



Moral Implications of Hedda's Suicide in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*
Mahdi Teimouri

Assistant Professor of English Literature, Khayyam University

Abstract

Ever since *Hedda Gabler* has been staged, critics have wondered about the root-causes of Hedda's diabolism. Some have tended to read Hedda's condescending and supercilious behavior as an overpowering desire to exert and preserve her free will. In this way they read her in light of existentialism stemming from the philosophy of Kierkegaard. Others have attributed her antagonism to her upbringing and the absence of a maternal influence in her life. Yet there are some who see her as a victim of the repressive society of her milieu. This short paper intends to complement this repertoire of debate by taking recourse to the moral philosophy of Emmanuel Levinas. I will argue that Hedda is a truly diabolic and amoral person not because she kills herself but because her suicide is exactly the confirmation of her indifference to the fate of 'the other', that is, her baby. My aim is to show that her total lack of moral responsibility, which is the source of her freedom, ultimately destroys her. **Keywords:** Ibsen, morality, maternity, moral self, Levinas