father of realism" and is one of the founders of Modernism in theatre. [1] His major works include *Brand*, *Peer Gynt*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Emperor and Galilean*, *A Doll's House*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Ghosts*, *The Wild Duck*, *When We Dead Awaken*, *Pillars of Society*, *The Lady from the Sea*, *Rosmersholm*, *The Master Builder*, and *John Gabriel Borkman*. He is the most frequently performed dramatist in the world after Shakespeare, [2] [3] and by the early 20th century *A Doll's House* became the world's most performed play. [4]

Many of his later dramas were perceived as scandalous and provocative by many people around that time, when European theater was supposed to present strict morals of family and propriety. In his later works, Ibsen dealt with situations that were hiding behind many facades. He was critical and inquiring into several conditions of life and moral issues. Ibsen wrote his plays in Danish (Danish are the common written language of Norway and Denmark) and Gyldendal was his publisher.

Most of his plays are taking place in Norway, often in places reminding of Skien, the port which was his hometown and where he grew up. He lived abroad for twenty-seven years, in Italy and Germany, and rarely went back in Norway during his most productive years. Most of the times he wrote his dramas according to his family and his background. Raised into a merchant family, which was connected to the patriciate of Skien. His drama plays have not stopped influencing contemporary culture, theater and films.

II.I Biography

Knud Ibsen (1797-1877) was a wealthy salesman of Danish origin, and Marichen Cornelia Altenburg (1799-1869) were coming from notable families in Skien society, a small town known for timber trade and the port. Knud married Marichen in 1825 and at the same year opened his own wholesale and retail trade company.

Henrik Ibsen was born on March 20, 1828, in Skien, Norway. His father was a successful merchant. When Ibsen was eight (1835), his father's business failed, which was a shattering blow to the family.

In 1882 he wrote a letter to critic and scholar Georg Brandes, that his parents were part of the both sides of the most respected families in Skien, describing and explaining in this way that he was closely related with all the patrician families who back then dominated the place and its surroundings, mentioning several families' names.

Thus, his family's financial ruin would have a strong impact on his future work; the characters in his texts often were depicting his parents, and his themes often have to do with financial difficulties as well as the moral conflicts that are coming as a result of these situations, with dark secrets hidden from society. "Ibsen would both model and name characters in his plays after his own family. A central theme in Ibsen's plays is the portrayal of suffering women, echoing his mother Marichen Altenburg; Ibsen's sympathy with women would eventually find significant expression with their portrayal in dramas such as *A Doll's house* and *Rosmersholm*." [5]

Ibsen was forced to leave school at the age of fifteen. He changed his residence to a smaller town named, Grimstad to become an pharmacist. It was the time he started writing his plays. When he became eighteen years old, he had a relationship with Elde Sophie Jensdatter Birkedalen, who had a son, Hans Jacob Hendrichsen Birkdalen. Ibsen was taking care Hans till he was fourteen, although Ibsen never met Hans Jacob.

Ibsen's intention was to be accepted at the university of Christiania, which later was renamed Kristiania and then Oslo till today. He had tried several times to enter the university but his attempts were not successful as he failed in his entrance exams. Very fast he gave up this idea, preferring to be dedicated himself to writing.

He published his first play, *the tragedy Catilina (1850)*, under the pseudonym "Brynjolf Bjarme" instead of his real one, when he was just 22 years old. *The Burial Mound (1850)* was the first of his plays to be staged but with not a great success.

"He spent the next several years employed at Det norske Theater (Bergen), where he was involved in the production of more than 145 plays as a writer, director, and producer. During this period, he published five new, though largely unremarkable, plays. Despite Ibsen's failure to achieve success as a playwright, he gained a great deal of practical experience at the Norwegian Theater, experience that was to prove valuable when he continued writing." [7]

From the year 1857 to 1862, Ibsen tried to make acceptable dramatic results out of inconsistency ideas, first in Bergen and then at the Norwegian Theater in Christiania. As well as writing plays which were incompatible to him and unwelcome to audiences, he although did a lot of directing. He was too self-conscious to be an effective director but too smart not to take advantage of this given opportunity and the practical stage wisdom from this experience. In 1858 he returned back in Christiania and became the creative director of the Christiania theater. "He married Suzannah Thoresen on 18 June 1858 and she gave birth to their only child Sigurd on 23 December 1859. The couple lived in very poor financial circumstances and Ibsen became very disenchanted with life in Norway. Although he began to develop qualities of independence and authority that had been hidden before." [7]

Ibsen wrote at this point two plays for the Norwegian stage, that showed signs of new inspiration and energy. *Kjaerlighedens komedie (1862; Love's Comedy)*, a satire on

romantic illusions, which was brutally unsuccessful, Ibsen introduced a theme of anti-idealism, which would make his own in the future. And in *Kongsemnerne* (1863; *The Pretenders*) he dramatized the strong inner authority that shapes a man to a man, a king or a great writer. This play was in fact the opportunity to talk to bigger audiences and become a national drama which Ibsen was waiting so long. Although the play was good, the theater was bankrupt and apparently Ibsen's career as a stage writer came at an end.

But, the death of his theater career was Ibsen's liberating step as a playwright. According to Robert M. Adams, without regard for a public he thought petty and illiberal, without care for traditions he was found hollow and pretentious. [6]

This was the reason he went abroad, and applied for a small state grant. In 1864, he went in Sorrento in Italy, leaving Christiania to self-imposed exile. He lived mainly in Rome, Dresden and Munich for the next twenty seven years of his life, returning back only for short visits in 1874 and 1885. His land of birth left him a very bitter taste in his mouth that he sometimes summarized as "small-mindedness". When he returned back to it he was a noted, but controversial, playwright.

II.II Famous works

His next play, *Brand* (1865), brought him the important praise that he was searching for, along with financial success. With Ibsen into exile, brought the result of a long semi-dramatic poem called Brand.

"Its central figure is a dynamic rural pastor who takes his religious calling with a blazing sincerity that transcends not only all forms of compromise but all traces of human sympathy and warmth as well.

The poem faced its readers not just with a choice but with an impasse; the heroic alternative was also a destructive (and self-destructive) alternative. In

Norway, *Brand* was a tremendous popular success, even though (and in part because) its central meaning was so troubling.

Hard on the heels of *Brand* (1866) came *Peer Gynt* (1867), another drama in rhymed couplets presenting an utterly antithetical view of human nature. If *Brand* is a moral monolith, *Peer Gynt* is a capering will-o'-the-wisp, a buoyant and self-centered opportunist who is aimless, yielding, and wholly unprincipled, yet who remains a lovable and beloved rascal.

But Ibsen had not yet found his proper voice; when he did, its effect was not to criticize or reform social life, but to blow it up." [6]

Therefore, with *Et dukkehjem* (1879; *A Doll's House*), the explosion came. Ibsen refused to come with a happy ending, although it would be shabby or forced (as in any other contemporary play would have been done) and audiences were provoked. That was not Ibsen's style and way. *A Doll's House* was about knowing oneself and being honest to that self. Torvald's character, who all along was a stable moral representative, ends to be a hypocrite and a weak compromiser. Nora, his wife is not only an ethical idealist, but a destructive one, as in *Brand*.

"The setting of *A Doll's House* is ordinary to the point of transparency. Ibsen's plot exploits with cold precision the process known as "analytic exposition." A secret plan (Nora's forgery) is about to be concluded (she can now finish repaying the loan), but before the last step can be taken, a bit of the truth must be told, and the whole deception unravels. It is a pattern of stage action at once simple and powerful. Ibsen used this technique often, and it gained for him an international audience." [6]

His next play was *Gengangere* (1881; *Ghosts*), caused even more reactions and distance than the previous one, by depicting even worse consequences of covering up ugly truths. Another critical comment on the morality of society. In the play a widow

betrays to her pastor that she had kept in secrecy the evils of her marriage for its duration. Despite her fiancé's womanizing, the pastor advises her to marry him, and she did in the belief that her feelings would reform him. But his behavior continues until his death. His sinful habits are passed on their son in the form of syphilis. Back then, the mention of venereal disease alone was scandalous, let alone if it could infect a respected family. By all appearances, the theme of the play is about innate venereal disease, but on another level, it has to do with the power of ingrained moral infection to weaken the most determined idealism.

A text dealing with syphilis on top of one dealing with a wife's abandonment of her family, locked his reputation as a "Bad Old Man". On the other hand, progressive theaters all across the Europe and in England began to staging his plays. The audiences were often small, but they started taking his plays very seriously. " So did conventionally-minded critics; they denounced Ibsen as if he had desecrated all that was sacred and holy. Ibsen's response took the form of a direct dramatic counterattack." [6]

In *En folkefiende* (1882; *An Enemy if the People*), the main character, Doctor Stockmann, works as Ibsen's personal spokesman. In the text he is a medical officer, being in charge for inspecting the public baths on which the fortune and success of his home town depends. When he discovers their water to be polluted, he says so publicly, in contrast with the town officials who try to silence him. After insisting on speaking the truth he is officially declared as "enemy if the people". However, depicted as a victim, Doctor Stockmann, as all idealists truth-tellers by Ibsen, brings within him a deep strain of tendency to destroy. In comparison with the truth, he doesn't care that his attack on the baths will ruin the town in the end. Ibsen will make this idea pretty clear with his next play.

In *Vildanden* (1884; *The Wild Duck*), Ibsen totally reversed his point of view by depicting on stage an unnecessary, catastrophic truth-teller, whose compulsion brings disastrous results on a family of helpless people.

The Wild Duck (1884) shows how the average man needs illusions (unreal and misleading thoughts or ideas) to survive and what happens to a family when it is forced to face the truth. Jalmar Ekdal and his family are leaving a somewhat struggling but cheerful existence, with the help of comforting delusions. Upon these helpless family intrudes an infatuated truth-teller, Gregers Werle. His goal is to cut away the moral foundations on which the family had grown, leaving them in the end with the weight of guilt which is too heavy to handle. The chaos that he caused in Ekdal's family is rather pathetic than tragic. "The working out of the action achieves a kind of mournful poetry that is quite new in Ibsen's repertoire." [6]

According to Robert M. Adams, each of this series of Ibsen's classic modern dramas grows by extension or reversal out of its predecessor; they form an unbroken string. The last play of the sequence is *Rosmersholm* (1886), in which different forms of the detrimental saint and the all-too-human mischievous person, once more struggle to define their identities. Although this time on a level of moral sensitivity that gives the text space for tranquility.

With *Rosmerholm* Ibsen's playwriting career not at all had become to an end. Afterwards, he moved towards a more self-analytic and symbolic style of writing that was different from the plays he wrote till then and made him famous. " Among his later plays are *Fruen fra havet* (1888; *The Lady from the Sea*), *Hedda Gabler* (1890), *Bygmester Solness* (1892; *The Master Builder*), *Lille Eyolf* (1894; *Little Eyolf*), *John Gabriel Borkman* (1896), and *Naar vi døde vaagner* (1899; *When we Dead Awaken*). According to Robert M. Adams, two of these plays, *Hedda Gabler* and *The Master Builder*, are vitalized by the presence of a demonically idealistic and totally destructive

female such as first appeared in **Catiline**. Another obsessive personage in these late plays is an aging artist who is bitterly aware of his failing powers. Personal and confessional feelings infuse many of these last dramas; perhaps these resulted from Ibsen's decision in 1891 to return to Norway, or perhaps from the series of fascinated, fearful dalliances he had with young women in his later years. After his return to Norway, Ibsen continued to write plays until a stroke in 1900 and another a year later reduced him to a bedridden invalid."[6]

In March, 1906 he had a series of strokes. On 22nd of May, his nurse assured everyone that he was better. His last words were "On the contrary". He died on 23rd of May in 1906.

II.III All his Works

1850 Catiline (Catalina)

1850 The Burial Mound also known as The Warrior's Barrow(Kjæmpehøjen)

1851 Norma or a Politician's Love (Norma eller en Politikers Kjaerlighed), an eight-page political parody

1852 St. John's Eve (Sancthansnatten)

1854 Lady Inger of Oestraat (Fru Inger til Østeraad)

1855 The Feast at Solhaug (Gildet paa Solhaug)

1856 Olaf Liljekrans (Olaf Liljekrans)

1858 The Vikings at Helgeland (Hærmændene paa Helgeland)

1862 Love's Comedy (Kjærlighedens Komodie)

1863 The Pretenders (Kongs-Emnerne)

1866 Brand (Brand)

1867 Peer Gynt (Peer Gynt) Translation By William Archer (1911)

1869 The League of Youth (De unges Forbund)

- 1871** Digte - only released collection of poetry, included Terje Vigen (written in 1862 but published in Digte from 1871)
- 1873** Emperor and Galilean (Kejser og Galilæer)
- 1877** Pillars of Society (Samfundets Støtter)
- 1879** A Doll's House (Et Dukkehjem)
- 1881** Ghosts (Gengangere)
- 1882** An Enemy of the People (En Folkefiende)
- 1884** The Wild Duck (Vildanden)
- 1886** Rosmersholm (Rosmersholm)
- 1888** The Lady from the Sea (Fruen fra Havet)
- 1890** Hedda Gabler (Hedda Gabler)
- 1892** The Master Builder (Bygmester Solness) Translation By Edmund Grosse and William Archer (1893)
- 1894** Little Eyolf (Lille Eyolf)
- 1896** John Gabriel Borkman (John Gabriel Borkman)
- 1899** When We Dead Awaken (Når vi døde vaagner) [7]

II.IV About his style

According to Robert M. Adams, Ibsen was in the forefront of those early modern authors whom one could refer to as the great disturbers. *"He belongs with Fyodor Dostoyevsky, Friedrich Nietzsche, and William Blake. Ibsen wrote plays about mostly prosaic and commonplace persons; but from them he elicited insights of devastating directness, great subtlety, and occasional flashes of rare beauty. His plots are not cleverly contrived games but deliberate acts of cognition, in which persons are stripped of their accumulated disguises and forced to acknowledge their true selves, for better or worse."* [6] Thus, he was constantly making his audiences coming across with painful sincerity the moral foundation of society and their existence. In the late 19th century he

turned the European stage back in the roots from what it had become. A figurative and amusement for the bored, to what it had been long ago in ancient Greece. A mean for passing doom-judgment on the soul.

He was reacting against traditional romanticism and demanded a theater capable of responding to the needs of his period. The result was that Ibsen introduced Realism in theater, which became the main approach in performing arts during 20th and 21st century. He replaced kings with representatives of middle class and he wrote prose instead of poetry. He was giving detailed scenic instructions to be sure that his plays will be represented with authentic way and proceeded in the interpretation of his characters towards the audience with an almost scientific way, by embodying the discoveries of that time, based on the importance of instincts, biology, heredity and the environment in general. He innovated a plot without intrigues and deceits, as till then famous "well made plays" and one of his innovation was to introduce dispersed irony, the elimination of all incidents before the critical moment, the usage of place- time- action unity which reveals a detailed study in ancient Greek tragedy.

Important source for his inspiration were the opinion of Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard (5. May, 1813 — 11. November, 1855), his family, young women who used to pen write with them, as well as his mother-in-law, Magdalene Thoreson, who led the feministic movement in Norway. In his last period plays, is observed a turn from realistic social concern drama, which is signified with "***The Wild Duck***" (1884). From now on his plays became complicated, enigmatic studies of human condition and applying techniques with origins from expressionism and symbolism.

As used by George Bernard Shaw (1856–1950), a great supporter of Ibsen's work, the term "Ibsenite" describes a play that exposes individual and social hypocrisy (pretending to be what one is not). Examples are ***Pillars of Society*** (1877) and ***A Doll's House*** (1879), which point out how the conventions of society hinder personal

development. In ***Ghosts* (1881)**, however, the character of Mrs. Alving discovers that there are forces within the individual more destructive than the "dollhouse" of marriage and society. The last of the "Ibsenite" plays, ***An Enemy of the People* (1882)**, is one of Ibsen's finest comedies.

Inspired by the demands of critics that literature should address current problems of the day, Ibsen set out to develop a dramatic form in which serious matters could be dealt with using stories about everyday life. Ibsen did not invent the realistic (based on real life) or social reform play, but he perfected the form. In doing so he became the most famous dramatist of the nineteenth century. Still, Ibsen remained what he had always been, a man who disliked society and concerned himself only with the individual and his problems.[10]

Ibsen had written out again the rules of drama theater, with a realism which was adopted by many, as Chekhov and which influenced and shaped the theater as we know it nowadays. After Ibsen, challenging themes and speaking straight about social issues considered one of the steps that a play is becoming art rather than entertainment. William Archer and Edmund Gosse were responsible for bringing his plays to an English-speaking audience. For instance, James Joyce esteemed his work highly in his early autobiographical novel "Stephen Hero". In 1891 he returned back in Norway, but everything had changed since he was gone. He had undoubtedly contributed to this change across society. Modernism now was rising in theater and in public sphere.III. "The wild duck"

III.I Summary of the plot

The Wild Duck is consisted of five acts. The first act opens with a dinner party in a mansion, hosted by Werle, a wealthy merchant. The dinner is also attended by his son Gregers Werle, who has just returned to his father's home after spending the past fifteen

years in the family mining concern, the Høidal works, in the northern forests of Norway. During the gathering he learns the news of a former classmate, Hjalmar Ekdal who was invited by Gregers. That he married Gina, a young servant in the Werle household. The older Werle had arranged the match by providing Hjalmar with a home and profession as a photographer. Gregers, whose mother died believing that Gina and old Werle had carried on an affair, becomes enraged at the thought that his old friend is living a life built on a lie.

The remaining four acts take place in Hjalmar Ekdal's apartments. The Ekdals initially appear to be living a life of cozy domesticity. Hjalmar's father makes a living doing odd copying jobs for Werle. Hjalmar runs a photo studio out of the apartment. Gina helps him run the business in addition to keeping house. They both dote on their daughter Hedvig who is slowly losing her eyesight. Gregers travels directly to their home from the party. The family eagerly reveals a loft in the apartment where they keep various animals like rabbits and pigeons. Most prized is the wild duck they rescued. The duck was wounded by none other than Werle, whose eyesight is also failing.

Gregers decides to rent the spare room in the apartment. The next day, he begins to realize that there are more lies hanging over the Ekdals than Gina's affair with his father. While talking to Hedvig, she explains that Hjalmar keeps her from school because of her eyesight, but he has no time to tutor her, leaving the girl to escape into imaginary worlds through pictures she sees in books. During their conversation, Gregers hears shots in the attic, and the family explains that Old Ekdal entertains himself by hunting rabbits and birds in the loft, and Hjalmar often joins in the hunts. The activity helps Old Ekdal cling to his former life as a great hunter. Hjalmar also speaks of his 'great invention', which he never specifies. It is related to photography, and he is certain that it will enable him to pay off his debts to Werle and finally make himself and his family completely independent. In order to work on his invention, he often needs to lie down on the couch and think about it.

During a lunch with Gregers and Hjalmar's friends Relling and Molvik, Werle arrives to try to convince Gregers to return home. Gregers insists that he cannot return and that he will tell Hjalmar the truth. Håkon is certain that Hjalmar will not be grateful for Gregers' intervention. After he leaves, Gregers asks Hjalmar to accompany him on a walk, where he reveals the truth about Gina's affair with his father.

Embittered by Gregers' news, Hjalmar bristles at the suggestion and confesses that he would like to wring the duck's neck. Indulging his mood, Hjalmar confronts Gina about her affair with old Werle. She confesses to it, but insists that she loves Hjalmar intensely.

In the midst of the argument, Gregers returns, stunned to find that the couple are not overjoyed to be living without such a lie hanging over their heads. Mrs. Sørby arrives with a letter for Hedvig and news that she is marrying old Werle. The letter announces that Werle is paying Old Ekdal a pension of 100 crowns per month until his death. Upon his death, the allowance will be transferred to Hedvig for the remainder of her life. The news sickens Hjalmar even further, and it dawns on him that Hedvig may very well be Werle's child. He cannot stand the sight of Hedvig any longer and leaves the house. Gregers tries to calm the distraught Hedvig by suggesting that she sacrifice the wild duck for her father's happiness. Hedvig is desperate to win her father's love back and agrees to have her grandfather shoot the duck in the morning.

The next day, Relling arrives to in Ekdal's house. He is appalled at what Gregers has done, and he reveals that he long ago implanted the idea of the invention with Hjalmar as a "life-lie" to keep him from giving in to despair. The pair argue as Hjalmar returns to gather his materials to work on the invention. Hedvig is overjoyed to see him, but Hjalmar demands to be 'free from intruders' while he thinks about his next move. Crushed, Hedvig remembers the wild duck and goes to the loft with a pistol. After hearing a shot, the family assumes Old Ekdal is hunting in the loft, but Gregers knows he has shot the wild duck for Hedvig. He explains the sacrifice to Hjalmar who is deeply touched. When Old Ekdal emerges from his room, the family realizes he could not have fired the gun in

the loft. They rush in to see Hedvig lying on the ground. Relling finds that the shot has penetrated her breastbone and she died immediately. Given the powder burns on her shirt, he determines that she shot herself. Hjalmar begs for her to live again so that she can see how much he loves her. The play ends with Relling and Gregers arguing again. Gregers insists that Hedvig did not die in vain, because her suicide unleashed a greatness within Hjalmar. Relling sneers at the notion, and insists that Hjalmar will be a drunk within a year.

III.II Contemporary aspects of The Wild Duck

From the very beginning of this thesis and by the moment I started searching plays and texts I was interested to work on, I wanted to choose a play which is included in realism/naturalism movement. I wanted to explore the kind of theater, where the characters are ordinary, common people and its theme is conveying the speech and movements found in the domestic situations of everyday life. A plot and characters that I could empathize and identify with.

As well, 19th-century realism is closely connected to the development of modern drama, which, as Martin Harrison explains, "is usually said to have begun in the early 1870s" with the "middle-period" work of the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen. Ibsen's realistic drama in prose has been "enormously influential." [9]

From many people Ibsen is perceived the one who perfected realism in theater and father of modern theater. The reason I chose *The Wild Duck* is because is about this fundamental idea of life- illusion and the conflict between idealism and reality. Certainly though, the agenda of the play is more than that. It is a play with really complicated characters where many aspects of contemporary society are revealed and commented.

The Wild Duck is a family drama about power. As with the majority of Ibsen's most durable plays, there are many layers and many ways into the text. But behind all the

complicated relationships between three generations of two families, and beneath the ideas about the claim of the ideal and about the 'life lie', remains the question: who is in whose power, how is power created and shifted between people, and what gives rise to it? The play is not least about the power which exists in the imagination and in the language of those involved.

In the beginning of the second act Ekdal family is introduced to the audience with Gina and Hedvig counting money and talking about the expenses of their house. The characters are under economic pressure and that Ibsen always uses this economic pressure as the motor of the play. I think that this element is a very important link to today's situation which makes this play so contemporary. In modern history and societies people are obsessed by the fear of dropping down the social ladder and of losing their social status. This can mainly be seen in the middle class, which until the 90s was the winner of the II post world war growing. Particularly in Greece, where I am coming from, the middle class was growing after Papadopoulos dictatorship in 1973 till the 90s and the zero years. The life-lie that is presented in Wild Duck has a direct impact in Greek society all these years till the financial crisis of 2008. A middle class was built on lies about opportunities and financial sources that will bring wealth to everyone. The life illusions were built not only from Greek corrupted politicians, but with a bigger help from European Union. Until in 2008, this illusion collapsed. Europe took the role of Gregers to our situation, and accelerated the degradation process of Greek society, ignoring that was the supporter from the beginning to this route. This situation can be described in many European countries nowadays and of course around the world because the principal is always somehow the same.

The economic crisis meant that the middle class were confronted with the danger of losing their jobs, wealth and social status. And a society where jobs and money are everything is a society where religion, nation and family have lost their power. Somebody who is jobless and has no money is faced with being a complete nobody with no reason

to on living. Or they try to find a meaning in life in values which were most important in the golden age of bourgeois society, like family values, marriage, Christian religion and in having children.

Although I mentioned Gregers as Europe in our situation, in terms of revealing and destroying the life-lie that a society is built on, he is such a complicated character who on the other hand I think Ibsen is criticizing social revolution and fake promoters of idealism. Because it is known that in periods of crisis people are willing to rebel and to react. On one hand people going towards basic values of societies (family, religion, marriage) and on the other hand reacting against authority and the old. Gregers can be parallelized with the lack of true idealists who will help a society to rebuilt and reconsider the new value.

Bernard Shaw (1856 - 1950) characterized Ibsen's idealist characters as the "bad" ones. In Ibsen's texts, sometimes idealism is identified with Devil's philosophy. Gregers actions over the "claim of ideal" are proved as a curse for the average man and a danger to society as in real life where the lack of leaders is more obvious than ever.

Moreover, Wild Duck has many other aspects in modern society except power and financial struggling. From life-lie and illusion a personal situation can be built. A marriage or a relationship. There is a fundamental question in this text and what is more preferable. Truth or life-lie? Every individual and every family have their own secrets. So many people prefer to remain in a familiar situation than changing their way of living and their reality. In the past most of women tend to create their own illusion and remaining to unhappy marriages because of their "weakness" to be on their own and independent. Our societies built on a patriarchal model, made women believe that their role is to support their man and keep their house in order. In Wild Duck though, Gina is the one who created this illusion for her family and tries to keep them together. Otherwise she will be a single mother in late 19th century which would have destroyed her life and reputation. Her choices was a one-way road. Times have changed, women are different

but still their role in society despite the fact they are more independent than ever, has its routes really deep. People tend to create their own life illusion in order to fit in the role model they've been served for centuries or because their weakness and self-esteem doesn't let them. The aspect of family, the pressure on the role of a woman in the time of Ibsen and nowadays, especially in the new conservative spirit we have to face now and which impacts society, where I see parallels in the difficulties of being a couple, having children and trying to solve the problem of having a family life then and now. At the same time where characters are completely preoccupied with constant worries about financial issues. This unwavering belief in the power of money destroys every human relationship, especially the male characters, who are becoming more or less narrow-minded and blind to other needs around them. Although, I believe that love is highly connected with revolution and changes to connect it again with all the things written above.

This play, as most of his works will always be modern and updated. Societies are based on the same elements and ideas for so long now that *Wild Duck* seems it is written nowadays. Moreover, although is numbered among texts of realism theater the element of symbolism is crucial. This fact made this play more interesting for me in terms of visual depiction and more playfulness for the creating process.

IV. Analysis of the text

IV.I Short analysis of ideas

IV.I.I Truth, Power and Idealism

Since the opening of the first act we can realize that the characters who will be involved in the play have been preceded by a great deal of past history. Part of this past is summarized in a conversation between the two minor characters in the opening scene and they are starting describing the people that will be presented in this play. Though, the most important of past events and actually the one that will interest the spectators for the rest four acts, is presented on stage before our very eyes. The very origin of Greger's plan. Hjalmar starts talking about his wife Gina, how he became a photographer and that old Werle helped him to settle his life.

Thus, Gregers has learned that it is his father who has given Hjalmar a start in life. Now that he knows it is the dismissed housemaid Hjalmar has married, and has learned at what point the help came, the suspicion that began few moments earlier begins to grow. It was Werle's self-interest. Gregers to this point wants to know the sequence of events

..... - *how was it? First the engagement, then the financial support?*

Knowledge consists of two elements. Facts and they way they are combined together. Hjalmar in the beginning has the facts and Gregers has only to piece them together. The dialogue between the two of the play's main characters in the very start will show us the fundamental isolation of the subtext. For what Gregers learns, puts him in a position to bring about certain desired effects.

For knowledge is power, but not necessarily the power to bring desired effects. Afterwards, Gregers intentions and actions do not lead to the foundation of a true marriage. They lead to the ruin of a family and the death of Jalmars daughter, Hedvig.

"Truth is most often used to mean being in accord with fact or reality, or fidelity to an original or standard. Truth may also often be used in modern contexts to refer to an idea of "truth to self," or authenticity." [10]

Truth is usually held to be opposite to falsehood, which, correspondingly, can also take on a logical, factual, or ethical meaning. The concept of truth is discussed and debated in several contexts, including philosophy, art, and religion. Many human activities depend upon the concept, where its nature as a concept is assumed rather than being a subject of discussion; these include most of the sciences, law, journalism, and everyday life. Some philosophers view the concept of truth as basic, and unable to be explained in any terms that are more easily understood than the concept of truth itself. Commonly, truth is viewed as the correspondence of language or thought to an independent reality, in what is sometimes called the correspondence theory of truth.

Other philosophers take this common meaning to be secondary and derivative. According to Martin Heidegger, the original meaning and essence of truth in Ancient Greece was unconcealment, or the revealing or bringing of what was previously hidden into the open, as indicated by the original Greek term for truth, "*aletheia*".

In *Wild Duck* the "Truth" revealed with the help of Gregers' becomes one of the fundamental subjects for the characters. It is the Truth who leads Ekdal family in their downfall with the biggest result, Hedvig's death. We can say that Ibsen through his text and these two families trying to open a dialogue about philosophical topics that are really important in order to create not only a family, but a whole society. It appears that Ibsen was influenced by modern philosophers and especially Nietzsche (1844-1900), who were active at the same time.

Friedrich Nietzsche believed the search for truth, or '**the will to truth**', was a consequence of **the will to power** of philosophers. He thought that truth should be used

as long as it promoted life and the will to power, and he thought untruth was better than truth if it had this life enhancement as a consequence. As he wrote in *Beyond Good and Evil*, "The falseness of a judgment is to us not necessarily an objection to a judgment... The question is to what extent it is life-advancing, life-preserving, species-preserving, perhaps even species-breeding..." (aphorism 4). He proposed the will to power as a truth only because, according to him, it was the most life-affirming and sincere perspective one could have. "Truth" is nothing more than the invention of fixed conventions for merely practical purposes, especially those of repose, security and consistence.

During the whole text, spectators are becoming witnesses of what Gregers' brought to the life of this people with the "claim of the ideal" and the need to reveal the truth with any cost. The usage of irony is demonstrated masterfully by Ibsen in the text. Despite Gregers dogmatically insisting on truth, he never says what he thinks but only implies. And is never clearly understood till the climax of the play. He is persisting Jalmar through innuendo and hidden phrases until he realizes the truth. Hedvig is Gina's daughter but not his child. He denies Hedvig, leaded by Gregers' persistence on absolute truth. Gregers observing the damage that he caused, is willing to repair things by suggesting Hedvig to sacrifice the Wild Duck. The wounded animal, to prove her love. Although, Hedvig compared with the other characters is the only one who recognizes that Gregers speaks in code. She is looking for the deeper meaning in the most important statement Gregers makes which does not contain one. To kill herself as an act of self-sacrifice, instead of the Wild Duck, in order to prove her love. Only in the very end Gregers and Jalmar realize that the absolute truth and "the claim of the ideal" is too much for the human heart to bear by once.

The big question that audience starts thinking is, if the truth is always necessary and needed? Dr Relling is always the character who will say this out loud and question Gregers. He refers to "life-lie" as an inevitable solution for people in need. For people who based on their financial situation will always depend on others.

So is the "**Truth**" related to "**Power**"?

*In social science and politics, **power** is the ability to influence or outright control the behavior of people.*

The term "authority" is often used for power perceived as legitimate by the social structure. Power can be seen as evil or unjust, but the exercise of power is accepted as endemic to humans as social beings. The use of power need not involve force or the threat of force (coercion). At one extreme, it closely resembles what an English-speaking person might term "influence", although some authors distinguish "influence" as a means by which power is used. One such example is soft power, as compared to hard power.

Much of the recent sociological debate about power revolves around the issue of its means to enable – in other words, power as a means to make social actions possible as much as it may constrain or prevent them. The philosopher Michael Foucault saw power as a structural expression of "a complex strategic situation in a given social setting" that requires both constraint and enablement. [11]

The thought of Friedrich Nietzsche underlies much 20th century analysis of power. Nietzsche disseminated ideas on the "will to power," which he saw as the domination of other humans as much as the exercise of control over one's environment. Other Nietzschean interpreters dispute the suggestion that Nietzsche's concept of the will to power is merely and only a matter of narrow, harmless, humanistic self-perfection. They suggest that, for Nietzsche, power means self-perfection as well as outward, political, elitist, aristocratic domination.

When Gregers gives a name to his mission, he calls it "laying the foundation of a true marriage", a partnership founded on the truth. The only character that have the opportunity of a true marriage though, unlinked with lies and secrets is old Werle. For old Werle, who by his very existence gets Gregers going with his mission, is after all the

same man who in the course of the play enters with Mrs. Sorby into a marriage of the very kind Gregers advocates.

Gregers wants to hit out his father with his plan, wants to free himself from his power and create something for himself to live for. He wants to be his own master. The tragic element however, is in the fact that he can only consider this by being a master of others. The son who rebels against the father by making himself a patriarch towards his friend Hjalmar.

Gregers tries to find his purpose in life and he present himself as the **idealist** who is searching for the truth talking around about "**the claim of the ideal**".

"Idealism is the metaphysical and epistemological doctrine that ideas or thoughts make up fundamental reality. Essentially, it is any philosophy which argues that the only thing actually knowable is consciousness (or the contents of consciousness), whereas we never can be sure that matter or anything in the outside world really exists. Thus, the only real things are mental entities, not physical things (which exist only in the sense that they are perceived)." [12]

The play's action and characters is linked in a socio-historic drama of which the characters are representing social classes. The merchant old Werle represents the ruling class, and Gina with her family the other, the socially powerless one.

Gregers on the other side, by virtue of heredity he belongs to the ruling class but by choice he allies himself to the oppressed. His intention are to become something different than his father but thanks to the ways he uses, he becomes an even worse oppressor than his father.

One person holds much power and others little. Happiness does not depend on one's position within society's economic antagonism. Mrs. Sorby and Werle together realize an ideal, a free and open relationship without secrets. It is something that someone chooses

for oneself but never on behalf of others, as Gregers does. Gina and Hjalmar had created a different kind of relationship, which basically is no less an ideal for their own reality and life.

Dr. Relling seems to realize this and becomes the spokesman of the truth, although he not only conceals the "life lie" but also fabricates lies for the benefit of other characters as well, as Molvik.

The only villain is Gregers in this play, with his need to go beyond his father, he has a will to power, which is perceived from himself as idealism. It seems that behind the idealism of Gregers is concealed nothing but egoism. Ibsen attacks to the negative side of revolution through Gregers. The middle class is fed on illusions, now Ibsen is approaching the negative aspect of revolution with self-control, in contrast with his previous works. Not because he is more tolerant to the average people, but because he is more interested in showing the inadequate idealist.

This is what happens to Gregers. He has a mission. He wants to step out of his father's shadow and to be seen and be remembered. But towards his father he is powerless, and powerless can be just as dangerous as power. He turns into power over other people. Gregers ignores that it is about power and that is why it turns into power of the evil kind.

It seems that Gregers and Hjalmar follows the fate of their parents and somehow the history is repeated. Sometimes the patriarchal family is a heavier weight that the class struggle. Gregers grew up in a family based in lies and pain. He witnessed his mother's pain. Now he wants the truth for everyone without counting or caring about the consequences, as soon as he chooses another path from his father and his way of leaving.

IV. II Important productions of "The Wild Duck"

IV.II.I Karel Jernek's Production, 1943

In Karel Jernek's production of Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, 1943 in the Na porici Theater, the scenography was designed by Frantisek Troster. The photographer's studio was evoked by a projection plane, where the carpet crossed in an arc to a vertical position from a diagonal and ended in the grid, perpendicular. In front of it archaic photo props hung in the grid cast their shadows on the imaginary floor. In this way a mysterious space was created in which various objects appeared as associative moments in the course of a life. An immobile camera on a tripod stood in the sharply lit space as a symbol reflecting the dramatic reality. Unfortunately, that was the only information I could find for this production, without more details regarding the directing decisions and the scenography. [11]



IV.II.II Bergman's Stockholm Production, 1972

When Ingmar Bergman put on *The Wild Duck* at The Royal Dramatic Theatre in 1972, his take on the play was hardly traditional. The drama usually centres on the mental conflict between Gregers and Hjalmar. Bergman opted instead to make Hedvig the central character of the play: it was through her eyes that the audience viewed the sequence of events. This interpretation was further reinforced by the mise-en-scene. Traditionally the attic is placed at the back of the stage, and what takes place there is consequently hidden from the audience. Bergman reversed this idea, turning the attic

outwards. This gave it a prominent position, one which heightened its symbolic significance. The contrast between the shabby studio and the attic thereby became an important theme of the production as a whole. It also brought the actors closer to the audience, making it possible to interpret their thoughts and feelings from their facial expressions.

As always in Ibsen's dramas the past casts a long shadow over the present, and this was visually reinforced by Bergman. The Werle house, for example, featured a portrait of Gregers' dead mother. This was especially significant in the scene with Old Werle, Gregers' father and the former business partner of Old Ekdal. It demonstrated how the memory of his beloved, yet deeply unhappy mother was always present in Gregers' psyche. This maternal portrait had a counterpart in the Ekdal home, where Gina was a calm and collected influence, whose down-to-earth motherly nature held things together. The production emphasised how various aspects of motherliness had formed and were still moulding Gregers' and Hjalmar's lives. [14] [15] [16]

This is, in broad detail, how *The Wild Duck* has most commonly been read, with Gregers at the top as the wielder of power, Hedvig at the bottom as the victim, and the two Ekdals with Gina in the middle as the broken-hearted survivors. This reading has surely never been more beautifully and more warmly defended than in Ingmar Bergman's Stockholm production of 1972.

Bergman's interpretation takes as its starting point a scenographic idea. The interpretation is indicated already in the stage set. The attic studio of the photographer Ekdal here does not fill the whole stage. It is only a small, two dimensional room downstage, enclosed by a low, three-panelled screen. Through a door at one side the two hunters go out into the loft in front of the narrow studio, while the roofbeams are projected on to the extensive backcloth.

The loft with the Ekdal's dream world, the 'forest' with the animals and the hunt, is no longer a small, shadowy room behind the flat, as in Ibsen's stage directions. It now lies around and in front of the flat. When Hedvig and her father point to the wild duck, they are not hidden in the impenetrable darkness. They stand out on the proscenium and point — at us.

In this way we, the spectators, are designated as the world which Gregers Werle wants to bring to self-awareness - and which he causes to collapse in the attempt. The production was conceived at a time when the concept of and the demand for bringing people to consciousness dominated public debate.

One precondition for the success of the interpretation is that the object of this process of making conscious, and of the demand for truth - namely, Hjalmar - can also be made an object of identification: that he should become a reasonably warm and lovable father of a family, who functions relatively well on what Gregers terms illusions. When he returns home from the dinner at the Werle household and boasts of the many pointed remarks he has hurled in the face of the fine grand chamberlains - 'I just gave them a piece of my



mind' - he is comical, because what he is saying, or at least what he would have his two women believe, is not true.

But Bergman has Hjalmar sing this phrase and thus lend it a reconciliatory touch of selfirony. 'His sensitivity is honest, his melancholy beautiful in its form, not a trace of affectation': it was in these words that Ibsen described Hjalmar in a letter of 14 November 1884, where he specifically vetoed any kind of parody in the acting of the role. So Bergman at least has Ibsen on his side in this aspect of the interpretation.

The whole burden of the play's statement thus rests with the character who carries the claim of the ideal in his back pocket, as he sets about bringing others to full 'consciousness'. Everything about this character is exterior, for he burns with a cold flame: the humourless laughter, the stilted walk, like one who preaches ideological revolution without realizing that he himself would hate the revolution more than anyone, if ever it should actually come about.

But Bergman does not read the text quite so simply. He has balanced his opposition to the Gregers Werles of his generation by making his antagonist in the play, Dr. Relling, also an unsavory fellow, who quite deliberately ensures that people do not have their eyes opened, and who himself is a conscious purveyor of lies to those he thinks in need of them. If Gregers Werle is the more dangerous, he is at least a misled idealist, while Relling is a staunch cynic.

In this way Bergman succeeds in defending the estranged Hjalmar Ekdal to the very last, while at the same time placing Mrs. Sorby in the pivotal position between the two opponents, Gregers and Relling. Where Hedvig bears all the pain in this performance, Mrs. Sorby bears all its Utopian optimism. She is the one who marries old Werle and openly tells him about all the sorts of things other people hide from one another — the very things Gregers wants to force them to look in the eye. The efforts of this missionary of the truth bounce off her, because with her truth comes from within.

In her bright red dress and coat, she stands out like a leitmotif of the performance, in contrast to its other dusty greens and browns. Only in one other detail of the play does a bright red colour appear: on one of the chairs in the Ekdals' home. It is the one on which, at the end of the play, old Ekdal sits in his uniform with his dreams. 'The forest takes its revenge': with this line of connection to the past, his fantasy about the world in the loft is defended like some sort of truth, in harmony with his being.

To deny an average person his 'life-lie' is to deny him his happiness: this is the truth which Bergman extracts from the play, modifying it in two ways. He lets the honest Mrs. Sorby take all the weight she can carry. And he extends the loft-space to encompass everything that cannot be reduced to the level of concept, including then whole audience. Much of what goes on in the little lighted room in the centre is important, 'the debate of the day'. But catastrophic consequences ensue if it cannot encompass and comprehend the whole surrounding loft. For the forest takes its revenge, and the revenge strikes the innocent.

Only one character is left out of Bergman's reading of the text: the old merchant Werle. This is understandable. In himself he is not particularly interesting. He may be seen as merely the begetter of the intrigue. But by pushing him into the background, one layer is lost of the character of Gregers Werle, whose begetter he also is. Gregers has yet



another subtext which remains silent in Bergman's interpretation. The idealistic wielder of power is himself subject to a power. [17]

IV.II.III Ronconi: Power and Realism, 1977

One alternative to the Bergman reading of *The Wild Duck* with merchant Werle in the centre can be demonstrated by reference to another performance of equal distinction, Luca Ronconi's Rome production of 1977. Through the two performances, two of the period's leading directors pursue a hidden dialogue about Ibsen's text.

Ronconi's interpretation, too, is right from the beginning demonstrated through the stage set. He has taken as his point of departure the fact that poor, misguided Hjalmar Ekdal is a photographer by profession: the whole production is in black and white, and it opens with three illuminated photographs in a dark room. They decorate the wall in the house of the old industrial baron Werle.

His dinner guests, whom Ibsen lets us hear mainly from off-stage, have been placed by Ronconi in two static groups by the proscenium, with the place-settings before them on the floor. And when they move it is with the reeling movements of blind men. In this way we are prepared for the emphasis on old Werle, who here is blind, with dark glasses and a white stick. He sees nothing, but has determined everything. He is the power, the man who owns money and people, the begetter of evil in the tragedy.

The begetter, too, of son Gregers, the misguided idealist, who here is white-haired and made to look of an age with the old man, just one of the pawns in the old man's game: Gregers, who may babble about ideology and cause the death of a young girl and the ruin of a marriage, but in so doing is only a fitting camouflage for the real oppression exercised by the financier Werle, which is not disturbed one little bit by Gregers's idealism.

The surrealistic shock-effect of the performance occurs in the second act, which takes place in the home of the photographer Ekdal. The little studio in the flat, where Werle has set him up with his abandoned mistress, is made up of three rooms, and the shock comes when one discovers that the three rooms are exactly identical, like photocopies of one another. Ekdal and Gina and Hedvig appear in turn in each of them, addressing the others as if they were taking up the positions they occupy only in one of the other rooms. And when the door opens, it is the same door which opens simultaneously in all three dividing walls. In comes Gregers - not from the side of the stage, but out from one of the dividing walls in the centre of the stage. It is unsettling in the elementary manner of a surrealist painting by Magritte.



And the loft with the wild duck is created by means of the whole set — all three rooms with three matching sets of furniture - being slid out sideways, while the actors remain where they are. And so, on a large empty stage, with a metal crate in the corner for the wild duck, the doublings have finally ceased, the light is dimmed, and the characters confront one another. In the world of fantasy it is finally possible to exist without one's vision becoming distorted.

The idea of the photographic technique, which begins by seeming just rather dull, slowly becomes loaded with meaning. The photograph - the most realistic of all representations — is, in the last analysis, the most unrealistic, with all its potential for copying and retouching.

At any rate, this is how Ronconi uses it. It is the blind Werle who 'sees' reality, for reality is power, and he knows what power is built on. He has it, and is holding on to it. The

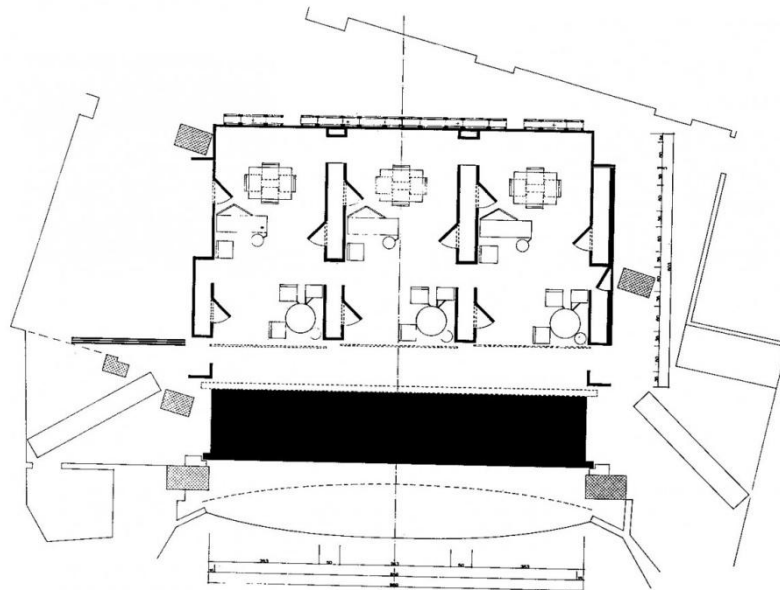


sighted, whom he owns, live in the misleading world of the photograph, each supported by his own illusion - Gregers by his, Ekdal by his, it makes no difference.

In the fantasy of the loft they enjoy for a short interval a world which is whole and free from oppression. But Gregers, who thinks he is rebelling against his father, actually brings order into the latter's world by wiping out the world of the loft.

Hedvig shoots herself behind a lowered curtain. We are not to be allowed to lose ourselves in grief over her death alone. Anger is to be directed not at Gregers, but at his father. When the curtain is raised again, her body is lying there, but now the loft, too, is divided into three like a set of photocopies, with three identical crates for the duck. The fantasy of the loft has been eradicated. The loft has now been made into the illusion which it must become if it is to be mastered.

The absolute ruler is the merchant Werle. He landed his former friend Lieutenant Ekdal in the soup, through their shady business dealings up in the Hojdal forest, for which Ekdal alone was punished. And he got his friend's son to bear the consequences of his seduction of Gina. But his own son is equally tacit and unexplained in Bergman's and Ronconi's productions. [18]



IV.III Brief character description

- _WERLE, a merchant, manufacturer.
- _GREGERS WERLE, his son.
- _OLD EKDAL.
- _HIALMAR EKDAL, his son, a photographer.
- _GINA EKDAL, Hjalmar's wife.
- _HEDVIG, their daughter, a girl of fourteen.
- _MRS. SORBY, Werle's housekeeper.
- _RELLING, a doctor.
- _MOLVIK, student of theology.
- _GRABERG, Werle's bookkeeper.
- _PETTERSEN, Werle's servant.
- _JENSEN, a hired waiter.
- _A FLABBY GENTLEMAN.
- _A THIN-HAIRED GENTLEMAN.
- _A SHORT-SIGHTED GENTLEMAN.
- _SIX OTHER GENTLEMEN, guests at Werle's dinner-party.
- _SEVERAL HIRED WAITERS.

The key characters in this play are exceedingly complicated, and each depicts some ambiguous attitudes towards life, which manifest their impact on their inter-subjective relations with other characters.

Werle

Werle as mentioned before is a merchant, a man of money and power who belongs to the aristocracy. During the play we can understand that there is a past with all the characters who either destroyed or help them, always for his own benefit. From old Ekdal till Hedvig it seems that is the man who shaped the daily life of the rest of the characters according to his self-interest. He is having an affair with his current housekeeper, Ms. Sorby which is based on mutual trust and truthfulness. Old Werle, who enjoys overwhelming power and domination due to the wealth he has received in industrial business, is the epitome of patriarchal sovereignty. His castrating power not only

incorporates his own child but also encompasses the lives of other people, like Ekdal family, who lie beneath his domination.

Gregers Werle

Young Werle, an idealist, feels that his mission is to Advocate & Preach Truth and Purity of Soul whenever he can. In the events of *The Wild Duck*, Gregers plays a major role of proving to others the virtues of the "claim of the ideal." From the beginning, when he realizes the intervention of his father to Ekdal's family, his goal is to reveal the truth and cure their marriage: that the loft is not the wide open spaces, and that the household is not self-sufficient, but is kept afloat economically only by subsidies from his father, old Werle, without thinking the consequences of his acts, inasmuch the truth is the only who matters in order to start "clean" from the beginning. But rather than making Hialmar happy by understanding the true nature of his marriage, Gregers only succeeds in turning Halmar against his daughter, Hedvig. Yet the whole plan leads to nothing but misery and death.

Gregers is not a hero, but he is keen on to heroes. We could easily say that with the first read, Gregers is the villain of this text. His villainy consists in a will to power, which is concealed from himself as idealism. It seems that behind idealism is concealed nothing but destructive egoism. Ibsen sees him as a key figure, on whose subtle characterization the success of the performance depends: 'Gregers is the play's most difficult character in respect of the performance'.

According to Hemmati, Gregers' inclination towards revealing the truth arises from the intrigues his father has played upon poor Ekdal's family. In a burst of guilt, contrition, shame and conscientiousness, he begins to ruminate upon performing an act, which consequently would stop the proliferation of falsehood and illusion. As if by awakening Ekdal family to truth, he craves to find a justifiable reason to his own humiliated existence. This humiliation, which has put Gregers into shame resulting in his excessive

feeling of guilt in the face of his friend mainly, arises from his father's overbearing patriarchal authority, dominance and power. [19]

Old Ekdal

Old Ekdal is a demoted lieutenant and Werle's former partner who is now a broken man. He does odd jobs of copy work for Werle's bookkeeper which provides him with enough means to buy an occasional bottle of cognac. Fourteen years ago, when old Ekdal was active at the Höidal works, the company appropriated a large quantity of lumber from government-owned land. Werle placed all the blame on Ekdal who was sentenced to prison. Ekdal paid for this crime by serving a jail sentence and losing his reputation. He now lives with Hjalmar and Gina, who dreams of his days of prosperity and of being a big-game; a dream he realizes by shooting rabbits in the loft.

Hjalmar Ekdal

Hjalmar Ekdal is a photographer, but dreams of becoming an inventor. He is son of old Ekdal. He is a self-centered, indolent and laughably commonplace. As a family man and provider, he relies on the patronage of Werle, the hard work of Gina and the unrealistic delusion of a ground-breaking discovery to get from one day to the next. His character begins to reveal itself early on, in Act 1, when he is too ashamed to acknowledge the presence of his father at the Werle dinner party. Hjalmar's superficially sensitive nature, understanding voice and gift for reciting the verses and thoughts of others, have always made him appear the gear light of the future among his family.

Gina Ekdal

Gina is been married to Hjalmar for fourteen years and is the practical housewife who keeps all the wheels oiled and turning and looks after the business over and above. She has a past with Werle family which is revealed from the beginning of the play. She is the

one who runs the house and has a nice, lovable life with Hjalmar and her daughter Hedvig.

Hedvig

Hedvig is conceivably the play's most pitiable figure. She is of uncertain parentage, belonging either to Hjalmar or to Werle and potentially passed from the former to the latter in a marriage intended to avoid public disgrace. Hedvig is also marked by an incipient blindness, a degenerative eye-disease that she has inherited from either Werle or Hjalmar's line. Hedvig is the innocent victim of the tension between the two men who stand for the "lie" and the "truth". She is too inexperienced and naive to recognize the shallow affection Hjalmar accords her. She is happy at home and pleased. She is like the wild duck who has forgotten the freedom of the sky, sea and woods in captivity. She has had no contrasting experience in life to provide her with perspective on those she lives with. Moreover, since she is Gina's natural daughter, she, like the wounded bird, is an indirect present from old Werle to the Ekdals. When Hedvig realizes that her father rejects her, she plans to sacrifice the wild duck to show her love and recall his. This is her attempt to adjust to the new truth Gregers has revealed. Finding her free will offering insufficient, however, Hedvig goes one step further and kills herself.

Relling

Dr. Relling is an impoverished doctor who lives in a downstairs apartment from the Ekdals. He is the realist of the play, always coming in a juxtaposition with Gregers. He accuses Gregers for ruining Ekdal's family with the claim of the ideal and he is talking about the importance of life- lie for financially ruined people and in general.

IV.IV Symbols

IV.IV.I The symbol of the Wild Duck

With the Wild Duck Ibsen leaves realism and is dedicated openly to symbolism. Wild Duck is the first play where the author gives the main role, more to a symbol, the Wild Duck, than to a character. The loft, where the symbol is living, is a unique world. Realistic and surrealistic at the same time. Ekdal family spend their time there, each one for their own reasons. With



realistic terms, it is not more than a storage with needless stuff. With poetic and symbolist terms is a world of illusions where the time has stopped. For old Ekdal is the forests of his youth, for Hedvig is the bottom of the sea and for Hjalmar a way to avoid his responsibilities.

Moreover, the loft is a miniature of the bigger world, where its objects are provided Hedvig an adequate substitute of the "bigger real world", which she does not want to discover. The Wild Duck obtains a mysterious importance mostly for Hedvig, which she cannot even describe. Therefore, whilst Wild Duck playing a leading part in the play, is not easy to be described what symbolizes. First of all because the Wild Duck symbolizes something different for each character and second we cannot easily distinguish it from the symbolic function of the loft as a unity.

Gregers is the only character who sees the loft as a symbol with the conventional way. For him, the Wild Duck represents the Ekdal family and the loft is the swamp they have been sunk. Although this symbol is plain, Gregers tries to force his way of reading the symbol, which leads to the tragedy of the final act.

IV.IV.II Truth and reality against lies and illusion

In this play it is obvious how the characters of these two families are related to each other through lies, truth, power and family bonds. They reflect each other and by mutual comparison amplify the dramatic theme and hasten events to their conclusion. However, the characters are not only related among themselves. They bear relation to the integral symbolism of the play, the image of the wild duck. Old Werle had shot and injured the wild duck when he was hunting. Werle's servant Pettersen, later gives the duck to Old Ekdal, who takes it home and with the help of his son Hjalmar and granddaughter, Hedvig, cares for it in the garret/ loft. The Ekdal family now is keeping the wild duck in the loft of their house with other animals like rabbits and pigeons. The wild duck though owns a special position to the loft. Hedvig is in charge and taking care of the wild duck. Through the text we can recognize the importance of this symbol in this play. Furthermore, the name of the play is Wild Duck and from this we can understand the importance of this element as a symbol and a meaning to the whole play.

Old Werle facing realities in the past and present doesn't need the wild duck in his life. Him and Mrs. Sorby are pragmatic individuals who now successfully begin to build a life based on mutual trust and truthfulness. He desired that his servant get rid of the wounded bird because he has no need of a wild duck.

In contrast with lieutenant Ekdal, Hjalmar and Hedvig who are keeping the wild duck in their house. It seems like the wild duck is the symbol of their illusionistic life. A wild animal in a loft, under captivity which by the passage of the time cannot distinguish nature and freedom from specially configured environment in order to be in captivity. Instantaneously, the spectators are wondering if this kind of life is more preferable for wild duck than the death itself.

The loft now is becoming a space of fantasy in the sense of an artificial environment in order to house the wild duck. The illusion of the wild life in captivity, where it seems it has a different meaning for each character.

Gina is not involved in the space of wild duck, at least not till Hedvig enters and kill herself at the end of the play. Is one of the characters that knows the truth and the facts that her common life with her family built on and she is not willing to destroy it. She doesn't mind with the occupation of the rest of the family with the loft, as long as their family is happy together.

Dr Relling and old Werle by their avoidance to encounter the truth that is laid behind their illusory worlds are more aware of their true human condition. The only persons who sustain real and complete identity are old Werle and Dr. Relling. They are the only people who can bear reality more than others, and are able to cope with reality by looking at the world and the personality without casting up strong defenses against their real world. In other words, they do not avoid the truth because they are not willing to confront reality, rather they believe that by dismantling their illusion the reality itself would be demolished.

IV.IV.III A Lacanian reading

In the play we read how *Hjalmar* has been developing some plans in his mind, in order to develop his future invention but every time someone is asking him he cannot give any specific details of this invention. He says that the reason he dedicate his life to photography wasn't to taking portraits of everyday people, but to develop photography both an art and a science. So that's why he decided to make the great invention. Later we are understanding that it was Dr. Relling who brought this valuable fantasy and developed Hjalmar's delusions by suggesting him to make a remarkable discovery in the future. According to Meyer, this makes Hjalmar a mere imitator or an artificial artist who has no specific originality of himself sustained by an illusory hope that never comes off. In other worlds Both Hjalmar and his father have sought to hide themselves in the deep

blue sea of illusion, and *Gregers*, like the "damned clever dog" trained by his father, hauls them back to the surface. Hjalmar's escape from reality situates him in his insulated fantasmatic world in which the reality (the signified) always slips beneath the layer of the pure signifiers as if an insurmountable hole is opened up in his symbolic world.

Hjalmar is distressed not because he thinks that Old Werle's over-reaching authority has played havoc on his family but on the contrary, he suffers his condition for he has not been able to adequately undergo his father's paternal authority. Old Ekdal's incapacity to impose proper regulative law (of the father) on his child is partly responsible for Hjalmar's symbolic disintegration/imbalance.

According to Hammati, the lack of adequate paternal authority in Ekdal's family has caused Hjalmar to lose contact with the realities of his symbolic world: either he is situated below the level of the symbolic world by his lack of originality or he is positioned above the symbolic level by being too much original. Hjalmar's fluctuation between his excessive originality and his lack of originality would make of him an unreliable person. Hjalmar's inability to smoothly handle his symbolic uni-verse and to establish a normal connection with others, would ultimately give him no other choice except to take recourse to his solitary imaginative horizon. Here we should be reminded that, Hjalmar's involvement in excessive imagination is not destined to enable him to sever his relation from the real world of the people around him or to discover something, which would distinguish him among his fellow people; rather he is already distinguished and separated from the symbolic world of the ordinary people.

Subsequently, Hedvig's blinding eyes should be read alongside her preoccupation with taking care of a crippled wild duck. Hedvig, associates the wild duck with herself not because she wants to heal the duck's wound and palliate its pains but inversely her

intentions to cure the duck rather arises from her concern to cure her own wound, her castration.

Hedvig does not commit suicide because she has realized that Gregers is speaking in codes and therefore looking for the deeper meaning of Gregers' statement decides to kill herself, but conversely her self-sacrificial act is the result of her avoidance to come to terms with the deeper meaning of Gregers' statement: that Hedvig, in order to obtain her father's love and attention should surrender to her father's overreaching power and authority which ultimately would result in her castration.

Gregers truly has understood how the figure of the wild duck acts as a nodal point, which serves as a supportive prop for sustaining and shaping Hedvig's fantasmatic world. The interesting point here is the fact that Hedvig is not concerned with taking care of a duck with a wound, but rather she is concerned with the wound itself, with the cut which has inscribed itself on the body of the duck, the point of the exclusion of the little piece of the real which establishes for Hedvig a new symbolic domain.

The open wound in the body of the duck acts as a horrifying supplement in the background, which sustains Hedvig's fantasy. Gregers seems to have understood the fact that it is not the duck itself that should be removed; as if the duck itself is tame enough and its mere presence is no obstacle to the revelation of the truth, rather on the contrary, it is the wildness of the wound in the body of the duck, which should be tamed and moderated. [20] [21]

IV.IV.IV A Darwinian reading

domestication means degeneration

"In plays by Ibsen, both before and after the appearance of Darwin as a public figure there is a rich variety of animal symbolism. Somehow the physical resemblances perceived between human beings and certain animals of the higher order must have

attracted the creative imagination of the playwright in a particularly productive way. As his plays develop, the relationship between the human and the animal becomes much more deeply woven into the thematic texture of the drama.

[...]the principal "animal" thematic is connected to the wild duck: the animal performs both on the literal, material level and in the register of metaphor. The contrast between the rich people belonging to Mr. Werle's circle and the people of modest means living under the roof of the Ekdal family is indirectly suggested by the existence of the domesticated animals maintained in the attic behind the wide double door at the back of the stage, animals held in captivity and made to forget the real wild life in the forest. This use of animals to mark a social distinction extends seamlessly to the metaphorical. In its inauthentic, shadowy existence, the domesticated duck may be said to correspond to the "losers" in society, to the characters who need an existential illusion, a "life lie," in order to have the strength to carry on with their dreary live. "[22]

According to Asbjorn, and his observation in Ibsen's Wild Duck, he mentions some connections between Ibsen and his possible interest in Darwinian theory and the characteristics of animals. From the very beginning of the text, in Werle's house in first Act, one of the chamberlains exclaims among the rich guests, food, alcohol and cigars, "My Lord, it's all in the struggle for existence" (Ibsen 401), an obvious reference to "Struggle for Existence," the title of chapter three of On the Origin of Species and, of course, a fundamental concept in Darwin's work. As a slogan in the 1880s, this concept was generally known to be a central part of the theory of evolution.

When Gregers visits Ekdal's flat in the second Act he is pointing out the limited space of the apartment especially for Old Ekdal who used to hunt in the forests. The family insists that they open the double door so that Gregers can see the "treasure" of the family. In the text the space is described "[...] an extensive, irregular loft room with many nooks and corners" (Ibsen 425) [25], with a couple of chimney shafts and parts of the room lying

in shadow. The duck is obviously the jewel of the crown in the eyes of Hjalmar, old Ekdal and Hedvig. As Asbjorn again says the names by which the animals are called in the original version of the play correspond exactly to the names used by Darwin's Danish translator: høns, vildand, kanin and due, and the two varieties of due (pigeon) are both by Jacobsen and in the play named tumlere and kropduer, "tumblers" and "pouters." This is hardly a coincidence. Darwin carefully describes the varieties of the domestic pigeons and their distinction from the wild ones. How they start changing habits and develop different characteristics.

In *A Study of Six Plays by Ibsen*, Brian W. Downs makes a more concrete guess. He suggests that Ibsen, either directly or indirectly from his friend J.P. Jacobsen, may have learned of the following observation in Darwin's work *Variation of Animals and Plants under Domestication*: "*We have seen how soon the wild duck, when domesticated, loses its true character, from the effects of abundant or changed feeding, or from taking little exercise*" [23]

What are the consequences for our understanding of *The Wild Duck* if we grant that the four animal species in the Ekdal loft were came from Darwin's discussion of "Variation under Domestication"? According to Asbjorn It is clear that the playwright did not assume the interest or approach of Darwin's study. While Darwin wanted to report the consequences of captivity on the evolution of the species, for Ibsen and in his moral universe freedom is an absolute value. Darwin finds an astonishing variety and interest in domesticated species; for Ibsen, domestication means degeneration.

We cannot strictly compare the two approaches, as Ibsen's basic distinction is drama, where human emotions are involved, and Darwin's scientific observation for the animals which are kept in the loft and slowly lose their original characteristics and forget wild life. In Ibsen's case the animals confined in the loft room and made to forget life in the real forest serve as an eloquent *metaphor* for the vulnerable and wretched human beings in

the Ekdal family and their dissipated neighbors. Even at the other side of wild duck's world, in the first act for Werle's guests, the "chamberlains" are been described as *a fat man, a bald-headed man, a nearsighted man*, in a way that evokes the unfortunate consequences of domestication and how humans are affected by the environment they are surrounded.

Darwin's view is not that domestication means degeneration. As a scientist he observes that animal species under domestication tend to develop new varieties. It is Ibsen who uses a wild animal in domestication in order to symbolize the Ekdal's family and society's degeneration. [24] [25]

To sum up all the above information, each theoretical approach helped me understand better the characters and their mentality. Different ways of interpreting the text through different ways of view. I cannot relate entirely with only one approach. I took elements that helped me developing the characters in several levels, dramaturgically and directing wise.

IV.IV.V Photography as a symbol

Another symbolic element in *The Wild Duck* is that of photography. Is not a coincidence that Hjalmar Ekdal is a photographer, whose studies were paid by old Werle. This element underscores the imitative nature of his way of living. Photography is the most realistic of all arts and at the same time you can easily create copies, illusions and a retouched reality. Taking ideas and ideals from other sources, Hjalmar presents an image of nobility and an appearance of character depth he does not really possess. In the course of the play, Hjalmar is busy at retouching — we never see him take any pictures. By the same token, Ekdal retouches his own self-image, minimizing his character blemishes until his whole life is a distortion of the truth.

IV.V Key moments

Undoubtedly, Wild Duck is a complicated play, with a text that is going deeper when the reader/ spectator unfolds the different layers of interpretation. In every text there is a key moment, this specific instant or point in time of the play that defines the rest of the situations.

In Wild Duck we can definitely say that there are more than one key moments, that can define the rest of the interpretation regarding the solution of the whole play. At this point we will focus on this scene that we will analyze.

In this thesis we perceive the element of the Wild Duck as the strongest one. In the end the whole play took its name from this symbol. We will focus on the moments that the loft and the wild duck are presented for the first time to Gregers and the audience (Act II) but as well the moment that Hedvig takes her life in the final act (Act V).

Act II When the loft is revealed to Gregers

Till this moment we have seen Werle's mansion (Act I) and in contrast with this world we are now entering the Ekdal's house/ photo studio for the rest of the play (Act II-V). When Gregers visits their house for the first time (Act II) and his plan is ready to take action, to reveal and lead them to the truth, Ekdal family shows him the loft where they keep the wild duck. As we talked thoroughly about the symbol of the wild duck and what does it mean for its character, now we are going to approach for the first time this space in order to define it more precisely.

The first idea was that the loft should be in a **central position** in connection with the rest of the space and with the characters as well. What is central is the counterpart of power — all that is creatively irrational: the loft, the wild duck, the hunt, Hedvig's pictures, the forest which takes its revenge, old Ekdal, and, first and foremost, Hedvig herself.

Moreover, putting the loft in the middle of the stage, automatically is becoming the strongest element and the rest of the actions are taking place around or insight. Ibsen seems to pay a lot of attention to the movement of the characters. What it is not said with words, it is said with their entrances, exits and their silence. For this reason it was really important to find a solution how to show this repeatedly dead-end that their life is being leaded because of Gregers interference. Because of the central position of the loft the characters are forced to move around it, in circles. Trapped in their reality, in Gregers search for truth, in their mediocre life. Their whole life is built around an illusion, their life-lie.

Afterwards, it was necessary to find a way interpret this place of fantasy in their own house. A space where every character is perceiving the reality in a different way, but as well being a space which is between reality and illusion, part of the interior and a connection/ border with the outside world. This need lead me to think this particular space as a balcony or an **atrium**. On the other hand, because of the central position and its necessity for this stage design, the result was to think the loft with an atrium in the middle of a well defined/ realistic interior.

The atrium is the "sun room". Is an open-roofed part of a building/ house and nowadays it more commonly has a glass roof. The atrium was the centerpiece of the home in ancient Roman architecture and is still used today to allow natural light in and connects the protected inside space to the outdoor environment, adding natural beauty to the space. During the centuries has evolved, but the basic design has remained the same. In architecture is a central part of buildings. [26] [27]

Thus, the main idea for my thesis is the usage of this principle, where the interior space is build around the atrium. A connection to nature through the central space of the house. Semiologically, it is really important that the atrium is used in the center of the building, in order to allow the connection with outside world, but still by making a shield from it with

the rest of the interior, in contrast with balconies and yards which allow the direct connection with the rest of the world. The nature in the atrium is somehow a nature in captivity. Trying to depict and imitate the real environment of the wild life.

Moreover, the main idea for the loft is that is the space of the Ekdal's family fantasy. The space where their life- lie is maintained. Every member of the family is entering in order to escape from the reality of their everyday life. For each one, the meaning and the content is different. The approach to this idea, when is revealed to Gregers for the first time, audience realizes that there is no wild duck and the rest of elements that family is describing to him. It is just an atrium. This space will play fundamental role in describing their state of mind. Every time someone enters, the environment is changing with **images/ projections** that show their place of fantasy.

Act V When Hedvig kills herself instead of the wild duck

Another really important key moment is again the loft/ atrium but in the end of the play (Act V). When Hedvig takes her life instead of wild duck's. As we said before, the space that till now was describing their fantasy world is about to be destroyed. The truth has ruined Ekdal's family happiness and it seems that nothing can be done in order to be fixed. My idea of interpreting this "demolition" of fantasy world is to create a literal illustration of the phrase:

"Revealing the truth is like lighting a match. It can bring light or it can set your world on fire"

Unknown

Hedvig's death will not be seen by audience in a literal way, but through a **total white or total black** atmosphere in the atrium. An absolute white atmosphere that will "burn" the space and blinds audience's eyes, or an absolute black which will create a void in the

middle of the space and make reflections between the glass of the atrium and the rest of the interior and the characters.

V. Visual Interpretation

V.I Stage Design

V.I.I Visual inspiration and analysis

Many critics has played great role in creating an image of him which is dominated: a bourgeois, metal- holder dramaturgist, a good Christian with an immaculate family.

"...Gladly I would have exploded noah's ark"

That was Ibsen's answer to a critic who blamed him for joining the conservative party. In the same poem assures that he remains a rebel, although he distinguish his revolution from any other that been held in the past. For Ibsen, none of the past revolutions was enough if it wasn't ultimate. Ibsen was searching the truth through his characters, if that meant that he was coming in contradiction with his previous works. He was questioning the purpose of family, society, revolution. His goal was not the refinement of his character but the truth of human existence through them. That is the reason that his characters have so many levels and readings. Because of this approach I started searching a movement which will answer to this need of truth.

V.I.I.I Anti-aesthetic movement

The Anti-Aesthetic movement rejected the role of beauty in art, stating it was a distraction from truth and more serious issues. Anti-Aesthetic artists share a common disdain for the idea that art has an obligation to be visually pleasing in order to be appreciated.

The movement rejected and grew increasingly hostile to the idea that aesthetics were a necessary or relevant aspect of art. The Anti-Aesthetic movement grew out of the anger at a public that was unaware of problems, and unwilling to face the harsh truths or realities of life. The Anti-Aesthetics were defined not by the way in which they chose to portray a subject or issue, but the way in which they specifically denounced the idea that art should strive to be beautiful.

Around the time that Karl Marx wrote his critique of society, artists were also rebelling against conventional forms in a movement known as Realism (1850-1940). **Realism** rejected the idea that art should try to find beauty in this world or the next. Jean-Francois Millet's famous portrait *The Gleaners* (1857) did not focus on the beauty of the immediate world in the same way as the Impressionists, but more on the harshness of the life of the working class. The figures in the painting are not idealized; the use of muted tones shows the artist is more concerned with capturing the reality of their plight, than with the beauty of the setting or the subjects. Realism marks the beginning of the Anti-Aesthetic movement. The next stage in the Anti-Aesthetic movement is found in **Dadaism** (1915-Present). It rejected the idea that art should have a serious subject, and criticized aesthetics and beauty by using parody or irony. In the most famous example, Marcel Duchamp entered an upside-down urinal and titled it *Fountain* (1917) in an art competition, signing it 'R. Mutt'. The piece ridiculed the seriousness of modern art, while at the same time becoming a symbol of the Anti-Aesthetic movement. The urinal symbolized the aspects of aesthetics (balance, color, focus, composition) which were embodied in its less glamorous utility. In this way, the anti-aesthetic ideals moved from an issue of truth for the Realists, to one of ridicule for the Dadaists. [28]

My aesthetic approach for visualizing and interpreting the stage design of *Wild Duck*, can successfully be described and influenced by this movement.

V.I.I.II The Ekdal's house/ photo studio

Before it was mentioned the importance of the loft and the symbol of the Wild Duck. Although that is true, the first approach stage design wise, will be Ekdal's house which includes the atrium where the Wild Duck exists as a symbol. Reading about the anti-aesthetic movement and my intension to approach the design with contemporary terms, I came across with Panelaks as an architectural solution during the 50's in ex-Czechoslovakia.

The Panelak

"Panelák is a colloquial term in Czech and Slovak for a panel building constructed of pre-fabricated, pre-stressed concrete, such as those extant in the former Czechoslovakia and elsewhere in the world.

Panelák is derived from the standard Czech: panelový dům or Slovak: panelový dom meaning, literally, "panel house / prefabricated-sections house". The term panelák is used mainly for the elongate blocks with more sections with separate entrances. The buildings remain a towering, highly visible reminder of the Communist era. The term panelák refers specifically to buildings in the former Czechoslovakia. However, similar buildings were built in other Communist countries and even in the West.

Paneláks resulted from two main factors: the postwar housing shortage and the ideology of Czechoslovak leaders. Planners from the Communist era wanted to provide large quantities of affordable housing and to slash costs by employing uniform designs over the whole country. They also sought to foster a "collectivistic nature" in the people." [29]

The Panelák after 60's

In the 1970s, the panelák, which had started off as a largely urban type in the Czech lands, made its way into the rest of the country as the post- 1968 regime attempted to placate its citizens with hundreds of thousands of new apartments during the period of

“normalization.” By this time, architects were forced to use lower quality materials, including plastics, and to design smaller apartments in larger buildings. For example, in the massive Petržalka project in Bratislava, the construction of which started in 1974, the average apartment contains 3.12 rooms in 45 square meters. This self-contained district of sprawling eight- to ten-story panel buildings with a total of 50,000 apartments was erected on the only piece of Czechoslovak land on the Austrian side of the Danube, leaving it accessible to the city and the rest of the country only by bridge.

Its architecture and location make it a prime example of how this style of urban planning failed to respond to existing urban patterns and infrastructures. Like Jižní Město and Petržalka, the 1960s and 1970s developments were typically at a massive urban scale—without trees, a pedestrian landscape, or usable community spaces—and nothing like the older districts nearby. Today these groups of often shabby apartment blocks dominate the edges of Czech and Slovak cities and towns. More than 3 million people, or one-third of the population of the Czech Republic, still live in more than 1.1 million apartment units in 80,000 structural panel buildings. More than one-quarter of Bratislava’s 435,000 people live in Petržalka alone.

In the years since the end of communism, for residents and visitors alike, these drab buildings have come to represent everything that was wrong with communism. President Václav Havel famously referred to them as “undignified rabbit hutches (kralikarny).” For Czechs and Slovaks, who are proud of their intact medieval cities and cathedrals, pictures the country towns, and a celebrated history of interwar modernism, it remains difficult to understand how paneláks could have become so ubiquitous less than forty years after the apex of the avant-garde. This investigation of the origins and development of the panelák, and the particular cultural, economic, social, and political conditions in which it was conceived, provides some explanation as to the dominance of this building type in postwar Czechoslovakia. The true test of the logic and successes of the Communist government’s early housing programs will be whether or not paneláks can be

fully integrated into the ever evolving present and future landscapes of Czech and Slovak cities. [30]

Paneláks today remain home to a mix of social classes, with middle class prevailing (according to sociologist Michal Illner from the Czech Academy of Sciences. Thus, there is little social stigma associated with living in a panelák.



Thus, summarize the above my main inspiration for the Ekdal's family house aesthetically and architecturally will be the principle of the Panelaks, especially during post-communism (late 80's -early 90's), when these blocks where starting being in their decadence. Moreover, as it concerns the **atrium** the principle will be the same, combining the interference of people in the panelak's balconies. Not only in these types of buildings, but in general during this period people tended to close their balconies with glass, creating transparent closed spaces. It seems that this act was an intension for privacy and delimitation for private space and property, which fits exactly with the meaning of the atrium for the Wild Duck in our case.



Examples for the style of the atrium



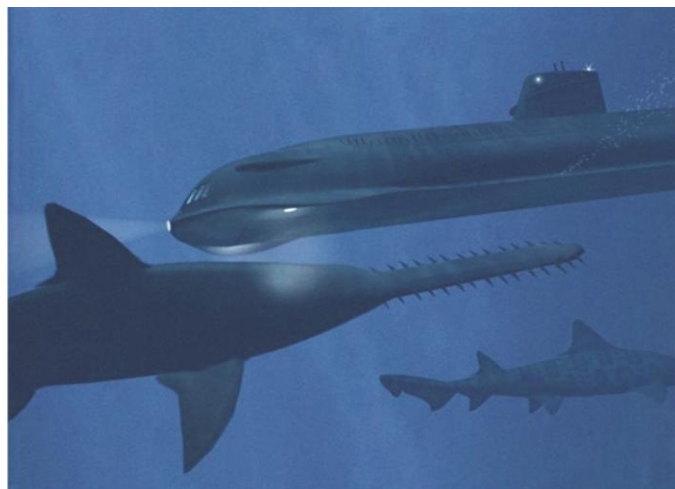
References for Ekdals' interior

Projections in the atrium

As Mentioned many times before the atrium is a space which symbolize their state of mind when they entered there. Different for each one. During the play every time a character is entering the atrium projections covering the whole space will represent their state of mind each-time. A forest and trophies for the old Ekdal, the bottom of the sea for Hedvig.



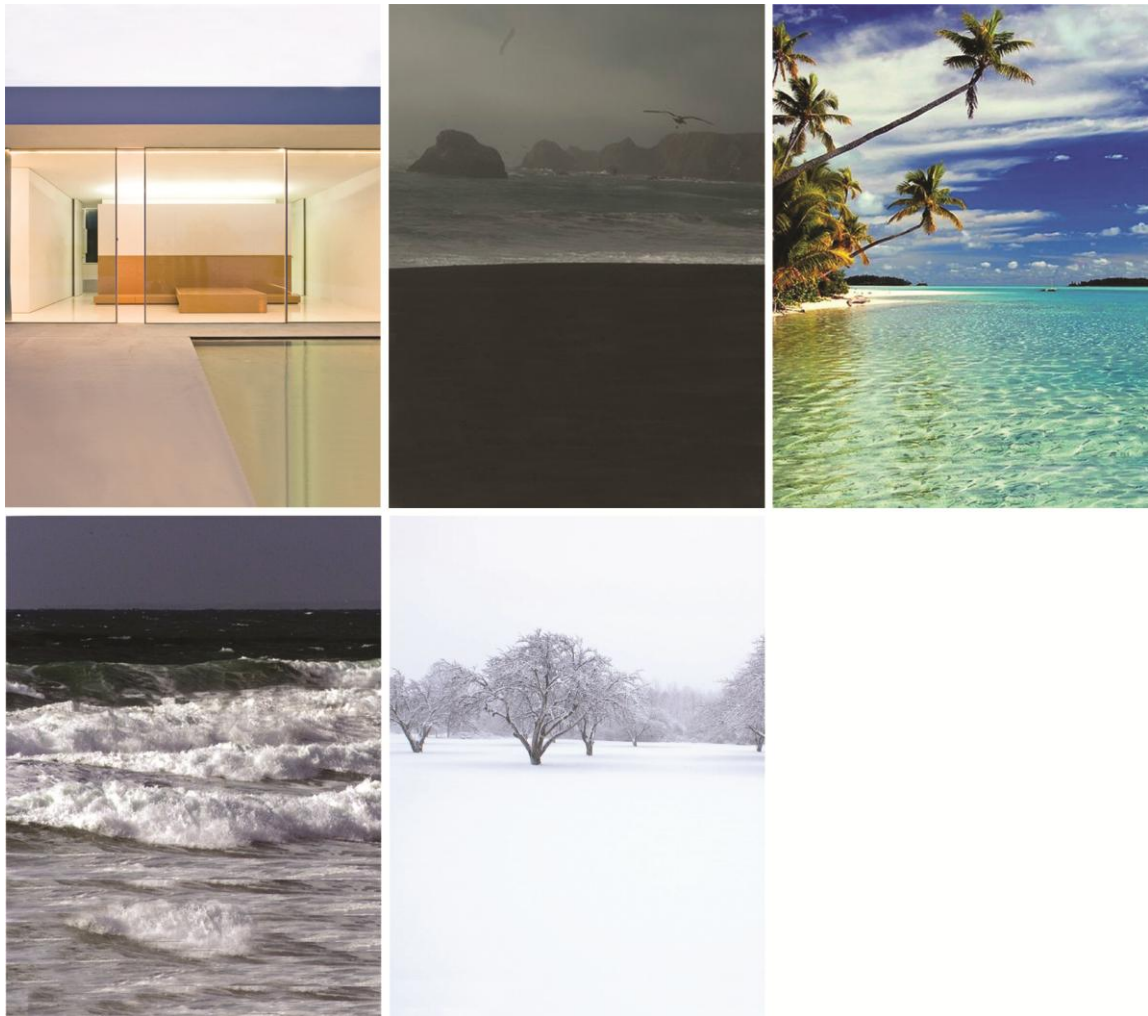
Old Ekdals' state of mind in the atrium



Hedvig's state of mind in the atrium

Backgrounds for the photo studio

A neat, clean environment, as Gina is in charge of the house. The house that was provided to them will be as clean as possible, in order to symbolize her need of keeping everything as it is. A well-made reality in order to provide happiness to her family. Cheap materials and furniture combined with muted tones of colors. The irony of the set will be the position of the atrium, making them moving in circles around them, as well as the corner where the Ekdal family is taking pictures (photo studio). Different backgrounds will emphasize their current state of mind.



Different backgrounds during the play

Props for Ekdal's house/ photo studio

Regarding the props for Ekdal's house, several **lighting equipment** will be existing on stage. For Act II, III the photo equipment is stored behind the doors and the atrium with **piles of boxes**, in order to create a mysterious space behind the doors. In the beginning of Act IV the equipment is being carried in the front, so the photo in front of the background to be shot.

Moreover, in Act III, Old Ekdal is entering the atrium with his **shotgun**. A real old shotgun that he used to have when he was a hunter. He is entering the atrium, pretending he is shooting his imaginary prey. In contrast with Hedvig in Act VI, when she is entering the atrium with the same shotgun, in order to give an end to her life. Thus, as long as Ekdal is in the atrium in Act III, Jalmar is retouching photos on the table with his **retouching brushes and equipment**.



Old retouching equipment



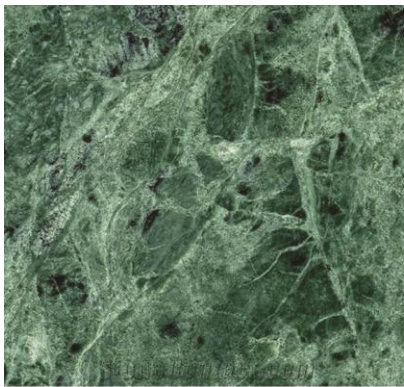
Camera and Lighting equipment



Old Ekdal's shotgun

V.I.I.III The Werle's house

In contrast with the Ekdal's house, Werle's family house where the first act is taking place will be the exact opposite. In the same era aesthetically but in a way to emphasize their wealth. In the late 80's and where the economical growth was in its finest, people tend to show their wealth especially through their interior decisions. New materials and furniture more than sculptures than functional. People didn't care about the usage of the objects around them, as far as they seem modern and westernized. It was a period where people finally had access to everything they wanted.



References for Werles' interior

V.I.I.IV The chosen theater

The chosen theater for the visual interpretation and the depiction of my set design proposal will be Dlouha Theater (Divadlo v Dlouhé) in Prague. A middle sized theater with approximate width eleven meters and depth approximately twelve meters. My model scale will be 1: 25.

V.I.II Basic dramatic situations



Act I _ Pettersen and Jensen

Pettersen and Jensen are talking in Werle's mansion. They are introducing the characters to the audience. Beneath, Jalmar and Gregers talking while the rest are having cocktails.



Act I _ Jalmar and Gregers



Act II _ Ekdal's house

In Ekdal's house, Gregers is meeting Old Ekdal, Jalmar, Gina and Hedvig. Beneath the atrium (Wild Duck) is revealed for the first time. It is Gregers' point of view. It is just an atrium.

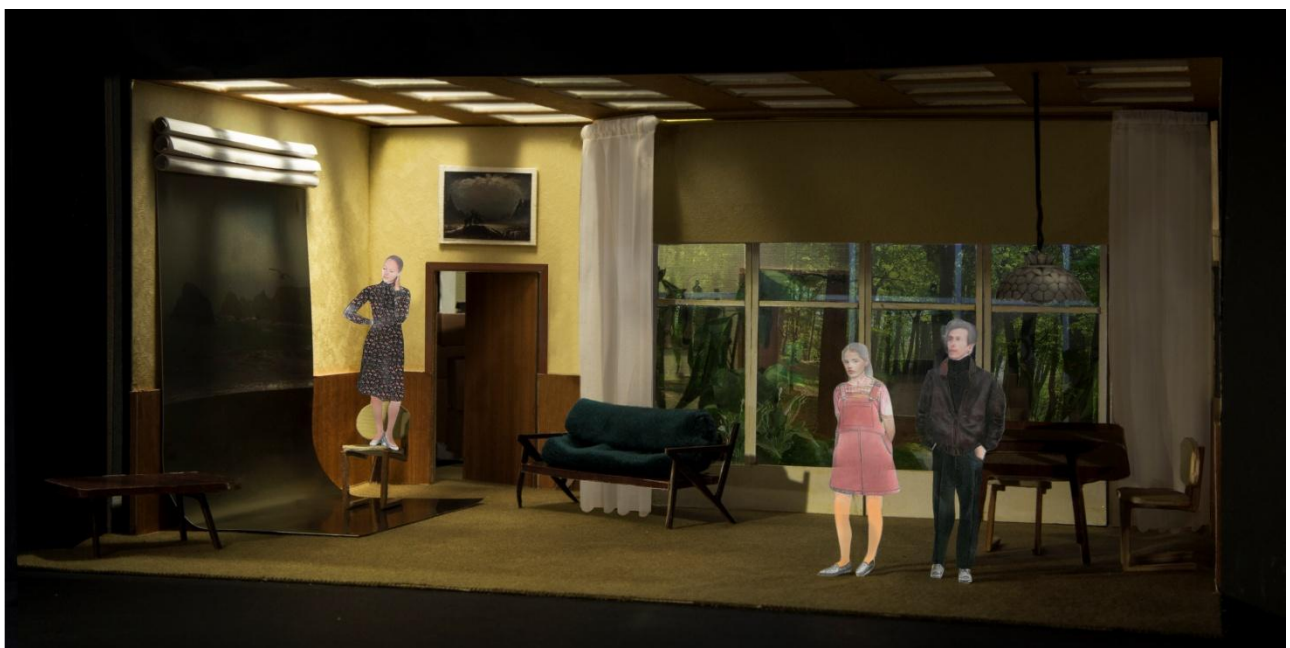


Act II _ The Wild Duck is revealed



Act III _ Old Ekdal in the atrium

Jalmar is retouching photos while Old Ekdal is in the atrium. Beneath Hedvig and Gregers are talking about the Wild Duck while Gina is changing the background on the wall. Old Ekdal is in the atrium.





Act III _ Old Werle and Gregers

Old Werle and Gregers are talking in Ekdal's house. Jalmar, Gina, Old Ekdal, Hedvig and Relling are behind the doors and the atrium.

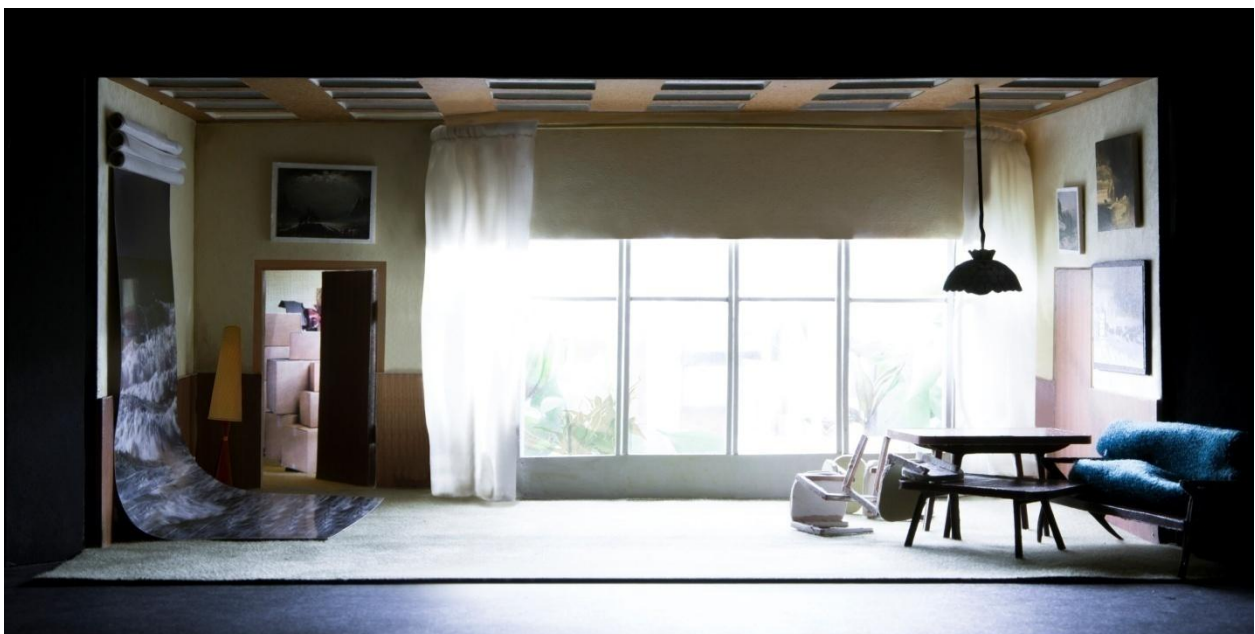


Act IV _ Photo in a tropic place



Act V _ Hedvig in the atrium

Hedvig is entering the atrium and with projections we can see how she is perceiving the space. Beneath Hedvig taking her life after conversation with Gregers about the Wild Duck.



Act V _ Hedvig is taking her life



Act V _ Hedvig is dead. Everyone on stage

Hedvig is dead. The atrium now is black and the background has changed to a peaceful snowy landscape.

V.II Costumes

V.II.I Visual inspiration and analysis

Through my research regarding the costumes, I started studying Scandinavian and especially Norwegian paintings from late 19th century, in order to define the lines of their costumes as a first step in the process. From back then, since today it seems that the principle, regarding the Scandinavian costumes design remains the same. The lines of the costumes are strict and simple. Through the years, and especially for women, elements as the length and the fabrics are changing but the main idea stays the same. Neat, strict and minimal lines without decorations. The prints and the fabrics were making a dress more casual or more luxurious.

In the play there are three women characters that costumes should be designed for them. Again remaining in the same era as the set design but considering as well the simplicity of the Scandinavian design, their lines will be as plain as possible.

Gina is a middle class woman, with financial struggling. Her costume will be modest and simple but with a touch of a bad taste. Hedvig on the other hand, is a young girl with no particular access to the outside world. Her costume should be youthful and somehow betrays her age but again with lack of style and effort. As for Ms Sorby, considering she is the future wife of Old Werle, her costume should be more bold and luxurious than Gina's. She is a confident woman who knows what she wants. This can be depicted either with the choice of the material or with the decision of showing more skin than the others, without making her provocative though.

In the first act, where the Werle's party is held every man is in formal costume. Werle and his chamberlains friends are in suits, Gregers Werle though in simple black clothes (pants and turtleneck blouse) and a brown leather loose jacket, in order to emphasize the antithesis with his father. He does not care of impressing him or his father's friends. I

would like the audience to feel first the impression that he is a different character. A rebel. But through the acts spectators will understand that his rebellion intentions are under discussion by the end of the play. Furthermore, his social status let him has this kind of attitude if he wants. As for Hjalmar, the line is thin in order not to make him as a caricature. In Werle's party he will be in a formal wear, although with some elements that betray his different social status. He will wear a leather jacket as well, but fake shiny and with a blazer line in order to show his effort to fit in the different environment. In the rest of the acts and especially when he enters his house in act II I would like to depict him in a sleeveless t-shirt, in order to show the intimacy he feels in his space, as well as the contrast with the previous act. Then he will be in sweaters and jeans to show his casual way of living.

V.II.II Final Costumes



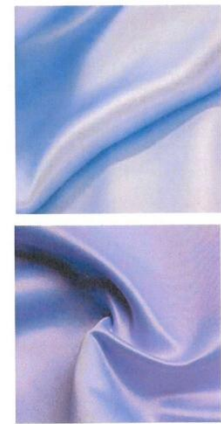
Gina

Gina In a modest and in contrast with her age dress. The pattern will be in brown colors close to the colors of their house. Act II, III, IV, V.



Hedvig

Hedvig in a corduroy overall in peach/ oink color. Her style is still childish and without effort. Act II, III, IV, V.



Mrs Sorby

The first costume for Mrs. Sorby in Werles' mansion. A minimal 80's line but in a luxurious fabric. Probably light purple silk. Act I



Mrs Sorby

The second costume for Mrs. Sorby when she is visiting Ekdal's house. Now more skin is revealed. Fabric with an 80's pattern in Act IV



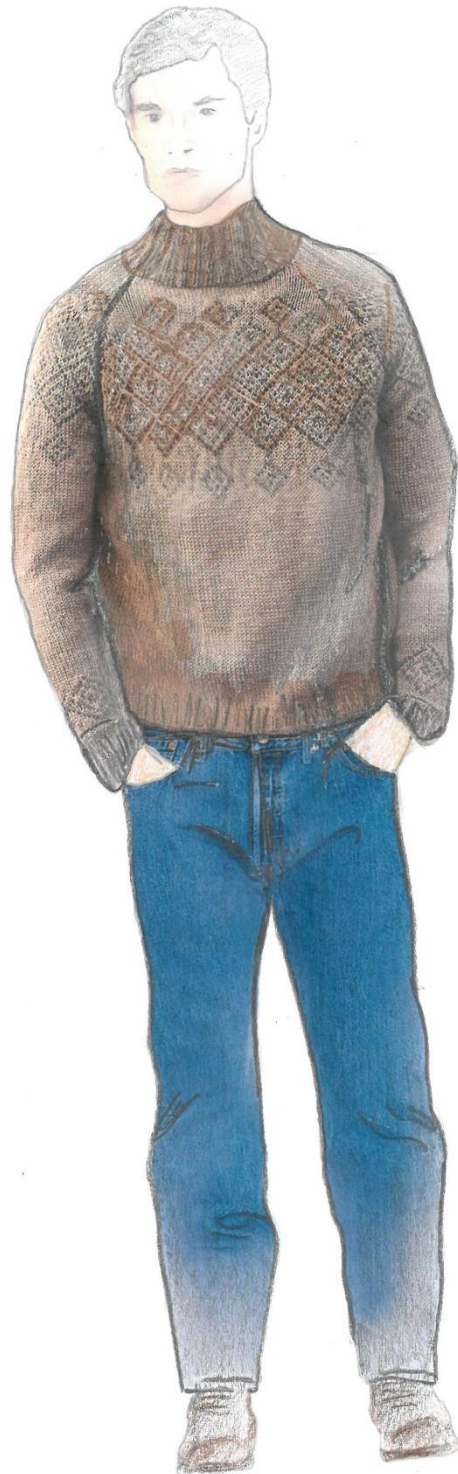
Jalmar

Jalmar in his first costume in Werle's mansion in Act I.



Jalmar

Jalmar in a sleeveless top and slippers when he enters his house in Act II.



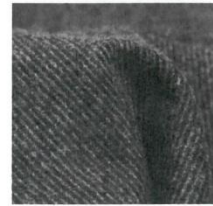
J a l m a r

Jalmar in a sweater for the rest of the acts in Ekdal's house. Act II, III, IV, V



Gregers

Gregers in black jeans, black turtleneck sweater and loose dark brown leather jacket. Act I, II, III, IV, V.



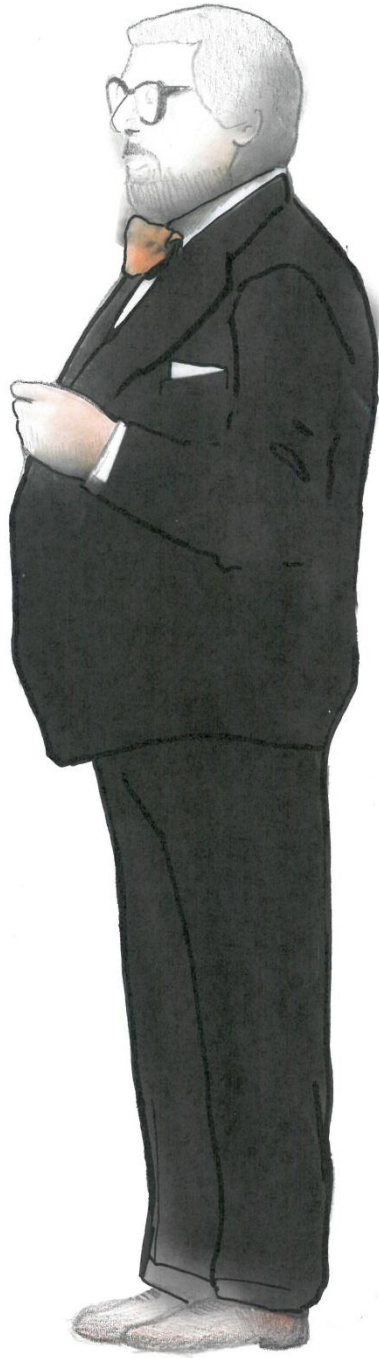
Old Ekdal

Old Ekdal in many layers of clothes. He is more slovenly than the other characters. Act I, II, III, IV, V.



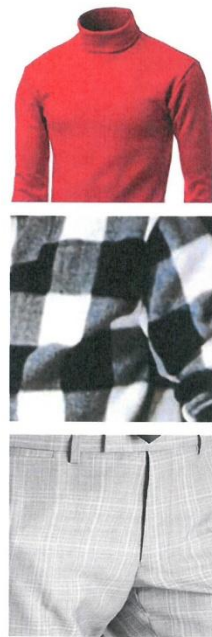
Old Ekdal

Old Ekdal in his old military coat. Act II, III, IV, V



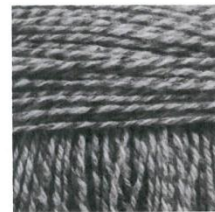
Old Werle

Old Werle in a black suit. Act I, II, III



Relling

Relling, a bold figure with a fleece jumper, a red turtleneck shirt and a grey cotton plants.
Act III, IV, V.



Molvik

Molvik in an effortless appearance. A little bit modest, out of fashion. Act III, IV.



P e t t e r s e n

Pettersen and Jensen will wear the same costumes. A service uniform for a formal occasion, with 80's influences.



A flabby
Gentleman



A thin-haired
Gentleman



A short-shited
Gentleman



Graberg

An example of costumes for the chamberlains and Graberg in Act I. The rest of the guests will wear these kind of costumes as well. Formal appearance with some different elements.

VI. Conclusion

While this project reached to an end I cannot stop thinking that the creative process and the designing solutions can continue forever, especially for such a complicated play as the Wild Duck. Above-mentioned a version of the play that represents my scenography approach which was shaped through my studies these two last years, the research that I made for this play and my intention to discover the possibilities and the results of a realistic stage design approach.

I tried to invoke all the knowledge that I earned from my professors, in every part of the process. I can surely tell that my approach to stage design is much deeper and meaningful than before. Through this journey I learned how to be substantial and more imaginative for better and more solutions, although designing for theater is a never ending process with always a margin of improvement and different interpretations.

Regarding this project, my final aesthetic proposal was based in two elements. First was the influence of Czech architecture and especially during communist period. As such as the remains of this architecture after the fall of communism, which coincided with the period that I believe the life-lie started/ was growing in my county. I found this combination fascinating and really suitable for the interpretation of this play.

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