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THE NEW CONCEPTION OF WOMAN IN MODERN DRAMA.

A THESIS

submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate School of the  
University of Minnesota by

Alice Van Fossen

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the  
Degree of Master of Arts.

May 21, 1914.

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REPORT  
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COMMITTEE ON THESIS

THE undersigned, acting as a committee of  
the Graduate School, have read the accompanying  
thesis submitted by Miss Alice Van Fossen,  
for the degree of Master of Arts,  
They approve it as a thesis meeting the require-  
ments of the Graduate School of the University of  
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The New Conception of Woman in Modern Drama.

OUTLINE.

- I. Introduction: statement of proposed investigation.
- II. A general review of the old conception of woman in drama, including some examples from the earlier drama.
- III. Characteristics of the new conception of woman and the reasons for the change.
- IV. Particular study of the best modern dramas and their women.
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- VI. The relation of this new conception to the woman movement.
- VII. Conclusion: the real value of the new conception of woman to drama and its development.

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## The New Conception of Woman in Modern Drama.

### I. Introduction.

There is no field of literature with a more universal appeal at the present time than that of drama and in this field one of the most interesting subjects for study and investigation is the new conception of woman shown by modern dramatists in their work. A decided change has taken place in the treatment of women in drama during the last half century. In the earlier plays women were of minor importance. Now they are usually the pivots around which the action of the plots revolves and the center of interest in the revelation of character. Dramatists are interested in the problems of women and they are presenting the different phases of the woman question, ranging from simple protests against conditions as they are to inspired pictures of what may be when the relations of women to society are properly adjusted. The modern dramatists are creating all kinds of women and are treating them all with sympathy and understanding. It is this new attitude of the dramatist toward his women and its rel-

ation to drama and life which will be the subject of this investigation and it is hoped that the importance of the new conception of woman in the development of modern drama will be established.

## II. A General Review of the Old Conception of Woman in Drama, Including Some Examples from the Earlier Drama.

Although there are a few examples in the earlier drama of plays in which the protagonist is a woman -- notably the "Antigone" by Sophocles -- for the most part it is the men who shape the plot and who stand out as the leading characters. When women are used it is not for any particular interest the author has in them as women but because they serve as foils for the male characters and help to make entanglements in the plot. The older dramatists never present the real woman -- they give her mannerisms, her appearance, her wit, everything outward and superficial but nothing of her thoughts and feelings or the attributes which give her human interest. She is a puppet manipulated by the author, a doll and not a person. Therefore it is particularly appropriate that the play which first proclaimed unflinchingly the emancipation of woman from this type of misrepresentation should have been called "A Doll's House."

In the earliest times when the female parts were taken by men there was of course no opportunity to display

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distinctively feminine traits of character and the plays in which women appeared were either rough horse-play or intolerable tragedy. In one case women were used to increase the interest of the audience in the plot, in the other to lend dignity to the dialogue. In neither was there an interest in character.

The early Greek and Latin comedy writers either ignore women or mention them only as light and frivolous creatures who have no part in the real business of life. Aristophanes used them as the chorus in "The Clouds" and as comic figures in "The Trial of Euripides" and "The Acharnians." Plautus and Terence found prostitutes necessary to the construction of their plots so they use women in that capacity. This is the lowest possible conception of woman in drama, and it is interesting to note the steps in the change which seems to be reaching its climax at the present time.

In Greek tragedy the treatment of women is noble and heroic. Antigone and Alcestis are wonderful characters but we admire them because of their bravery and steadfast devotion to duty without having a personal interest in

them. They represent the ideal of sacrifice for the sake of a man and however beautiful it may be in these particular cases, it is the old ideal, entirely different from that expressed in modern drama. Their exalted station and poetic utterances separate these tragic heroines from our daily lives.

In the early English plays there are many varieties of women and there is a slight and gradual progress shown in their depiction, corresponding to the development of English Drama. It was not until recently, however, that women became prominent as dramatic figures. A few examples from the early English drama may serve to show the attitude of the older dramatists toward their women and make more clear by contrast the new conception of woman in modern drama. In the early Towneley Plays of "Noah's Flood" and the "Second Shepherd" the women are represented as decidedly masculine types. There is no difference between them and the men except in appearance, and a large part of the comic element of these plays lies in the fact that the supposed women act like men. A slight advance is made in Dame Custance, the principal woman in Nicholas Udall's

comedy "Ralph Roister Doister" for in spite of her prowess in fighting she has a few womanly characteristics. Gammer Gurton in her anxiety over her needle and cat shows some feminine traits although her language is decidedly masculine. In "Cambises", by Thomas Preston, we find the first representation of true womanly attributes in the person of the Queen, and her nature typifies the ideal of womanhood which dominated most of the earlier drama — perfect humility and obedience. In John Lyly's "Campaspe" two more attributes are added which have since been very important in drama. These were wit and beauty. Beyond this there is very little progress in the portrayal of women in drama until recent years. There are some periods in which interesting women were created but it is usually a plot interest rather than one of character.

Shakespeare comes nearest to a psychological treatment of women but like all of the other early dramatists he invariably treats them in their relation to some man — usually a love relation. Unmarried heroines always find a husband before the end of the play or if they do not, life is no longer worth living for them. Wives find their chief occupation in trying to keep their husbands happy

and contented, no matter what sacrifices they themselves are forced to make. Even when a woman seems interesting in herself the author takes care that our chief interest is not so much in her as in what some man thinks of her. Thus in "Much Ado About Nothing" we are more interested in the love affair of Beatrice and Benedick than we are in any character development. When Shakespeare did create a new and independent woman in the person of Katherine he must needs have her originality wiped out and her tempestuous nature tamed to implicit obedience to the wishes of a man. This was perhaps due to the ideals of the time which demanded obedience as one of the chief womanly virtues. The other virtues necessary to a woman in early drama were faithfulness and chastity. If she had these she needed nothing else and without these she was lost no matter what she had to offer in their place. Learning was ridiculed and any sort of independence on the part of good women was unheard of. Clayton Hamilton says in regard to this:

"The old plays teach that women are lovable in proportion to their ignorance."\* Such an attitude in drama must surely have had a bad influence on the ideals of

\* Studies in Stagecraft: Clayton Hamilton: page 204.

the time and was no doubt one of the reasons why education for women has only recently become popular.

In the Restoration Drama the woman are represented as exceedingly clever and beautiful. Their principal purpose seems to be to add brilliance to the dialogue but they also have a definite plot purpose for the plots of these plays are almost invariably love intrigues. These creatures have no true womanhood and we are led on through their misadventures more out of curiosity than interest. Love is everything to them but their ideals of love are very low. The keynote of this type of drama is subterfuge and deceit and the woman who is cleverest at deceiving her men is counted the best heroine. George Meredith describes thus the ideals expressed in these plays:

"But those ravishing women, so capricious and so choice of speech, who fence with men and pass their guard, are heartless! Is it not preferable to be the pretty idiot, the passive beauty, the adorable bundle of caprices, very feminine, very sympathetic?"\* Using his adjective we may say that the women of Restoration comedy are very feminine but not at all womanly.

\* An Essay on Comedy: George Meredith: page 23

In the plays of Sheridan, Steele and Goldsmith, there is an improvement in many ways but the treatment of women is decidedly similar to that in the Restoration plays. They are creatures of circumstance and plot, and while there are a few who stand out rather distinctly because of their mannerisms, for the most part they are 'silly, unthinking creatures. They are artificial in their virtues as well as their vices,-- perhaps more clearly so in their virtues because it is not the good women that we remember but those distinguished by some interesting vice or eccentricity.

The most interesting women in the comedies of Moliere are the pert little maids but they are all of one dimension and are chiefly noted for their audacity and clever remarks. We enjoy meeting them but they do not seem so much like women as they do like the embodiment of common sense. The "learned ladies" and "Precieuses" are interesting because they show the attitude of that period toward education of women and the kind of education in vogue at the time. These women are comic characters but it is their veneer of culture and not their real natures that are

presented.

In early drama a woman's goodness is measured by her willingness to sacrifice her individuality and surrender herself utterly to some man. She goes like Magda's little sister "directly from the arms of her father to the arms of her husband"\* and her whole aim in life is to be dutiful to each in turn. There is never a suggestion in the older drama that there is anything unfair in the absolute dominance of one sex. It was customary and the dramatists probably gave the matter no thought. There is a romantic glamour thrown about these women. They are creatures of the imagination and know nothing of the common things of this world. They are nearly always ladies of high degree-- often queens and princesses whose sole duty it is to sit at home and faithfully await the return of a husband from the wars or the coming of a lover. They are supposed to be happy with nothing to do. The dramatists pictured women in their plays as they thought women ought to be and what we have is not women of a certain period brought to life in the plays of the period but a particular combination of vices or virtues which the playwrightes thought might

\* Magda: Hermann Sudermann: page 156.

be desirable for the women of the period to exhibit. The women of the earlier drama are creations of the minds of the authors and since the authors, being men, knew very little of the nature of women, these creatures conjured by them out of their own imaginations have little interest for us.

The early dramatists had no psychological interest in their women and physical characteristics combined with simple, conventional actions have small dramatic power. It was the men who held the center of the stage and appealed to the audience by their deeds of bravery while the chief business of the women in the caste was to appear beautiful. With a very few exceptions -- Greek tragedy and some of the plays of Shakespeare -- the women of early drama are of secondary importance and their treatment lacks sincerity and insight.

### III. Characteristics of the New Conception of Woman and the Reasons for the Change.

What a change we find when we come to examine modern drama! Instead of being a rather insignificant part of the play, woman is the center of interest. Instead of being used to bring out the character of a man, it is her character which is revealed through the use of auxiliary male parts. She is no longer a creature of love and romance but a many-sided, living, changing woman. The modern dramatist handles problems fearlessly and the principal task he has assumed is to determine the place of woman in her relation to society. As long as woman was represented as a delicate, home-loving creature whose only object in life was to marry and keep her husband happy, there were no problems about women. New conditions have brought out new characteristics of women and have presented definite problems concerning them.

The new woman of drama is essentially real. We recognize in her traits which we ourselves possess. She is human and has human weaknesses instead of being set upon a pedestal for men to admire. She is not a great lady but

is usually a worker and by seeing in a play a sympathetic treatment of a working woman we are led to realize that the woman who does our washing may have a heroic character and that our own humdrum lives may be of more value than we thought.

In our study of the new conception of woman as represented in modern drama it will be necessary to confine ourselves in a general way to the realistic type of drama for in the strictly classic literature the predominance of form makes subtle character delineation difficult and the romantic drama, however interesting and enjoyable it may be, deals almost wholly with women of the older type. With this in mind if we examine the characteristics which distinguish the modern realistic drama from the old, we shall find that each helps to make clear the reason for the change in the treatment of woman. The recognition of the fact that a human being is interesting because he is human and that each person has a right to develop his individuality, <sup>was an</sup> ~~were~~ entirely new ideas in the drama and it was only a short step from recognizing the value of individualism in man to realizing that woman also has a right to

live her own life. This step would probably have taken much longer had not the genius of Ibsen cleared the way but through him, we find at the very beginning of the modern movement a belief in the individuality of woman.

The modern drama is psychological and when once the idea became fixed that the working of a man's mind under certain conditions was interesting, it was seen that a woman's psychological reactions, being more difficult to understand, because of her training, would be in consequence, more interesting. So we have a woman as the leading character in most psychological plays. Modern drama is also sociological, dealing with the relation of the individual to society, and modern dramatists have been quick to see that one of the most interesting of problems is that concerning the relation of a woman to the society that has wronged her. Ibsen, Jones, Pinero, Masfield, Houghton, Galsworthy, Sudermann, Brieux, Becque, Moody, Fitch, Kenyon and many others deal with this problem in some of their best works.

Modern drama has few characters. This tends to make those that are used more important and their traits are

portrayed with greater accuracy. Women who had been mere figures when there were large numbers of them sweeping in and out of rooms, now become vital to the action. Often there are only one or two women in the cast and these of course assume a far greater importance in the play.

There is compression and synthesis in modern drama. The action is decisive, most of the speeches are short; there is a unity of scene, time and action and there is a tendency toward a smaller number of acts. This brings out each character vividly and shows woman in her real relation to society. She is represented in a realistic manner in her natural environment and we can study her there and apply the lessons given by her actions to our own lives. It is the growth of realism and psychologic interest in the field of the drama that seem to be most responsible for the change in the dramatists' conception and presentation of woman.

In a study of modern drama it is customary to begin with the Scandinavian writers altho, strictly speaking, it was in France that realistic drama originated and it was Dumas fils who invented the thesis play or play with a

purpose. In dealing with the new conception of woman in drama, however, Ibsen seems properly to come first for he was the dramatist who earliest represented woman as an individual struggling against society or social conventions.

The idea that woman has a duty to herself as well as to men, that she has an individuality which needs responsibility and struggle in order to grow, is first suggested in the character of Selma Bratsberg in Ibsen's comedy "The League of Youth." This girl, child-like and beautiful, has been shielded from all trouble and pain and when disaster comes to her husband and he asks her to stand by him in his trouble she refuses and answers him with fierce earnestness.

Selma; "Oh how you have maltreated me -- shamefully maltreated me, all of you together! You have always compelled me to receive, and never permitted me to give. You have never required the least sacrifice of me, nor laid upon me the slightest weight of care. When I asked to share your burdens, you put me off with a flattering jest. How I hate and detest you. You have brought me up to be dandled like a doll, and to be played with as one plays with a

child."

What a shock this speech must have been to this kind and considerate man and what a shock it must have been to the world of men who were treating their women just this way and thinking that their conduct was irreproachable. Thus, the first blow was struck in the drama against chivalry and the idea of dependence of women.

#### IV. Particular Study of the Best Modern Dramas and their Women.

If we make a careful study of the works of Henrik Ibsen and the other important dramatists of our time, we shall see that their plays are a continuation or an outgrowth of the idea that a woman has a duty to herself as well as to others. Let us now examine the women in modern drama, beginning with those of the Scandinavian writers and see to what extent the relation of woman to society is used as a theme and to what degree the treatment is sympathetic and psychological.

Ibsen had expressed this new idea of a woman's duty to herself in "The League of Youth", as we have seen, but here it is of little importance in the working out of the plot. Ibsen saw, however, that the idea was big enough to be made into a play by itself. Thereupon he wrote "A Doll's House" which challenged the world with its declaration that woman as well as man must have an opportunity for individual growth and development. What Clayton Hamilton calls "the soul of 'A Doll's House'" is the theme as stated by Ibsen in one of his notes. He says:

"There are two kinds of spiritual law, two kinds of conscience -- one in man, and another, altogether different, in woman. They do not understand each other: but in practical life, the woman is judged by man's law, as though she were not a woman but a man. . . . . A woman cannot be herself in the society of the present day, which is an exclusively masculine society, with laws framed by men and with a judicial system that judges feminine conduct from a masculine point of view."\*

At the beginning of the play Nora is little more than a pretty, lovable doll. She has been spoiled by her father and later by her husband and she has no notion of responsibility or duty. She eats macaroons and then lies to her husband about them not thru maliciousness but because she does not want to hurt his feelings. She forges her father's name in order to save her husband's life. She has never been taught anything about the law to which she is responsible. She is a child with no character or thoughts except those imposed upon her by her husband. As the play progresses we can see her grow. This process begins after her interview with Krogstand in which he threatens her. After

\* Studies in Stagecraft: Clayton Hamilton: page 155.

he has gone out she "appears buried in thought for a short time, then tosses her head.\* She has begun to think and from this time on she thinks more and more as the action advances. The first clash of the individualities of Nora and Helmer comes when Nora says:

"But don't you think it is nice of me, too, to do as you wish?

Helmer: Nice? -- Because you do as your husband wishes? Well, Well, you little rogue, I am sure you do not mean it in that way."\*\*

This one sentence of Helmer's gives us the key to the kind of bondage in which Nora is held and from which she must escape if she is to grow. Nora herself realizes this after that powerful and pathetic scene in which she is trying to keep her husband from taking the blame for her act upon himself, when she finally discovers that he has no intention of so doing. She "looks steadily at him and says with a growing look of coldness in her face:

Nora: Yes, now I am beginning to understand thoroughly."\*\*\*

Again when the bond is returned Helmer cries exultingly, "I am saved. Nora, I am saved."

\* A Doll's House: Henrik Ibsen: page 32

\*\* A. Doll's House: Henrik Ibsen: page 42.

\*\*\* A Doll's House: Henrik Ibsen: page 75.

And Nora quietly asks, "And I?"\*

The climax of these revolutionary ideas comes in the final speech when Nora says she must leave.

"Helmer: To desert your home, your husband and your children! And you don't consider what people will say!

Nora: I cannot consider that at all. I only know that it is necessary for me.

Helmer: It's shocking. This is how you would neglect your most sacred duties.

Nora: What do you consider my most sacred duties?

Helmer: Do I need to tell you that? Are they not your duties to your husband and your children?

Nora: I have other duties just as sacred.

Helmer: That you have not. What duties could those be?

Nora: Duties to myself.\*\*

It is this sermon of the duty to oneself that Ibsen has preached more powerfully than any other dramatist. In this play he has shown us a man who from every conventional standpoint is perfection itself but who fails in his duty to his wife. We have a woman who in the eyes of the law is a criminal but she has our entire sympathy, for she

\*A Doll's House: Henrik Ibsen: page 77.

\*\* A Doll's House: Henrik Ibsen: page 82.

acts from unselfish motives and is struggling after knowledge which will make her fit to live in the world. Archibald Henderson says of this play: "In 'A Doll's House', Ibsen first definitely sounded the trumpet -- the call of woman's freedom. This is his first drama wholly modern in tendency. .... Here, in advanced maturity of technique, we behold the struggle of the modern woman against the vitiating influence of her environment, her heredity, and the social conventions which retard her development as an individual and as a human being." \*

Almost universal criticism of the idea formulated in "The Doll's House" that a woman ought to leave her home and husband if by remaining she must sacrifice her own individuality, led Ibsen to write another social drama in which his heroine did the conventional thing -- stayed with her husband in spite of his dissolute life and character. In "Ghosts" Ibsen shows the horror and useless sacrifice of a woman who gives her whole life to her unworthy husband. Mrs. Alving is a tragic heroine. She is not a doll, like Nora. She has struggled against her fate. In the horror and disgust of her discovery of her husband's

\* Interpreters of Life: Archibald Henderson: page 208.

true character she had fled to Paster Manders but he, as a representative of conventionality and with the old ideas of right and wrong, sent her back to her husband and her duty. The rest of her life is a heroic self-sacrifice in which she tries to believe that she is doing right while her whole nature revolts against her life of lies. She is one of those characters who are the very essence of the modern movement in drama. Ashley Dukes describes them as characters who are "dynamic, developing, offering criticisms to the conditions in which they live and so projecting themselves into the future and making history."\* The record of Mrs. Alving's life is a criticism of the conventional social ideals and altho the pathological aspect is somewhat overstressed, it is essentially a powerful drama of truth.

In "The Wild Duck" we have two new types of women, the "homely, sensible" Gina Ekdal and her sensitive, idealistic child Hedwig. Hedwig is one of the most pathetic figures in literature. Her sweetness, devotion and self-sacrifice make the tragedy by which she takes her life to gain her father's forgiveness all the more poignant. Gina,

\* Modern Dramatists: Ashley Dukes: page 9.

who is characterized by Dr. Norda as "a female Sancho Panza", is, like Sancho, practical, devoted, intent upon the realities of life and not concerned with its ideals. She slaves for her selfish husband, performs her duty as she sees it and does not worry over her "past." She does not feel that she has wronged her husband in not telling him for she knows he would not have married her.

"Hjalmar: You ought to have told me at the first, -- then I should have known what sort of a woman you were.

Gina: But would you have married me, all the same?

Hjalmar: How can you suppose such a thing?

Gina: No; and that's why I didn't dare to tell you anything then. I had got to love you so dearly, as you know. And I couldn't make myself utterly wretched. "\*"

Here is another new thought in drama -- that a wife can deceive her husband on a fundamental question in order to preserve her own happiness and not be represented as utterly despicable. The newness, as in the preceding plays, is all in the attitude of the dramatist. Wives had deceived their husbands in plays before this but they were either utterly worthless creatures who do not deserve our

\* The Wild Duck: Henrik Ibsen: page 157.

sympathy as in the Restoration Comedy or they are weak, high-strung women who become hysterical when their husbands learn of their misadventures. Gina belongs to neither of these classes. She states clearly and sensibly (when she finds it necessary) the reason for her fall and then calmly tells her husband that she kept him in ignorance because she loved him. The sympathy of the audience is entirely with her for she has been a faithful, loving, unselfish wife and he, as a husband, can boast none of these attributes. Thus another step has been taken in the emancipation of woman in drama as inaugurated by Ibsen.

The woman question, to Ibsen, meant primarily the question of the position of woman in marriage. So far we have had three phases of this -- all emphasizing the right of a married woman to individual development and happiness. In "Rosmersholm" the principal character is not married but her development is closely connected with the marriage question. Rebekka West is one of the strongest and most clear-cut of Ibsen's characters. She is a New Woman, with firm beliefs, abundance of vitality, definiteness of purpose and faith in herself. But the most notable thing about

her is the change that comes over her largely through the influence of her environment. Huneker in his "Iconoclasts" says: "Rosmer drags down with him Rebekka West, who, because of her tendency to variability, in an evolutionary sense, might have developed; but the Rosmer ideals poisoned her fresher nature."\* It is these Rosmer ideals that transform Rebekka's nature from that of a passionate, self-seeking individualist to a more lovable, if more ordinary human being, but it is these same ideals ingrained in Rosmer's nature that cause him to sacrifice Rebekka because of abnormal sense of duty.

"The Lady From the Sea" has not the powerful realism of the preceding plays but its lesson is just as clear — the right of a woman to unrestricted choice in regard to her own life and the necessity of responsibility. The symbolism in this play seem necessary in order to bring out the the idea definitely and the lure of the sea with its beauty and mystery forms the background of this slight but appealing work of art. A choice on the part of Ellida between the sea, represented by the stranger and her home and husband is made necessary because she has no ties that bind

\* Iconoclasts: James Huneker: page 16

her to her home — no responsibilities. Ibsen shows this when he makes her exclaim while thinking of her decision: "Oh! If there should be something for me to do here! \* If there had been something for her to do she would not have been tempted to leave. That is the first thought the author impresses on us. The second comes at the end of the play when the decision is about to be made. Ellida's husband has tried every device in his power to keep her with him, emphasizing in true masculine fashion the fact that she has no right to leave him because she is his wife. At last he feels that he cannot keep her love or alter her <sup>0</sup> bnging if he refuses to let her go, so he bids her "choose your own path in perfect freedom and on your own responsibility."\*\* Her reply finds an echo in the heart of every woman who has all her important decisions made for her. Ellida clasps her head with her hands, and stares at Wangel saying, "In freedom, and on my own responsibility! Responsibility, too? That changes everything."\*\* This new feeling of freedom and responsibility was all that she needed in order to choose fairly and wisely. Here we have the antithesis of "A Doll's House." The husband comes to

\* The Lady from the Sea: Henrik Ibsen: page 267.

\*\* The Lady from the Sea: Henrik Ibsen: page 281-282.

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a realization that his wife is a separate, thinking individual. He treats her as such and she remains with him.

Huneker says of Hedda Gabler; "From her birth neurotic, Hedda Gabler is hopelessly flawed in her moral nature. She succumbs to the first pressure of adverse circumstance."\* Hedda is a new type, not lovable but worthy of pity because of her inheritance. She is the first of Ibsen's women who does not have the sympathy of the audience with her. There is something repellent in her character. Her morbid curiosity concerning the ways of men and her unnatural hatred of her unborn child are revolting until we remember that she does not know what happiness is and that her moral nature has been "hopelessly flawed." Ibsen again drives home the lesson that the sins of the fathers are visited upon the children. Again he shows that youth, beauty and position, the only requisites of the women in the early drama, do not bring happiness and are as nothing compared with character. He points out clearly that the conventional good woman may be bad and the conventional bad woman good, for Hedda, judged by all the standards applied to the older heroines, was a good wife and her friend Thea Elvsted having deserted her husband was, by these same

\*Iconoclasts: James Huneker: page 16.

standards, an abandoned wretch. Ibsen shows them as real women bringing out the good qualities of Thea and emphasizing the disagreeable side of Hedda's nature and we realize how different women may be in drama as well as life. Ibsen's characters, however unpleasant, are honest and consistent. While the old-fashioned play-wrights, even those of his own time, presented in their characters only the veneer of social refinement and good breeding, usually combined with a large income, he created living people of his own country and station, struggling to understand life and facing the same problems that his contemporaries faced. We admire sincerity in anything and while we may not like Hedda Gabler as a person, we cannot choose but enjoy the portrayal of her character as an art creation.

There are two interesting women in "The Master Builder" -- the old-fashioned, inconspicuous, faithful wife of the Builder, who still mourns for the dolls which were burned in the great fire, shows us the value of sympathetic treatment in the portrayal of the most old-fashioned and ordinary characters. The somber grayness of her life emphasizes by contrast, the dominating and inspiring figure of Hilda

Wangel who represents the spirit of youth. She, like Rebekka West, knows what she wants and goes after it with intensity of purpose, unhampered by scruples of conscience but she has no depressing environment to struggle against and she attains her purpose although the Master Builder is sacrificed. Hilda Wangel represents individualism, variation from the normal, and the enthusiasm and disregard of consequences peculiar to youth.

In "Little Eyolf" we have the first suggestion of the awakening of woman to a realization of her duty to society. Individualism has failed to satisfy the selfish, passionate Rita Allmers. She has lived for herself alone and in this play Ibsen shows that happiness does not come in this way. He seems to indicate that his former heroines have striven for freedom because that was the necessary first step in their development but when this is gained he points the way to something nobler,— social service. The death of Little Eyolf is necessary to bring Rita this revelation and the last part of the play when she comes to a realization that the true meaning of life is responsibility and service is one of the most beautiful scenes in all of the

plays.

In passing from Ibsen to the second great Scandinavian writer, it is interesting to note, first of all, the extreme divergence in the conception and treatment of their women. August Strindberg had little patience with the sympathetic attitude that Ibsen took toward the sex and he characterizes the women of Ibsen's plays in very uncomplimentary terms. Nora he calls "a puppet for the author's sentimental propaganda," Hedda Gabler "a public nuisance, a candidate for the whipping-post." Hilda Wangel seems to him "an upstart minx, born to drive men mad," and Rebekka West is "a petticoated prig."\* It may be difficult to see readily how a man who sees women from such a different angle that he can so misinterpret Ibsen's masterpieces, could have aided in any degree in advancing the modern conception of woman in drama. Strindberg has repeatedly been called a woman hater and in nearly all of his plays we feel a note of distrust and hatred in his presentation of a woman character. He is angry at womankind for daring to assume that she is in any way equal to man and many of his plays show that while woman may be more crafty, cruel

\*Modern Dramatists: Ashley Dukes: page 50.

and deceitful, man will win when pitted against her because he is her superior sexually. The strongest plays are dramatic duels of sex. But Strindberg has done more than to give us his ideas of what a woman should not be. He has come nearer than any other dramatist to presenting a living, changing human person instead of a "character" which he defines as a person of a fixed type. His women if unpleasant are at least real and they are fundamentally modern -- creatures of this age, troubled, doubtful, struggling for they know not what. Strindberg, himself says of them. "Because they are modern characters, living in a period of transition more hysterically hurried than its immediate predecessor at least, I have made my figures vacillating, out of joint, torn between the old and the new.\* This vacillation seems to be the secret of the intense attraction that Strindberg's characters have for us. We recognize ourselves in the sudden shiftings of mood or even of personality and we are delightfully uncertain as to the real nature of the different persons -- simply because they have no one real nature but are thoroughly human composites of many different natures. Strindberg's

\* Author's Preface to Miss Julia: page 15/

women repel us because they are so unlike anything we have ever known in drama but the longer we study them the more we realize that they are very like something we know in real life. It is true that these women are not entirely good but then they are not entirely bad either. There is not one who has not some redeeming traits. Even the Baroness in the "The Link" altho she is passionate, uncontrolled, cruel, bent on injuring her husband, cannot fail to win our sympathy when she cries out in despair, "Myself? But did I make myself? Did I put evil tendencies, hatred and wild passions into myself? No! And who was it that denied me the power and will to combat all these things. When I look at myself this moment, I feel that I am to be pitied." \* And she is to be pitied for she is a creature formed by wrong heredity, environment, and training, who has struggled and suffered, who is cruel in very desperation, who is lacking in the fundamental trait of self-control and so fails to attain happiness.

Jeanne in the play "There are Crimes and Crimes" is a sweet and unselfish character but she is not by any means a conventional good woman. The really interesting

\*The Link: August Strindberg: page 141.

person in this play is the vacillating Henriette. Attractive, lured by success, sensuous and fascinating, weak in will and strong in love or hate, she is the central figure from the moment she casts her spell over Maurice until the end when, disillusioned and penitent she sadly says, "I am going alone, alone as I came here, one day in Spring, thinking that I belonged where I don't belong and believing there was something called freedom, which does not exist."\* In this statement seems to lie the fundamental difference between the dramas of Ibsen and those of Strindberg. The women of both are in search of freedom and although none attain it definitely, still we feel that for Ibsen it does exist projected beyond the play while Strindberg shows the hopelessness of searching for it. There may be physical freedom but there are countless ties which bind us to those we love and those we hate. In Strindberg's plays love and hatred, freedom and bondage are closely bound together. Alice, in "The Dance of Death" rejoices one moment in the death of her husband which frees her from the bonds she hates and the next moment she has forgotten her hatred of him and irrevocably binds herself to his memory which she loves. She says, "At last that tongue

\*There Are Crimes and Crimes: August Strindberg: page 79.

is checked! Can brag no more, lie no more, wound no more!  
Thank God for my liberation from the tower, from the wolf,  
from the vampire! In a few moments she is sobbing, "My  
husband, my youth's beloved, yes, perhaps you laugh! --  
he was a good and noble man nevertheless."\*\*

"Miss Julia" with all its sordidness and horror is a  
grim sermon on love. It is the embodiment of Strindberg's  
idea that "no love relation in a "higher" sense can exist  
between souls of different quality."<sup>\*\*\*</sup> Julia herself is a  
very unlovely character, abnormal and morally unsound  
through heredity and her fate is the out-growth of many  
circumstances. Strindberg's explanation of this character  
is interesting. "Miss Julia is a modern character, not be-  
cause the man-hating half-woman may not have existed in  
all ages, but because now, after her discovery, she has  
stepped to the front and begun to make a noise."<sup>\*\*\*</sup> That  
is one of the characteristics of modern drama -- to bring  
to the front types which have existed in all ages but have  
not been discovered or considered worthy of notice, types  
which are evolving at the present time and beginning "to  
make a noise."

\*The Dance of Death: August Strindberg: page 264

\*\* The Dance of Death: August Strindberg: page 268.

\*\*\* Author's Preface to Miss Julia: page 15.

In sharp contrast to these extremely realistic and psychologically complicated types of women, Strindberg has a few examples of the ideal romantic type. These are appealing through their sweetness and unreality and they give us an entirely different view of the author's character. The wistful, spirit-like girl-child in "Easter" is one of these and the beauty of her nature pervades the play transforming what is evil in the other characters into goodness and happiness. The princess Swanwhite in the lovely fairy play of that name is another figure of the same kind, who through her purity and love overcomes her wicked step-mother. Even the step-mother has touches of compassion in the midst of her cruelty and this fact differentiates her from the other cruel step-mothers of literature.

Perhaps the play that best presents the struggle of sex as Strindberg conceives it, is "Comrades." In it the author shows the new conditions which have come into the fields formerly belonging entirely to men and he attempts to explain why the readjustment is so difficult. The chief reason here seems to be the lack of integrity and business

honor on the part of the women but the author does not even suggest that this might be learned. Bertha and Axel, the Comrades, are discussing the problem.

"Bertha: But tell me, why don't you suffer when a comrade a man comrade, is accepted, although he has less merit than you?

Axel: I'll have to think about that. You see our feeling toward you women has never been critical. We've taken you as a matter of course, and so I've never thought about our relations as against each other. Now when the shoe pinches, it strikes me that we are not comrades, for this experience makes me feel that you women do not belong here.\*

It is easy to see that Strindberg is not a Feminist and that he has no love for the New Woman, but he has rendered an inestimable service to the progress of the new conception of woman in drama by making his women true, interesting, and forceful. Closely linked with this is the new conception of the theater and a clearer understanding of Strindberg's ideas toward both may be gained from his words, "Let us have a theatre where we can be shocked by what is horrible, where we can laugh at what

\* Comrades: August Strindberg: page 23.

is laughable, where we can see life without shrinking back in terror if what has hitherto lain veiled behind theological or aesthetic preconceptions be suddenly revealed to us. Let us have a free theatre, where there is room for everything but incompetence, hypocrisy and stupidity."\* We can easily see from this why his women are so far removed from the conventional types.

Björnstjerne Björnson, the third of the great Scandinavian playwrights, gives us in his plays real modern women — women of intelligence and poise. He is not trying to explain the fallacy of the old ideas in regard to woman — Ibsen has done that for him. He does not attempt to show with the fierce energy of a Strindberg, the mistakes and sorrows inherent in the new ideas and in the nature of woman. He pictures fine, brave, thinking women in their efforts to reconcile themselves with their environment as they find it. Björnson might well be called the dramatist of the mind for it is mental adjustments and struggles and these usually in the minds of women which are the center of interest in his plays. He presents a crisis in the life of a woman, as in "The Gauntlet" in

\* Modern Dramatists: Ashley Dukes: page 31.

which a young woman, Svava, discovers that her betrothed who has always seemed to be the personification of goodness, has committed a sin which she feels she cannot forgive. The whole play is a record of her thoughts on the subject, what others think of her and how they all act in relation to this one thing. And yet the play is vitally interesting, gripping and sincere in its appeal, for it is deeply psychological. It is not so much the actual sinning that Svava mourns over but the fact that she can no longer have complete trust in Alf. Such a distinction would have had no place in the older drama for two reasons. The women did not show any traits except the primal ones of love, hate, jealousy and others of a similar nature; and even if the dramatist had been able to grasp the fact that they actually had other traits, it would have been unconventional to present them.

Svava and many more of Bjornson's women express in their words and actions the new attitude of thinking women toward life. In the "gauntlet" the particular subject is the double standard of morality and in other plays the author takes up other subjects of vital import in the life

of the human race with special emphasis on the injustice of the position of woman in the home. While little is actually accomplished in the plays, the ideas they embody are broadening and their educational value is great.

Bjornson goes farther than most dramatists in suggesting reforms. Good will undoubtedly come from plays that set men to thinking along new and sane lines and these plays have distinctly that effect. One example may show how this is accomplished.

"Svava: If you would only let men have as much trouble with their children as the women. Then I think we would soon have a new set of principles. Oh, just let them, uncle.

Nordan: They haven't the time. They must rule the world.

Svava: Yes, they have chosen their own part."\*

Bjornson, like Ibsen, is in sympathy with women and his genius is helping to give a better understanding of their problems.

In "The New System" there is a contrast between the old and new type of woman, showing that both may be interesting in drama if presented truthfully. The old-fash-

\* The Gauntlet: Bjornstjerne Bjornson: page 56.

ioned ideal of a wife as represented by the faithful and loving Mrs. Riis, fails when a crisis comes and she cries despairingly, "If I only knew how to help you! But a wife is merely what the man has made out of her, and sometimes that isn't enough."\*

*the earlier drama by the same*

"Beyond Our Power" is a remarkable play in many ways, notably in the use of a miracle motive, but it is chiefly worthy of study for our purposes because of its pronounced variation from the old conception of woman. As we have noted, in the earlier drama love was all there was of interest in a woman's life. In this play there is a clear distinction made between a woman's love and her thoughts and ideals. Clara loves her husband devotedly but cannot believe as he does even though she feels that this failure to believe is costing her untold physical pain and suffering. The author shows that a woman can love her husband with her whole heart and still keep her individuality. The husband feels this when he says to her, "Do you know I think I love you the more for not wholly sharing my faith . . . . Your devotion to me comes wholly from yourself, from your will -- and from nothing else. And I am proud of the

\*The New System: Bjornstjerne Bjornson: page 281

fact that, by my side, you have remained true to yourself."\*

How far this is from the ideal presented in "The Taming of the Shrew" that in order to love a man a woman must subject herself entirely to him, must think, act, and feel exactly as he wishes her to!

Bjornson's women are home women, more interested in people than principles. He shows us the beauty of home life and his suggestions for reform are based on the idea that a perfect family life can only be found when each member is considerate of the others. He emphasizes not the rights of an individual but his duties, especially duties toward the family and through his ideal of family life he shows his conception of woman as an equal and helper of man. The influence on man of this new idea of womanhood is shown in "Love and Geography." The wife, Karen, is one of the old-fashioned kind, giving herself entirely to her husband who sacrifices her and everything else to his work. When her girlhood friend persuades her that this submission is ruining her husband's disposition, Karen departs and leaves him to discover what he has lost. But her departure is not made in anger or for revenge. It is love for her husband and her newly-awakened sense of jus-

\* Beyond Our Power: Bjornstjerne Bjornson: page 129.

tice that causes her to leave him and when he has had time to realize the tragedy of a life in which love has been sacrificed to geography, Karen returns and the family life is adjusted on the principle of mutual forbearance and love.

In "Laboremus" Bjornson has pictured an entirely different type of woman -- an immoral egotist who does not hesitate to use every possible means for her advancement. There is some similarity between her character and that of Rebekka West during her first year at Rosmersholm but Lydia in this play has no unselfish motive to redeem her. The Undine music motive heightens the intensity of the play and helps to reveal in a suggestive way the character of Lydia. In "Leonarda" we have a revelation of the sacrifice that a woman can make so that those she loves may be happy, and the author makes clear the cruelty of a society which misjudges and condemns an individual.

Bjornson has dramatic power, sympathy for humanity and faith in the future to which he contributes the belief that salvation lies in the practice of cooperation and justice in home life. He has done much for drama by giving it good, honest, thinking women who are working out their own fates in their way.

The first step in serious drama in England was taken in 1867 when Tom Robertson presented his play "Society". This play and the more popular one, "Caste", which soon followed are far from being modern as we now use the word but they are interesting as transition pieces. The plots are very similar to those used by Sheridan and Goldsmith but there is added in Robertson's plays a psychologic interest in character and a sincerity in transcribing life as he saw it which was entirely new in the field of drama. In appearance and in most of her conversation Maud Hetherington in "Society" is the old type of stage heroine but when she revolts against the conditions under which she lives and shows her real nature, she belongs in the group of new women in drama. One of these passages is interesting to note, not on account of its intrinsic worth but because of its historic value. The revolt against traditional dramatic action, the suggestion of change in dramatic ideals, the beginning of real character analysis <sup>are</sup> found in the words of Maud;

"I will neither dress myself at the expense of a man I despise, control his household, owe him duty, or lead a life that is a daily lie; neither will I marry one I love, who has dared to doubt me, to drag him into deeper poverty."\*

\* Society: T. W. Robertson: page 726.

The social dramas of Wilde, Jones, and Pinero deal chiefly with the problem of a wronged or sinning woman in her relation to society. This type of woman had been used before in drama but it was either in tragedy or farce. It is the attitude of the author toward his characters, the expert craftsmanship and the difference in the treatment of the theme that make the social comedies of these three playwrights essentially modern. The women portrayed are usually the old type for whom love is everything but the author's accurate observation and skillful depiction of their characters make them new from a dramaturgic standpoint if not from a realistic one.

In "Lady Windemere's Fan" we have a conventionally good and a conventionally bad woman brought together and for the purpose of the play it is the good woman who is bad and the bad woman who is good. Nothing happens as the outcome of the action except that Lady Windemere is brought to her senses and Mrs. Erlynne leaves London, but these two women make the play and the actions which reveal their characters are of primary interest. This whole group of plays aims to present "a cross-section of life"

rather than to work out any particular development of character. Wilde's best woman character is Mrs. Arbuthnot, the "Woman of No Importance." She has poise, good sense, real feeling and a forceful character. It is she about whom the action of the play revolves and she fulfills the requirements for the new type of woman in drama.

Henry Arthur Jones uses as the subjects of his plays what he calls "the problems of modern life arising out of the inadequacy of conventional morality."\* "The Case of Rebellious Susan" shows that there is a change beginning in the attitude of woman toward their environment. Susan herself feels the injustice of the double standard of morality and her remarks lead the Admiral to say, "I can't think what's coming over women. They never used to make this fuss."\*\* Jones noticed that women were waking up and he makes them appear so in his plays. This is a most interesting manner in the characters of Pybus and Elaine—Pybus, who thinks himself a genius and wants his wife to create for him "a lovely, lonely world" so that he may "bring all his powers to their full fruition." Elaine is willing to do her share but insists, "Yes dearest. We

\*The Drama Today: Charlton Andrews: page 122,

\*\* The Case of Rebellious Susan: Henry Arthur Jones: page 39.

will help each other. I feel, too, that I have a message for this age. Of course I shall be free to develop my own character.

Pybus: Of course, dearest, of course. Still, I think---"\* and we know her thinks that woman's place is in the home, that it is only men who need character development.

The author may not be in sympathy with the woman movement but he presents those facts pertaining to the question which come in his particular field and we feel that his women are modern. The most intensely interesting woman that Jones has created is Audrie Lesden in "Michael and His Lost Angel." She may be "lost" but she is struggling against so many things — her own spoiled nature, her false environment and blighting conventions—that we cannot choose but grant her our sympathy. She has extraordinary vitality, cleverness and charm and she is consistent throughout and striving for that which woman has been taught through countless ages to consider her aim in life — happiness in love. She is discontented with herself and cries out to Michael:

"I want to be good! Help me to be good! You think

\* The Case of Rebellious Susan: Henry Arthur Jones: page 76

I'm foolish and light and frivolous. Well, perhaps I am, but when I'm with you I'm capable of anything, anything — except being an ordinary, average, good woman.

Michael: But isn't that all that is required of a woman?

Audry: Perhaps. Its rather a damnable heritage, isn't it?\*

Audry is certainly a new type of woman in drama — not only new herself but challenging all the old ideals of womanhood so strongly and poignantly that we feel with her that to be an ordinary, average, good woman is rather a poor ideal for thinking human beings. And yet it was not so long ago when this was the only ideal.

Charlton Andrews in "The Drama Today" states that Arthur Wing Pinero is chiefly concerned in his plays with the problems arising out of the double standard of morality. He says:

"The student of Pinero's plays will note that his chief characters are nearly all women and that the dominant note is the tragedy of the weaker sex, -- woman as the victim of circumstances largely beyond her control."\*\*  
Pinero's best creation is Paula in "The Second Mrs. Tanqueray." She is treated with sympathy and psychologic ex-

\* Michael and His Lost Angel: Henry Arthur Jones: page 39

\*\*The Drama To-day: Charlton Andrews:page 111.

actness. by the author and her character is so clearly drawn that the suicide at the end seems inevitable. Both her good and bad qualities make self-destruction the only possible solution for her under the circumstances. Paula's step-daughter, Ellean, is the conventional type of innocent youth who feels it her duty to shun and detest evil but after Paula's death she realizes how cruel she has been and she acknowledges the responsibility she has tried to put aside.

"Ellean: Killed -- herself? Yes -- yes. So everybody will say. But I know -- I helped to kill her. If I'd only been merciful!"\*

Nina, the rebellious and self-sacrificing heroine of "His House In Order" is another illustration of this effort on the part of Pinero to break away from the dramatic models ruled by convention and make characters with more than one attribute. Nina's sudden changes from passion to humility, her generosity in giving up the terrible revenge which is in her power, her patience under supreme trials make her worthy of sympathy and intensely interesting as a psychologic study.

\* The Second Mrs. *J*anqueray: Arthur Wing Pinero: page 144

It is interesting to note that this author has in one of his lighter comedies a suggestion of the change in the conception of woman in drama which he realized was fast taking place. "Trelawny of the Wells" is a picture of the change from romantic to realistic drama and Trelawny might be called a "new" actress. The play itself is of the romantic type but within it the importance of realism and naturalness is emphasized. Pinero seems to stand on a middle ground. His women are usually of the old type but he treats them with the new psychologic insight.

The plays of Arnold Bennett are clever and perhaps it is their very cleverness that sometimes keeps us from seeing their psychological significance. This is especially true in "The Honeymoon", where there is so much interest in the story and dialogue that we are apt to overlook the subtlety and truthfulness with which the figure of Flora is drawn. The subject of the relation of love to a man's life is a vital one and it is handled in such a way that it is vastly amusing to those who are looking only for amusement and yet the psychology of the characters is not violated. Flora is <sup>a</sup> thinker but she is also a woman

and it is her tolerant womanly love which wins. Here Bennett has just a suggestion that drama may have gone too far in analytic and intellectual decisions and here makes his character the more human by having her think one thing and do another.

"Milestones", written in collaboration with Edward Knoblauch, is a progression of characters, showing the change of ideals in succeeding generations and the way the women adequately fulfill their part of this panoramic picture. Rose is a type of the ideal woman in the older drama -- patient, loving, absolutely dutiful to her husband. Gertrude is the new woman who has refused to marry because she did not find the right man among her suitors and could not bring herself to "pour tea every morning for the wrong man".\*

In that sparkling play called "What the Public Wants" there is a striking illustration of the application of the new conception of woman in drama. Emily, the refined and talented heroine gives up everything which in the older drama was considered happiness for a woman. She sacrifices love, protection, position and a fortune and this simply because, as she expresses it to Mr. Worgan, "We differ as

\*Milestones: Arnold Bennett: page 70.

to the precise point where shame ought to begin."\*

In a play by Allan Monkhouse called "Mary Broome" there is a very advanced treatment of the relation of a woman to a marriage for which she is in no way adapted. Forced into it by public opinion, she finally revolts and resolves to go to Canada with a man of her own class, one who will be dependable. Her argument before her husband's relatives is pathetic and thought-provoking.

"Mary: Now George Truefit and I have talked it over and we think we see what's right. It can't be right but it's not so wrong as other things..... But I want to be sure of things. I want things to last. I want to feel that I'm faithful and true. Its strange for me to be running away from my husband for that. I'm not one of the kind that does it. Its funny that I'm leaving you because I want to be a proper wife. P'raps I'm all wrong. Its hard for a girl like me, not very clever to make out things. Its all been very unusual. I may be wrong but I can't help it."\*\*

The author's treatment of his leading character is earnest and sympathetic and he adds his testimony to the growing belief that marriage is not always the best solution of the problem of a woman who has been wronged.

\*What the Public Wants: Arnold Bennett & Edward Knoblauch: page 144.

\*\*Mary Broome: Allan Monkhouse: page 81.

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Granville Barker has gone to the extreme in his attempt to present life as it really is. He ignores artistic selection and banishes rules, sacrificing drama for realism but he does present characters so human that we feel personally acquainted with them. This is especially true of the women in the most dramatic of his plays, "The Voysey Inheritance". Mrs. Voysey is one of those elderly women who are tolerant and good and read high-class cultural magazines. She considers marriage the natural state, "once you're married" and cannot believe that separation is possible. Perhaps even more familiar is the character of Honor, the worker of the family, imposed upon by all but seemingly without thought of revolt. She is resigned through habit and waits on all of the other members of the family "because somebody has to". Alice Maitland is more advanced, very sensible and practical, with high ideals but no nonsense about the methods of carrying them out. Her conversation with Edward Voysey concerning principles has an unusual and ultra-realistic flavor because of her frequent interruptions of the serious theme with the demand that he crack her another nut. Barker

has succeeded admirably in this play in giving a detailed picture of English middle-class family life and he cannot be criticised from the standpoint of character drawing in however much he fails dramaturgically.

It is almost impossible to trace the psychology of the leading character in "The Marrying of Ann Leete", Her principal object in marrying a gardener and cutting herself off from her world seems to be to avoid a marriage of convenience which had been arranged for her. Her brother George calls her a "new woman" who wants a new world -- and perhaps she is too "new" for our comprehension. The women in "Waste" are not quite so clearly drawn but there is much of interest in their conversation. Lady Davenport voices the fundamental fallacy of the old argument that women do not need to vote because they are the rulers of men anyway when she says, "Yes, my dear, but power without responsibility isn't good for the character that wields it either."\* Frances, the strong, broad-minded, noble woman who has remained unmarried protests against the conditions by which "Most women must express themselves through men."\*\* Amy, the woman who is chiefly

\*Waste: Granville Barker: page 223.

\*\*Waste: Granville Barker: page 230.

concerned with the "waste" is not portrayed as a very admirable character. She is physically fascinating, but weak and unwilling to bear the consequences of her sin. The author seems to be showing, especially in the contrast between Frances and Amy, how different two women can be whose conditions in life are similar. He shows the new woman not as a single type developed by a change in man's attitude toward woman, but as a variety of types, each a natural outgrowth of a certain reaction toward the new idea.

The plays of John Galsworthy are chiefly distinguished for their realism and power. His realism, unlike that of Barker, is selective and his power is rather that of character than of plot. He adheres strictly to his belief that the dramatist should take an interesting set of characters and let them work out their own plot even if, as in "The Pigeon", a real plot does not develop. He has been accused of pessimism but discontent with conditions as they are means not pessimism but progress and in spite of the somber note in his work we feel that Galsworthy does not despair of humanity but of the artificial conventions under which people are forced to live. Even if he were a

pessimist, however, we should forgive him in our whole-souled enjoyment of the art of his works. The women who make the strongest appeal are those who are abused and down-trodden yet make no resistance. Their very docility gives them a pathetic strength and rouses our anger against the conditions which make their lot necessary.

Mrs. Jones in "The Silver Box" is one of the women who is most self-effacing and who stands out strongly as a dramatic figure. She is quiet, neat and uncomplaining although she has had nearly all the trouble possible to a woman. She is unaffectedly grateful for whatever is given her by those of a higher class even though it is these very people with their false ideals of life who have caused the greatest part of her misery. Her futile, pathetic plea with her husband not to go away but to think of the children, deepens the tragedy and enhances our sympathy for her. She is a common drudge but the heroine of a vital tragedy. What a change from the old idea that tragedy was possible only when queens and princesses were concerned!

The figures of Ruth Honeywill, down-trodden and miserable, the instigator of the action in "Justice", Mrs.

Megan, the weak, pleasure-loving, ward of a society which wishes her dead but will not let her die, Freda, the ladies maid in "the Eldest Son" who has been wronged but refuses marriage as a reparation; are all examples of how much deep insight into character and conditions and a clear simple presentation of facts can do in giving women — ordinary poor women — a vital and significant place in drama.

Perhaps the most powerful of Galsworth's plays in which a woman is the central character is "The Fugitive." It deals with the problem of a cultured woman, a lady, who has ceased to love her husband and so refuses to live with him or accept aid from him. The tragedy of her fate is her inability to do anything useful by which she can earn her living. Clare, the fugitive, has many good qualities and also many bad ones. She is perfectly sincere in her feeling that she must leave her husband. She says, "Right? Whatever else is right -- our life is not. I swear before God that I've tried and tried. I swear before God that if I believed we could ever again love each other only a little tiny bit, I'd go back.. Can't you see that I'm fighting for all my life to come -- not to be buried alive --

not to be slowly smothered. Look at me! I'm not wax -- I'm flesh and blood. And you want to prison me for ever -- body and soul."\*

After she has tried to support herself and has found it impossible because of her training she realizes that it is indeed "a curse to be a lady when you have to earn your own living."\*\* She herself explains that it is not that the work is too hard but "its the working under people; its having to do it, being driven, and every morning getting t there at the same time"\*\*\* that is intolerable to a sensitive woman who has never learned to discipline herself. Like Paula Tanqueray, it is both her good and bad qualities that lead her to destruction. Her innate honesty and determination not to take anything for which she does not give a return leads her to ruin because she has only one thing to give.

The new conception of honor in women is expressed in a conversation between the author, Malise and Clare's brother.

"Malise: If she drops half-way, it's better than if she'd never flown. Your sister, sir, is trying the wings of her

\*The Fugitive: John Galsworthy: page 41

\*\*The Fugitive: John Galsworthy: page 59.

spirit, out of the old slave market. For women as for men, there's more than one kind of dishonor, Captain Huntingdon, and worse things than being dead. We each have our own views as to what they are. But they all come to -- death of our spirits, for the sake of our carcasses."\*

It is Clare's sense of justice that leads her to desert her husband and her love that causes her to leave Malise and since she cannot work, the only two courses open to her are prostitution and death. The former she finds impossible because of her nature and training, so her suicide seems inevitable. This play is a strong and psychologic if unpleasant study of one woman in her struggle against conditions that seem unjust to her.

Bernard Shaw, the brilliant iconoclast, might be expected to present new and unusual types of women and he succeeds admirably in creating advanced and independent characters who are not mere creatures of plot. These women are up-to-date, thoughtful, and clever with natural characteristics, neither all good or all bad. They live their own lives and make us feel their individuality. The best of these new women of Shaw form the nucleus for the

\* The Fugitive: John Galsworthy: page 56.

best of his plays. His dramas seem to be more than those of any other playwright except perhaps Ibsen, dramas of women. He seems to understand their natures better and to transform his ideas and observations into characters more cleverly than most of the others. Perhaps the most delightful of his creations is Candida -- womanly, sympathetic, a mixture of the practical and ideal so often found in a woman's nature. Marchbanks, who thinks he understands her, cries out, "Is it like this for her here always? A woman with a great soul, craving for reality, truth, freedom and being fed on metaphors, sermons, stale perorations, mere rhetoric?"\* What he cannot understand is that she may enjoy the sermons and rhetoric and love the man who utters them. Candida is an individual and she does not feel that her life must necessarily be lived for some man. She realizes her own value and does not like the idea of being auctioned off to one of the two men who want her.

"Candida: Oh, I am to choose, am I? I suppose it is quite settled that I must belong to one of the other.

Morell: Quite. You must choose definitely.

Marchbanks: Morell, you don't understand. She means that she belongs to herself.

\* Candida: George Bernard Shaw: page 243.

Candida: I mean that and a good deal more. And pray, my lords and masters, what have you to offer for my choice?"\*

Shaw has portrayed her character so cleverly that we are not quite sure until the end what she is going to do. She is a new kind of dramatic heroine and we have no standard by which to judge her but she is a delightful personality and perhaps more natural and interesting because we cannot wholly understand her.

"Getting Married" is a frank and interesting discussion of the different phases of the marriage question put in dramatic form. All of the characters are decidedly individual and each has a different view of the question to present. All of the women except Mrs. Bridgenorth are very advanced. There is Edith who, on the day set for her wedding refuses to go through the ceremony because of the absurd divorce laws; then there is Lesbia who calls herself "a regular old maid" and says, "The one thing I never could stand is a great lout of a man smoking all over my house and going to sleep in his chair after dinner and untidying everything. Ugh!"\*\* Her really advanced views, however, are in regard to children.

\*Candida: George Bernard Shaw: page 279.

\*\* Getting Married: George Bernard Shaw: page 219

"Lesbia: I ought to have children. I should be a good mother to children. I believe it would pay the country very well to pay me very well to have children. But the country tells me that I can't have a child in my house without a man in it too; so I tell the country that it will have to do without my children. If I am to be a mother, I really cannot have a man bothering me to be a wife at the same time."\*

This is a very daring statement but it brings up several problems in regard to women which are worthy of thought. In some ways Lesbia is the most advanced women in modern drama.

Her niece Leo is married and, thinking herself tired of her husband, is applying for a divorce. The incidents in connection with this proceeding are very funny, ridiculing still further the English divorce laws. She is still on perfectly good terms with her husband and soon discovers that he is more interesting than she had thought him and that she cares as much for him as for the other man. At last, unable to solve her difficulty, she declares that she loves them both and decides that she would like to be married to a number of different men at different times. This

\*Getting Married: George Bernard Shaw: page 219.

idea is certainly novel even though there is little else to recommend it. Mrs. George is also a very "new" character. She is a thoroughly experienced woman who knows exactly how to handle men and get what she wants. She is very advanced in her views on marriage, believing that when a woman gets tired of her husband, she should leave him and stay away until she chooses to return.

"Mrs. Warren's Profession" presents two new kinds of women. Mrs. Warren is a type of woman which was not presented in the older drama. Her shameful profession makes her unpleasant as a person but she is interesting as a dramatic character. She becomes almost a tragic figure when she is telling her daughter Vivie the circumstances that caused her to begin her manner of living. Vivie represents the practical side of the new woman raised to the nth power. She is well-educated independent, logical and seemingly heartless but she is an appealing figure nevertheless. She has no patience with the old ideals of "maid-only reserve and gentlemanly chivalry", because she thinks that they must have caused a "frightful waste of time -- especially women's time."\* The end of the play is the

\*Mrs. Warren's Profession: George Bernard Shaw: page 168.

most delightful and novel. She sacrifices love seemingly without a pang. She bids her mother good-bye "matter-of-factly" and the rest of the play is in pantomime. "Vivie laughs at Frank's note, tears it up and tosses the pieces into the waste-paper basket without a second thought. Then she goes at her work with a plunge."\* To her, not love or luxury, but work is the basis of life and this is one of the fundamental ideas of modern drama. As we have seen, in the early drama a heroine was a person who could do absolutely nothing in the way of useful work, while the new heroine, if she may be called such, is usually a worker and often a very humble one.

Ann Whitefield in "Man and Superman" has gone a step further. She believes that it is the woman who should choose her mate and that any means are justifiable in the pursuit of the right man. The new idea presented here is that of the Life Force which brings together the people whose union will do the most to increase the efficiency of the race.

The character of Gloria in "You Never Can Tell" is a satire on the type of woman who plays with love and

\*Mrs. Warren's Profession: George Bernard Shaw: page 244.

thinks she is doing no harm, and much of the enjoyment of the play comes from the conflict between this independent and previously unvanquished young lady and the man who is cleverer than herself at the game of love-making. Gloria's mother, Mrs. Clandon, is so advanced and decided in her views that she has left her old-fashioned husband and assumed the training of her children alone. She has absolute faith in her own methods, and encourages unrestrained development and individual expression even at the expense of all the attributes that were formerly considered necessary to children.

The Woman in "The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet" is a mystic character, not definitely and realistically drawn like most of Shaw's women, but she says one thing that places her in the category of modern women. "I was a good wife to the child's father. I don't think any woman wants to be a good wife twice in her life. I want somebody to be a good husband to me now."\* A statement of this nature would have been unheard of in anything but recent drama.

Each of Shaw's women is interesting in her own particular way -- the fascinating Jennifer Dubedat of "The

\* The Shewing-up of Blanco Posnet: George Bernard Shaw:  
page 442.

Doctor's Dilemma", Major Barbara, resolute and inspired, the charming little Cleopatra, and even the disagreeable Blanche Sartorius of "Widower's Houses". In "The Philanderer" two types of women are contrasted. One is Julia Craven, the woman who pretends to be advanced and intellectual in order to win the affections of a man, and in opposition to her is Grace Tranfield, the real new woman, who believes in the best things of the Ibsen cult and acts upon her belief. When she says to Chartaris:

"I will never marry a man I love too much. It would give him a terrible advantage over me,"\* she expresses a new attitude toward love and a revelation of the reason for the unhappiness of so many of the old-fashioned women who love their husbands devotedly. There is a note of pathos at the close of the play which makes the ending different although it is the conventional one of an engagement. Grace says quietly to Julia;

"They think this is a happy ending, Julia -- these men -- our lords and masters."\*\*

In "Captain Brassbound's Conversion" Shaw has departed from his usual idea of women and has given us a woman

\*The Philanderer: George Bernard Shaw: page 122.

\*\* The Philanderer: George Bernard Shaw: page 160.

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whose chief characteristic is charm. Lady Cicely is a most delightful person, so clever that she knows how to hide her cleverness and she knows just how to manage men. Her simple ingenuousness and her artless confusion of important and trivial matters make her at once appealing and powerful and she always gets what she wants. It is hard to make the charm of a character felt by quoting only a few speeches but some idea of her manner may be given. When presented with a description of the dangers attendant upon her proposed expedition she says, "But I always go everywhere. I know the people here wont touch me. They have such nice faces and such pretty scenery."\* Later in her conquest of Captain Brassbound, she tells him, "After all, those men must really like you, Captain Brassbound. I feel sure you have a kind heart. You have such nice eyes."\*\* Lady Cicely is a perfect manager and by persuasion and prevarication she always makes everything go as she wants it to go. In the portrayal of this character, Shaw seems to be laughing at himself for every quality that he has given to his other women is here subordinated to the one gift of charm.

\*Captain Brassbound's Conversion: George Bernard Shaw: page 160

\*\* Captain Brassbound's Conversion: George Bernard Shaw:  
page 244.

Among the other English dramatists of note there are four who are of particular interest in the study of women in drama. Barrie in "What Every Woman Knows" and "The Legend of Leonora" shows the dramatic value of the old-fashioned woman and emphasizes that important trait, charm, which has been overlooked by the other dramatists with the exception of Shaw in the play just mentioned. There is an indefinable attraction about Barrie's women and they steal away our hearts even if we cannot admire their characters. In the one-act play "Half an Hour", the woman is hardly justified in what she does but she is so charming and carries off a difficult situation with such audacity and grace that she wins our sympathy in spite of us.

"Rutherford and Son" by Githa Sowerby is a sombre, powerful drama showing realistically the colorless life of a family under the absolute despotism of the father. It is a powerful sermon against the subjection of women -- strong in its theme and pathetic in its details. Janet Rutherford is the most tragic figure and the author makes us feel the injustice of her position by the mere statement of facts. She and her sister are discussing Susan, the

house-maid.

"Ann: Susan's not one of the family! A common servant lass.

Janet: Like me.

Ann: Just you let your father hear you.

Janet: We do the same things.

Ann: Susan's paid for it. Whoever gave you a farthing?<sup>\*\*</sup>

Rutherford cannot understand why a woman should want anything except food and clothes and he thinks he has done everything necessary for his daughter when he has provided these. This tragedy of misunderstanding is expressed in a dialogue between them.

"Rutherford: Fine words to cover up the shame and disgrace you brought on me -- .

Janet: On you?

Rutherford: Where'd you ha' been if I hadn't set you up?

Janet: Down in the village -- in amongst it, with the other women, in a cottage -- happy maybe.

Rutherford (angrily) I brought you up for a lady as idle as you please -- you might ha' sat wi' your hands afore you from morn till night if you'd had a mind to.

Janet: Me a lady? What do ladies think about, sitting the

\*Rutherford and Son: Githa Sowerby: page 32.

day long with their hands before them? What have they in their hearts?"\* Here is a plea for responsibility and work for women and an expression of the social idea which differentiated modern drama from that of earlier times. To be "in amongst them" and to have work that will keep mind and hand busy is what the modern woman wants and her wishes are reflected in the drama of the period.

Another play of a similar nature but more poetically tragic in its tone and characterization is "The Tragedy of Nan" by John Masefield. It is a simple story of a poor abused girl and not a little of its charm is in the use of the country dialect. The tragedy of a life is summed up in the words of Nan after she has received the gold pieces which are to pay for her father's death and her suffering.

"And there was a girl, a young girl with a sick heart. D'you know what came to 'er? She came among them as might have made much of 'er. For she'd 'ave give a lot for a kind word. 'Er heart was that broke 'er'd 'ave broke out a-cry-ing at a kind word..... You 'ad me in your power. And wot was good in me you sneered at. And wot was sweet in me you soured. And wot was bright in me you dulled. I was a fly

\* Rutherford and Son: Githa Sowerby: page 90.

in a spider's web. And the web came round and round me, till it was a shroud, till there was no more joy in the world. Till my 'heart was bitter as that ink and all choked. And for that I get little yellow round things."\*

This is surely a departure from the old idea that wealth was all that was necessary for happiness. Another new note is the suggestion that there are different kinds of love. In the older drama love was love. The hero loved the heroine and she either reciprocated or not but there was no differentiation in quality. Nan with clear insight sees that Dick's love for her is not the right kind. She says, "But you come. And you 'ave you/love of a girl. You says lovely things to 'er. Things as'd move any girl -- and only because you be greedy. Greedy of a mouth agen your mouth; of a girl's lips babbling love at you."\*\* Nan is a unique and decidedly appealing character in modern drama.

Somewhat suggestive of Masfield's plays in the use of dialect and simple character delineation are the Irish dramas and although the plays which grew out of the Irish Theater Movement are not directly concerned with presenting a new type of woman, there are a few which suggest this

\* The Tragedy of Nan: John Masfield: page 65.

\*\*The Tragedy of Nan: John Masfield: page 69.

idea. The women in the plays of Lady Gregory and W. B. Yeats are for the most part simple, superstitious Irish peasants with no thought of improving their condition. John M. Synge comes the nearest to picturing a new woman in "The Shadow of the Glen". This play is a somber tragedy of the sort of marriage made necessary by the economic conditions in Ireland. Nora Burke is imaginative and longs for happiness but has sacrificed it for "a bit of a farm, and cows on it, and sheep on the back hills."\*Women have a place in the Irish plays but their treatment is largely suggestive and imaginative and the plays in which they appear are pictures rather than character sketches.

Perhaps the most revolutionary of all modern dramas as far as the treatment of women is concerned is Stanley Houghton's "Hindle Wakes". The characters are rather ordinary people and the play progresses quietly through the first two acts in which it is revealed that Fanny Hawthorn has spent the week-end in a near-by town with Alan Jeffcote, the son of her father's employer. The surprises come towards the end after Alan's father has agreed with the parents of Fanny that the two must marry. They are

\*The Shadow of the Glen: J. M. Synge: page 25.

discussing the details of the ceremony, when Fanny remarks, "I was just wondering where I come in".\* She is told that all she has to do is to stand up and be married, to which she replies, "You'll look rather foolish if that's just what I won't do."\* Consternation greets this outburst and she goes on: "It doesn't suit me to let you settle my affairs without so much as consulting me.

Mrs. Hawthorn: Consulting you! What is there to consult you about, I'd like to know? You want to marry Alan, I suppose, and all we're talking about is the best way to bring it about.

Fanny: That's just where you make the mistake. I don't want to marry Alan -- and what's more, I haven't the least intention of marrying him."\*\*

Shortly after this Fanny and Alan are left together in the hope that he may persuade her to do the conventional thing. Their dialogue reveals the fact that Alan thinks Fanny is making a great sacrifice and is giving him up because she fears the marriage will spoil his life. She shatters this belief in the most striking passage of the play. "Don't you kid yourself, my lad. It isn't because

\* Hindle Wakes: Stanley Houghton: page 94.

\*\* Hindle Wakes: Stanley Houghton: page 95.

I'm afraid of spoiling your life that I'm refusing you, but because I'm afraid of spoiling mine! That didn't occur to you."\* And of course it hadn't or to any other man in a similar position. Situations of this kind in drama before this even in such a recent play as Galsworthy's "The Eldest Son" had been treated entirely from the standpoint of the man. This was certainly an innovation. Later Fanny utters more heresy in trying to explain her attitude. "All women aren't built alike... I was fond of you in a way"

Allan: But you didn't ever really love me?

Fanny: Love you, Good heaven's, of course not! Why on earth should I love you?\*\*\*

And she repeats almost word for word the statement he has made previously but which did not sound so strange coming from a man. "You ~~were~~ just someone to have a bit of fun with. You were an amusement -- a lark."\*\*\*

By her straightforward logic she shatters the conventional arguments with which her mother tries to persuade her.

"Fanny: You're not really angry with me because of what I've done. Its because I'm not going to have any of Mr. Jeffcote's money that you want to turn me out of the house. Mrs. Hawthorn: Its not! Its because you choose to be a girl

\*Hindle Wakes: Stanley Houghton: page 100.

\*\* Hindle Wakes: Stanley Houghton: page 103.

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who's lost her reputation, instead of letting Alan make you into an honest woman.

Fanny: How can he do that?

Mrs. Hawthorn: By wedding you of course.

Fanny: You called him a blackguard this morning.

Mrs. Hawthorn: So he is, a blackguard.

Fanny: I can't see how marrying a blackguard is going to turn me into an honest woman.

Mrs. Hawthorn: If he marries you he wont be a blackguard any longer.

Fanny: Then it lookê as if I'm asked to wed him to turn him into an honest man."\*

In Fanny's last words there is a note of triumph and fearlessness for the future. "Its right good of you, Alan, but I shant starve. I'm not without a trade at my finger tips, thou knows. I'm a Lancashire lass, and as long as there's weaving sheds in Lancashire I shall earn enough brass to keep me going. I wouldn't live at home again after this, not anyhow! I'm going to be on my own in future. You've no call to be afraid. I'm not going to disgrace you. But so long as I've to live my own life I don't see why I

\*Hindle Wakes: Stanley Houghton: page 106.

shouldn't chose what its to be."\*

The play that seems to be the best expression of the influence of the femimist movement in Germany is "Magda"; by Hermann Sudermann. The struggle of this play is a vital one, representing the two phases of duty — duty to one's parents and duty to one's self. The old-fashioned German atmosphere is an ideal one in which to work out such a theme and in spite of tradition Sudermann makes us feel that it is Magda who is in the right. She says truly, "I am myself and through myself I have become what I am."\*\* She is determined in carrying out what she believes right but she loves her father and her struggle is to do what she must without hurting him. The impossibility of reconciling these two objects makes the tragedy. Both the tender and the determined side of her nature is brought out in her conversation with her father when she says, "Father dear, I will hunble myself before you willingly, I lament with my whole heart that I've brought sorrow to you today.... But I must live out my own life. That I owe to myself and mine. Good-bye."\*\*\*

Edward Everett Hale, Jr. in his "Dramatists of Today"

\*Hindle Wakes: Stanley Houghton: page 107.

\*\* Magda: Hermann Sudermann; page 122.

\*\*\* Magda: Hermann Shdermann: page 132.

declares that the struggle as expressed in this play is the basis of the new conception of woman in drama. He says that this play "does show us the new woman, but that is only a current form of the difference between new ideas and conservatism or conventionalism, as you may choose to call it!"\* Magda is then a symbol for the new ideas, her father for the old. This suggestion does not seem quite adequate for it detracts from the human interest of the piece and belittles the importance of Magda as a woman, which is one of the most essential things in the play. Our sympathy is with Magda whether we consider her as a representative of the new ideas or whether we take a more personal viewpoint and consider her as a woman. We feel that she has been treated unjustly and according to our standards she is in the right when she says to her father, "You blame me for living out my life without asking you and the whole family for permission. And why should I not? Was I not without family? Did you not send me out into the world to earn my bread and then disown me because the way I earned it was not to your taste."\*\* Charles E. Caffin says of Magda, "The main point is that she is a woman with an independant will and

\* Dramatists of Today: Hale: page 78.

\*\* Magda: Hermann Sudermann: page 156.

the courage to exert it and abide by the consequences. She is in revolt against that sacrifice of womanhood which a false ideal of home life entails. Her spirit is too free, too eager to touch life at many points, too restlessly conscious of power in itself, to brook the small and narrow surroundings in which convention would have kept her imprisoned."\*

This play is the greatest of the dramas of the man who has always stood for individualism and has discovered that this can best be expressed through a woman. In Magda we do not feel that there is anything morbid or that the author draws our sympathy to a character who is unworthy of it. He even suggests that there are duties to others which cannot be selfishly put aside, when Magda asks the Pastor; "Have I not a life to live also? Have I not a right to seek my own happiness?" and he replies,

"No; no one has that."\*\* Magda is the only one of Sudermann's plays that presents what we might call the good phase of individualism. The "Joy of Living" carries the idea a little too far and when we look at Nina dispassionately, away from the play, we do not feel that she, like

\*The Appreciation of Drama: Charles H. Caffin: page 149.

\*\* Magda: Hermann Sudermann: page 139.

Magda, is in the right. There is a kind of blunting of our moral sense. We admire the play and the character as a work of art, but ideals such as Nina stands for and expresses are dangerous. In the "Fires of St. John" this is carried a step farther still and licence is extolled. We are forced to sympathise with characters who act contrary to all our ideas of right and this play distinctly emphasizes the lower and more selfish phases of individualism.

The plays of Hauptmann are of two types, the poetical-ly symbolical, represented by "The Sunken Bell" and the brutally realistic such as "The Weavers." In "The Sunken B Bell", the author conceives of two ideals in the life of a man — the artist ideal and the duty ideal. It is the old struggle of individualism against conventional right and in this play the first is typified by the joy-giving Rautendelein and the second by the loving wife Magda. There is little of the psychological in the depiction of either of these women and our chief interest is in what they represent and in the poetic beauty of their language.

In "The Weavers" there are countless characters, men and women, all deftly woven into the revelation of the

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central idea — starvation. There is no leading character but certain ones stand out in our memory on account of particularly keen misery. We find this misery expressed in many ways but in none more poignantly than in a speech by Luise, a mother who has watched her four children starve to death.

"Luise: Yes, I set up to be a mother, that's what I do -- an' if you'd like to know it, that's why I would send all the manufacturers to hell -- because I'm a mother -- Not one of the four could I keep in life! It was cryin' more than breathin' with me from the time each poor little thing came into the world till death took pity on it."\*

The tragedy of motherhood among the very poor is expressed powerfully and pathetically in this play.

The third German dramatist who has distinguished himself in helping to bring about the new treatment of women in drama is Wedekind. He has opened up an entirely new and somewhat startling field of dramatic research. His best-known play, "The Awakening of Spring", is a dramatic denunciation of the reluctance of parents to tell their children the vital facts of life and reproduction, and it

\* The Weavers: Hauptmann: page 130.

is indirectly a criticism of the German school system. It is a tragic piece, with no unity except in subject. The scenes are episodes and are chiefly character-revealing dialogues. Practically all of the action takes place between the scenes and the spectator sees only the tragic results. One of the most pathetic parts of the play is the scene in which the young girl begs her mother to tell her about herself and the mother refuses through fear or shyness to tell the truth, thus bringing about the tragedy. The girl has our entire sympathy and through his treatment of her the author suggests that we should view erring women with tolerance since ignorance of the laws of life may have caused their fall. He blames the system and not the individual for the wretchedness of society.

There are many French dramatists who are active in the new movement but there are only a few important ones whose works are available in English so this study will be confined to Brieux, Rostand, Becque and Hervieu. Brieux is the most active in the struggle for the emancipation of woman and his plea is for the abolition of the dowery as a necessity of a French girl's marriage and for personal purity of

both sexes. All of Brieux's dramas are thesis plays and he has often been accused of sacrificing truth and dramatic power if necessary in order to prove his thesis. Truth is undoubtedly sacrificed in "The Three Daughters of M. Dupont", but it is a powerful and human drama and we forget that three daughters representing the three possible conditions for women would probably not be found in the same family. Granting the author's premise there is nothing illogical in the way the theme is worked out. The three occupations possible for women in France are represented in this play by Julie, the wife, Caroline, the unmarried worker outside the home, and Angile, the prostitute. The unhappiness of each is shown and the tragedy is in their helplessness. The marriage of Julie has been consummated through fraudulent representation on both sides. There is no real love and Julie longs for children while her husband hates them. She tries to free herself from him but public opinion and the testimony of her sisters that other methods of earning a living are worse than hers drive her back. Brieux does not pretend to use pleasant themes but his attitude is not pessimistic. He feels that

these deplorable conditions will be righted if people only know about them and there is hope, not in any particular case in his dramas, but in their general atmosphere.

The women in his much-discussed drama, "Damaged Goods" are chiefly important in their relation to the theme. The terrible fate of many innocent women is brought to light in a plain and scientific manner with sincerity and dramatic power. Brieux is the champion of the women and children and through his intensity of purpose he has introduced many new themes into the field of drama. "Maternity" is an indictment of the system by which a man may force his wife to have children against her will even when they are destined to be sickly because of their father's excesses. Lucie, the principal character, is married to a man who believes in large families, whatever misery and trouble they may bring. The economic problem is again presented when Annette cannot marry the man who loves and who has wronged her, because she is poor. Madeleine is unhappy because motherhood has taken away some of her beauty and her husband has ceased to love her. The whole play is a protest against the selfishness of men and the attitude that motherhood

out of wed-lock is a crime. In "The Independent Woman"\* Brieux gives a hopeful note in regard to the economic independence of women. Therese, the intelligent, far-seeing woman of this play, says, "No, I take the train tonight for Paris. But the workingmen will have no cause to rejoice. In this new war of the sexes, it is the men who will be conquered because women work at lower wages — they don't have to make money to squander at the saloon — and only the men will be defeated, only the men M. Feliat! The sons of bourgeois families who haven't enough stamina to marry girls without dowries will be sure to find them later, on their way — poor girls whom they have forced to go to work! A new era has begun. In every land, in the cities, in the country, among rich and poor, out of every home deserted by drunkards, or left empty by those who fear the tribulations of marriage, a woman will rise up and leave it, and come and take her place beside you, in the factory, in the workshop, in the office. You wouldn't take her as a housewife and she refuses to prostitute herself to you -- she will be a working woman, a competitor, and a successful competitor! Good-bye!"

\*This play has not been translated into English and the passage cited here is a quotation from an article on "The New Brieux" by Barrett Clark in the Drama for August 1913.

"Blanchette" is a protest against the educational system which trains a girl strictly for teaching and then fails to find her a position. Blanchette is a bright, intelligent girl who has been sent to school by her parents in the hope that she may be able to earn her living. Her education <sup>has</sup> spoiled her for any other kind of work than teaching and there is no position open to her. In this play the solution comes in her marriage to a peasant and we are led to believe that she will be happy but there is a suggestion of the fate of many girls in like circumstances who do not have the opportunity to marry.

One of the most penetrating psychological studies in modern drama is "The Escape" by this author. Here he shows the effect of suggestion on the human mind. The principal characters, Lucienne Bertry and Jean Belmont have slight hereditary weaknesses and these are so dwelt upon and emphasized by their friends that they almost despair of ever finding happiness. Their escape finally comes through the admission from the doctor who has led them to believe most definitely in the influence of heredity that he has been mistaken. This admission frees them from the poisoned at-

mosphere that suggestion has built up around them and they begin to live with new hope.

The plays of Edmond Rostand do not belong strictly to the type of drama we have been studying. They are romantic rather than realistic and the principal characters are men. Rostand does not seem to be in sympathy with the woman movement. There is a suggestion of his attitude in "Chantecler" when the Pheasant-hen says,

"The Pheasant-hen I am, who have assumed the golden plumage of the arrogant male.

Chantecler: Remaining in spite of all a female, whose eternal rival is the idea."\*

"The Crows" by Henri Becque is a dramatic picture of the helplessness of women who have no man to protect them. There is pathos in their hopeless condition and the necessity for the sacrifice of the most lovable member of the family to the contemptible man who is persecuting them, in order that the family may live. Becque, like Brieux, seems to deplore the condition that makes women so entirely dependent upon men and he shows the tragedy of the position of a woman who has no masculine protector in a conversation

\*Chantecler: Edmond Rostand: page 252.

between one of the daughters, Judith, and M. Merckens.

"Merckens: There are no resources for a woman, or rather, there is only one. See here, Mademoiselle, I am going to tell you the whole truth in one sentence. If you are pure, they will esteem you without helping you; if you are not, they will help you without esteeming you; you cannot hope for anything else."\* This is hardly a pleasant outlook for the woman who wishes to make her way in the world but the mere recognition that something is wrong is one step toward righting it and M. Becque has presented the wrong very dramatically.

Paul Hervieu in "The Labyrinth" has taken up a serious and vital subject -- that of the relation of a divorced woman who has re-married, toward her first husband who is the father of her child. "The Labyrinth" is a powerful and tense drama and Marriane has our sympathy for her character is true and consistent and the wrong she does is due to physical weakness. In contrast to her admirable nature is presented her cousin Paulette who does constantly and lightly what Marianne sacrifices her happiness to keep from doing. Marianne is conspicuously a new type in French

\*The Vultures: Henri Becque: page 131.

drama and although the theme is the conventional one of two men and one woman, it is far from conventional in characterization and treatment.

For some reason American dramatists have not succeeded as well as the European in presenting woman in her new relations to society. This may be because the conditions of woman in America does not seem to warrant taking up the cudgels in her behalf. The conditions so dramatically pictured by Brieux, Sudermann and Galsworthy are not present in this country to any great extent and the dramatists are therefore searching for material which will be more appropriate. There are many interesting women in American drama but the woman question is not definitely used except in a few instances. In "The Servant in The House" by Charles Rann Kennedy there is one passage which seem to have a direct bearing on our theme. It is the dialogue between the Vicar and his wife in which he inveighs against the old-fashioned attitude of women toward their husbands. The wife says, "Do you take me for an Atheist?" and the Vicar answers;

"No, far worse -- for an idolater. What else but idolatry is this precious husband-worship you have set up in your

heart -- you and all the women of your kind? You barter away your souls in the service of it; you build up your idols in the fashion of your own respectable desires: you struggle silently amongst yourselves, one against another, to push your own god foremost in the miserable little pantheon of prigs and hypocrites you have created."\* This is surely a new and rather startling conception of the ideal of wifely devotion so long held before women as their goal.

In "The War God" by Israel Zangwill the principal woman character is an anarchist who is passionately devoted to the cause and has faith enough in the right of her side to sacrifice everything for it. She is a romantic figure and is different in many ways from other modern women in drama but she has the same desire to do things and to be independent of men which animates them all. Mary, the woman in "The Next Religion" by the same author, is devoted to her husband but will not accept his religious teachings. She is a strange mixture of the old and new in her willingness to slave and suffer so that her husband may spread a doctrine in which she does not believe.

William Vaughn Moody has created two splendid women--

\*The Servant in the House: Charles Rann Kennedy: page 112.

Rhoda Williams in "The Faith Healer" and Ruth Jordan in "The Great Divide". The most remarkable thought brought out in the author's sympathetic treatment of Rhoda is that the highest love of a man for a woman is not worship of her as something far above him but the human forbearing love possible only between equals. Michaelis loses his power when he imagines Rhoda to be a perfect creature whose love will keep him from his duty and he<sup>y</sup> regains it when he discovers that she is "just a weak, wounded girl, praying for strength to live, to heal her wounds and-- after many days -- to find the peace that she has lost."\* He knows that the love and companionship of a fellow human being will help and not <sup>him</sup> hinder in his work. "The Great Divide" is a truly American drama. The struggle here is between the ideals of the East and the West and it takes place in the heart of a girl. She is gradually won from the narrow New England prejudices concerning right and wrong across "The Great Divide" to the more free and broad ideas of the West.

There are a number of other American playwrights who have presented with more or less sympathetic treatment the new ideal of woman in drama and in most cases she is a

\*The Faith Healer: William Vaughn Moody: page 154.

typical American woman facing the problems peculiar to our country and civilization. Charles Kenyon in "Kindling" shows her as a woman down-trodden and oppressed through economic conditions, one who longs for a different environment in which to raise her child. Augustus Thomas in "As a Man Thinks" shows her rebellion against the idea that men may do with impunity what is not allowed to women and although the old idea triumphs in the play there is a suggestion that such conditions are not fair. Clyde Fitch shows her in "The Truth" as a woman who has been taught to lie if it was pleasanter or easier than to tell the truth and who finally discovers that true love must have truth as its basis. Josephine Preston Peabody, in her beautiful poetic drama "The Piper", shows the redeeming power of one woman's love and while this may not be a new theme, it is decidedly new in treatment. In "The Bird of Paradise", Richard Walton Tully drives home the lesson that physical love such as Luana gains by "the arms and the lips" is not lasting and that there is something higher in the relation between man and woman. Percy Mackaye brings out the same idea in "Tomorrow" when Father Peter says, "When love has

learned to reason, obey love."\* It is "the love of the mind, the romance of reason" that is exalted in this play and this is a new and gripping idea in drama. "Mater", also by Mackaye, is a delightful and somewhat incomprehensible study of a woman playing the part of her own daughter and its chief attraction is in the sense of humor displayed by Mater — an almost unheard-of attribute in the women of drama, the other notable exception being Barrie's "What Every Woman Knows". In her perversities and lack of understanding of a man's idea of honor there is latent criticism of the old type of education for women by which they were trained to use indirect methods to gain their ends. The keynote of the play is in the words, "The test of love and the best of love is laughter."\*\* "Anti-matrimony" contains another charming woman who has a sense of humor and that delightful play-instinct which Mackaye seems to understand so well. The play is a mild satire on the new ideas in regard to marriage and it is humanized by the character of Mildred, the devoted wife who shows the others their folly by indulging in a make-believe carrying-out of their ideas.

Of a far different type but having the same sympathy and human toleration in treatment is the central figure in the beautiful poetic drama "Rahab" by Richard Burton. Al-

\*Tomorrow: Percy Mackaye: page 152

\*\* Mater: Percy Mackaye: page 162.

though not modern in setting or plot it is decidedly so in the attitude of the dramatist toward his characters and it illustrates clearly the tendency of modern drama to create sympathy for a woman who has sinned because she is a fellow human being and still not condone or make light of the sin.

"The Red Light of Mars" by George Bronson-Howard is rather startling in some respects but it has a big theme and delightful treatment. One of the most interesting things is the author's insight into feminine psychology and his representation of change in the character of Miss Fanny Felix. The motivation is careful and consistent. At the beginning of the play she is the type which is commonly known as "the typical American girl", selfish, money-loving and ambitious, but she gradually becomes human and self-sacrificing through the influences brought to bear on her. There is much of interest on the women question in this play. The best passage is in a dialogue between Angus and The Devil.

"Angus: Women have always been our refining influences. They draw out our nobler selves.

The Devil: They draw out our sentimental selves, cunning minxes. Men are dragged down, their philosophy sapped, their reason rotted, by living with inferior creatures. You see, while men were out battling with circumstances and learning to use their brains, women were slaves. Had brains, right enough, but didn't get a chance to use them. Men played the grand act with them. "Now don't bother your little head about that, dearies, papa'll fix it!" Well, about the beginning of the last century, I realized I must let men alone for awhile — and work on women. So first, I created an industrial revolution that would send women out to work in the world — like men —

Angus (angrily) That proves what a devil you are! Ah, those good old days when every father could support his daughter until she married -- when every wife was in her true sphere -- the home.

The Devil: That shows how men's brains have gone back while I worked on women.--- Well, my work on women has been effective. She's learned in fifty years what men took thousands to learn. In another fifty she'll be men's mental equal."\*

\*The Red Light of Mars: G. B. Howard: page 51.

Upton Sinclair has created a woman new, and yet entirely different from the other new women of drama. In "The Naturewoman" he has made a character who is a combination of the physical attributes of a wild being and the mental characteristics of a thoroughly modern, up-to-date woman. Indeed her conversation is far in advance of that of the present day. Raised on an island in the South Seas, she is perfect physically and has read everything worth while. She is utterly frank and truthful and brings consternation into the well-ordered, conventional lives of her relatives. She even goes so far as to win away her cousin's husband because she sees in him a perfect mate but at the last moment she gives him up and the author leaves us to decide whether or not she has done right.

The American dramatist who most directly makes use of the woman movement as the motive of his plays is George Middleton. Nearly all of his one-act plays are based on the idea that men and women should have equal rights and duties and that conventions should not bind the individual. Middleton is the Feminist of the American group. Clayton Hamilton admirably describes the significance of women in

the plays of Middleton. He says:

"These plays, though totally different in subject matter, reveal an underlying unity. Each of them deals essentially with women -- and with modern woman in relation to our modern social system. Woman is, at present, a transitional creature, evolving from the thing that man considered her to be in the far-away period of wax flowers and horse-hair furniture to the being that man considers her about to be in the unachieved, potential future: and Mr. Middleton has caught her in this period of transition and has depicted her, under many different lights, colored with her virtues and discolored with her faults."\*

The struggles in the plays of Middleton are complex, not the simple old-fashioned struggle between love and duty but more subtle ones growing out of our civilization. Some of his women might almost be called superwomen, for they are glorified examples of the present-day independent thinking women. Most of his men are useless, degenerate creatures but they are used to show that the system which suppresses and enslaves its women, ruins its men.

"The Cheat of Pity" is a powerful play showing that

\*A Pioneer in American Literary Drama: Current Opinion;  
May 1914.

what is conventionally called duty may not be right. The woman sacrifices her happiness because of pity for an insane, brutal creature to whom she is bound. After his death she realizes her mistake but it is too late. In "The Failure", "In His House" and "The Man Masterful", the question of divorce is taken up. The author's contention seems to be that it is wrong for a man and woman to live together when love is gone regardless of the outward things that seem to make it necessary.

All of the plays are deeply psychological and women are pivotal in the plots. Perhaps the most interesting play and the one which presents the author's ideas most clearly is the three-act comedy, "Nowadays". The setting is a well-to-do home of the old-fashioned sort in which the father is absolute master and the women are made to feel their inferiority. The masculine attitude is ably expressed in a speech by the father, Mr. Dawson, who is "smoking, complacently surveying the women work". He says to his son;

"I tell you there's nothing like a woman's touch about the house. That's what makes the home. A little lower, Belle. Sam, when you come back here and marry you'll know what it means to find your wife waiting at home for you,

when you're tired out working so she can rest comfortably all day doing nothing but just fuss about the house."\*The tragedy of a love that cannot understand is here. The autocrat who thinks that all women need is protection and a good place to live, cannot grasp the idea that they may want work and interests other than housework. Diana is a beautiful example of the best type of new woman, earnest and sympathetic, who does what she thinks is right in spite of opposition and who is not afraid to outrage the conventions by proposing to the man she loves. To show that all women are not of this advanced type, the author brings in as a contrast Betty Howe, weak, dependent and loving, who needs some one to support her. The other woman of the play is the devoted wife who has sacrificed all of her girlhood interests in trying to please her husband, who has raised her children and still has strength and health but nothing of interest to occupy them. The injustice of her position is brought out in a conversation with her husband.

"Mrs. Dawson: I stay here and do what Nellie and another servant could do, because you think that's a woman's place. I help wash the dishes, see that the beds are made, the

\*Nowadays: Middleton: page 20.

meals ordered, things kept clean — the same thing over and over and over every day. Then I sit down and wait for you to come home tired with making the money we don't need... If I went to Diana, would you refuse to support me?

Dawson: I have the right to refuse.

Mrs. Dawson: Is that the law?

Dawson: Made by sensible men to protect the home.

Mrs. Dawson: Then a home must be in a pretty bad way if a man has to tie a woman by his purse strings. Does the law give a wife the right to collect back payments?

Dawson: Belle, you're ridiculous. You talk as if you were my housekeeper and not my wife.

Mrs. Dawson: If I'd been your housekeeper at twenty-five dollars a month you'd owe me three hundred dollars for each of the twenty-five years I've lived with you. That's nearly eight thousand dollars worth of service that I've put into this house, which has been my home as well as yours. Yet the law gives you the right to say what I shall do. You can cut me off without a penny if I wish to be with my girl, so long as you obey the law -- without a penny till you're dead, because you make the money. Didn't I make the

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money for you by saving it? .... And I bore you two children, and my heart's crying out for Diana. And you went go with me, though you have nothing holding you here, nothing but the past. You're forgetting I am a mother as well as a wife."\*

And Dawson, puzzled, watches her go off and bursts out,

"Well, what the Hell's come over women nowadays?"\*\*

Middleton's dramas seem to be an attempt to explain what has come over women nowadays and the reasons for the change.

Outside of the five countries mentioned there are a few others which have contributed dramatists of note who are especially interesting in connection with our study of the new conception of woman. In most cases there is one man who stands for the movement in his own country as Echegaray in Spain and Maeterlinck in Belgium.

The drama's of Jose Echegaray are intense and somewhat morbid. His women are of especial interest and their characters are consistent psychologically. In "Mariana" the struggle is that of a girl between love and a combination of revenge and a distorted sense of duty. The motivation is so well executed and the poor girl's tortured soul so

\* Nowadays: George Middleton: page 155.

\*\*Nowadays: George Middleton: page 158.

well depicted that everything she does seems natural and unavoidable. There is a certain fatalism in the plays of Echegaray and we watch fascinated while the characters are led step by step to their irrevocable doom. This is especially marked in "The Great Galeoto", a beautiful and intensely appealing drama of the tragedy which gossip, even unmalicious gossip, may bring into the lives of noble men and good women.

The Italian dramatist D'Annunzio has created strong intellectual women and the struggle in his plays is between the beauty ideal and the duty ideal. A woman stands for each of these ideals in his two best-known plays -- "The Dead City" and "Gioconda". The treatment is sympathetic and exquisitely beautiful. Both sides of the question are fairly presented and in "Gioconda", although humanly our sympathy is all with Silvia, the deserted wife, still the author makes us feel that Lucio was not entirely wrong in following the call of beauty and art represented by Gioconda.

Of the Russians, Leo Tolstoy and Maxim Gorky stand out most prominently. There is a strength and crude power

in their work not to be found elsewhere except perhaps in the plays of Strindberg. In "The Smug Citizen," Gorky shows the tragedy of the life of a girl who has been educated until she has become a misfit, has lost faith in everything and has failed to do that which is of first importance for a girl of her class -- obtain a husband. She is a different type of woman from any we have found before. She is modern but she lacks that joy in life and interest in affairs that characterize most of the new women in drama. The things she has to struggle against are small but numerous and they crush enjoyment out of her life -- nagging at home, a dislike of her work, the triumph of a younger, uneducated girl. The tragedy of her life is an education which is merely from books and which does not qualify her for living. She says pathetically, "I realize that I have comprehended the cruel logic of life -- he who cannot believe in anything cannot live -- he must perish."\*

The women in Tolstoy's plays are of various types, none of them very likable. The crafty, avaricious Matryona in "The Power of Darkness" is one of the most hideous characters in all dramatic literature and her daughter-

\*The Smug Citizen: Maxim Gorky: page 57.

in-law Anisya, although more stupid, is not far behind her in cruelty. In this play Tolstoy is seeking to represent the abject and hopeless misery of the Russian peasant women who will do anything for a little money. Something of their condition is given in a speech of an old servant.

"A peasant woman, what is she? Just mud! There are many millions of the likes of you in Russia, and all as blind as moles -- knowing nothing! So many millions of girls and women, and all like beasts in a forest! As she grows up, so she dies! Never sees anything; never hears anything. A peasant, -- he may learn something at the pub, or maybe in prison, or in the army, -- as I did. But a woman? Let alone about God, she doesn't even know rightly what Friday it is! Friday! Friday! But ask her what's Friday? She don't know. They're like blind puppies creeping about."\* It is almost impossible to believe that such conditions can exist but Tolstoy has made them so real that we are forced to credit them and it seems as if such a dramatic revelation would do much toward influencing the higher classes to help in improving the condition of these poor down-trodden women.

\*The Power of Darkness: Leo Tolstoy: page 78.

In his comedy "The Fruits of Culture" Tolstoy gives a contrast to his tragic piece by showing the foolishness of people of high station. There is Anna Pavlovna who is afraid of microbes, the Fat Lady a devotee of spiritualism, young Betsy who is fond of practical jokes, but for his chief character the author chooses a ladies-maid, the daughter of a peasant. She is witty, appealing and determined in accomplishing what she has set out to do and her character is a suggestion of what the Russian peasant women might be if they were given a little education and freedom. Tolstoy is the champion of the peasants and, because their lot is the hardest, particularly of the peasant women.

Arthur Schnitzler, the famous Austrian playwright, does not usually treat women with any great degree of sympathy. His idea seems to be that woman was created for the amusement of man, and under these circumstances, we can scarcely expect to find any examples of new women in his works. His nearest approach to a sympathetic treatment of woman is in a play called "Light-O'-Love". The woman here is sweet and lovable and her true love almost has the power to win back the man from evil. In the poetic drama

"Paracelsus" there is another real woman but as a rule the women of Schnitzler's dramas are heartless coquettes having none of the qualities which go to make up the broad-minded, sympathetic new woman.

The leading dramatist of Belgium, Maurice Maeterlinck, has created one of the finest women in modern drama in the character of "Monna Vanna". She is great enough to see that there is a duty above her duty to her husband, an honor above personal honor. Even if we condemn her action at the end, we must admit that it seems inevitable. One of the most dramatic moments in literature is the one in which, under her husband's cross-questioning and unbelief she suddenly begins to lie after seeing the uselessness of telling the truth. Monna Vanna is a wonderful character but the true value of the play in its relation to the change in the conception of woman in drama is in the suggestion which it gives that a woman may have more virtues than one. It challenges the idea that a woman's virtue consists solely in the preservation of her chastity and that she may be absolutely unprincipled in every other respect without losing her womanhood. The virtues of honesty, truth-telling and un-

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selfishness are as much ~~as~~ part of a good woman's character as chastity and should be so reckoned in judging her.

Maeterlinck brings this out in his beautiful and sympathetic treatment of his leading character and our view of womankind is broadened through knowing Monna Vanna.

## V. Classification and General Conclusions Drawn from the Preceding Study.

From this particular study of the best modern dramas and their women a number of conclusions may be drawn which help in determining the relation of the new conception of woman to the drama as a whole. The Scandinavian and British dramatists seem to be the most advanced in their treatment of women and, generally speaking, most powerful in getting dramatic effects revolving about a woman as the pivot of the plot. The Germans are best in the treatment of fundamental philosophic problems and women are used as the basis of the plot only when the problem demands it. The British use women in their plays because they find them interesting as woman and they choose plots which will admit of a woman as the central figure, while the Germans use them only when they feel that they are necessary to their plots.

The French are especially adept at writing thesis dramas and succeed wonderfully well in the composing of logical, well-made plays which prove a thesis and are marvelous works of art. They are concerned with the pre-

sentation of problems and they care little for solutions since these seldom make good dramatic material. They usually show a typical case representing some phase of society in which reform is needed and merely suggest a remedy. From the time when Dumas fils first conceived of drama as a "criticism of life," the French have found in the relations of men and women, what they consider the true material for drama and they have developed it skillfully and artistically from every point of view. Woman is an essential in French drama because of its nature and in the recent dramas there is a tendency to make her pivotal in the plot. The American dramatists are not so definitely interested in the problem of the readjustment of woman in her relation to society but this idea is well treated in individual cases and the under-current of feminine unrest is found in most of the plays.

The three dramatists who stand out most prominently as the friends and champions of women are Ibsen, Shaw and Brieux. Their plays are imbued with social passion and a desire to expose and change the conditions under which women are treated unfairly. They expose the injustice and overturn the conventions which have enslaved

women, vanquishing "the dead hand of the past" with common sense and suggesting the terms of equality and toleration under which men and women may live together in true happiness. These three are the leaders of the woman movement in drama and their influence on other dramatists and on society has done much for the emancipation of woman.

All of the dramatists studied have a decidedly different conception of woman from that held even half a century ago, but there are different degrees in the interest which they take in the question and the lengths to which they develop it. It may be possible to divide the plays roughly into classes with this thought in mind. The first class includes the plays which contain old-fashioned women treated with a new sympathy and understanding of their natures through the application of psychology. To the second class belong those plays which deal with woman as a changing, developing individual and in which the play depicts the psychological processes and physical actions which bring about the change. The third class treats of the new woman already determined in her own mind about the necessity of living her own life but constantly coming into conflict

with old traditions and conventions.

Some of the typical plays of the first class are "The Second Mrs. Tanguarey", "The Tragedy of Nan", "The Silver Box", "A Woman of No Importance", "What Every Woman Knows" "The Next Religion". In the second class we might include "The Doll's House", "There are Crimes and Crimes"; "Maternity", "The Labyrinth", "The Great Divide", and "The Truth". The Third class more definitely represents the new woman in drama and includes "Rosmersholm", "Comrades", "Michael and His Lost Angel", "Hindle Wakes", "Candida", "Getting Married", "Mater", "Nowadays" and perhaps most typical of all, "Magda". There are some plays which cannot definitely be placed in any class. They seem to combine the ideas of two, as "The Lady From the Sea" or, like "The Marrying of Ann Leete," they defy classification.

It is easy to realize the importance of women in drama when we observe that each of the plays studied contributes something either directly or indirectly to the advancement of the new conception of woman. Except in a few cases, the best modern plays are either written about women or else are studies of the characters of men and women viewed as

equals. Just now the greater number belong to the first category because a reaction was necessary from the too-great use of men as the center of drama, but when affairs have become better adjusted between the sexes the dramatists will no doubt see that both men and women have problems worthy of dramatic treatment and the plays will be written accordingly.

## VI. The Relation of this New Conception to the Woman Movement.

There is a very interesting study in the problem of the relation of the new conception of woman to the Feminist movement. The question might be asked whether the search of the realistic dramatists after truth would have brought to light traits in women which they themselves did not suspect or whether it was necessary for a new type of woman to develop before the dramatists could see <sup>the value</sup> of women in drama. Archibald Henderson suggests that it was the dramatists who were largely instrumental in bringing the woman movement to pass. He says, "Ever since Henrik Ibsen declared in burning words that in the *Workers and Woman* he placed all his hopes for the future ..... this age has won the right to the title; the age of Woman's Emancipation;. Ibsen entered the lists as Woman's Champion, not in a partisan spirit but because he realized that the cause of woman was the cause of humanity. It is an evolutionary growth from the days when he tragically pictured woman as under necessity of self-sacrifice and service for others."\* Ellen Key in *The Woman Movement* suggests that they are parallel and perhaps

\**Interpreters of Life*: Archibald Henderson: page 175.

this is the most rational way to look at the matter.

She says: "There are now no great movements of the time whose path does not run parallel with or cut across the woman movement."\* The problem of life as she sees it is precisely the one that we find exemplified in all of the great dramas. It is "to find the right choice in the collusion between family duties, duties toward oneself and duties to society." Not being a dramatist she goes still farther and presents a solution, one which is suggested if not expressed in the modern dramas. "As long as the law treats women as one race and men as another, there is a woman question. Not until men and woman, equal and united, work together for mankind will the woman movement belong to the past."\*\*

John Stuart Mill in discussing the Subjection of Women says, "After food and raiment, freedom is the first and strongest want of human nature. The desire for it does not decrease as reason develops. On the contrary, the communities in which reason has been most cultivated are those which have most strongly asserted the freedom of action of the individual."\*\*\* It is this idea of the "freedom

\* The Woman Movement: Ellen Key: page 64.

\*\* The Woman Movement: Ellen Key: page 70.

\*\*\*The Subjection of Woman: John Stuart Mill: page 384.

of the individual" to attain the fullest and most harmonious development that the dramatists of today have chosen as their most vital theme and since woman is more handicapped than man in the struggle toward it, they have almost universally chosen women as their central character.

Richard Burton in "The New American Drama" combines drama and the woman movement in this fashion: "Perhaps the theme, so lending itself to countless ramifications, that at present seems even more fruitful than that of business life is that which deals with the freedom of the individual economic, social or political, with woman naturally the centre of interest. Within our generation she has been and is undergoing a triple revolution in these particular aspects of the common life. She is no longer the same as wife, mother, wage-earner, and citizen. And although at present her political enfranchisement would seem the burning question, when it is settled, as it soon will be, the political phases of her new life will be seen as one fact of that general evolution of the sex into social freedom in the broadest sense. In all this surely, lies magnificent possibilities for the play writer of democratic sympathy

and thoughtful observation."\* If woman is "naturally the centre of interest" in the most gripping of present-day themes for the drama, it must be true that the subject of woman in drama is of primary importance.

Charles H. Caffin in "The Appreciation of Drama" declares that there is a direct relation between the drama and the woman question. "Innumerable adjustments must still be made between the sexes before each in mutual equality, can round out its perfect self. In this progress the drama must play its part. It should be a big one, for there is no other influence so potent."\*\* We may say then, that the drama is a vital and desirable aid to the woman movement, that it has a wide appeal and a vast influence over many different kinds of people. Whether the new conception of woman by dramatists is the cause of the result of the woman movement or whether they are parallel, each vitally influences the other and they are closely bound together. One of the most apt and delightful combinations of drama and feminism and a sentiment which is really the epitome of the woman question is found in a remark by Bunty in that delightful Scotch play, "Bunty Pulls the Strings."

"There are few things I couldn't be if men would let

\*The New American Drama: Richard Burton: page 145.

\*\* Appreciation of Drama: Charles H. Caffin: page 152.

me -- and I tried."

The power of the dramatist is great for his medium not only has a wider appeal than others, but its appeal is also stronger for both the eye and ear are active in receiving the appeal of a play, and when a real dramatist uses his power in presenting a real problem such as the relation of woman to society, a greater influence for good is exerted than anyone can imagine. A playwright can synthesize impressions which have been vaguely wandering about in the minds of the audience into strong, intense issues in the lives of people. He can make us see the right and wrong in our ideas of life by working out in human experience universal ideas. Dramas are experiments with life and from them we can draw many conclusions of great value in forming our concepts of living. Since there are still many people who are doubtful about the advisability of giving woman equal freedom with man, it is particularly important that some powerful medium such as the drama with its appeal to all classes should be used as an educational force. This is being done more and more and the most earnest dramatists are devoting themselves to this task with inspiring power

and enthusiasm. The drama and woman question are at their best when united, for each helps the other immeasurably and together they are able to do untold good in helping to bring about the right relationship between men and women in society.

## VII. Conclusion.

The Real Value of the New Conception of Woman to Drama and its Development.

Women must necessarily play a large part in any art that claims to depict life. Drama more closely approaches a perfect representation of life than any other art, so we should expect to find the treatment of women of utmost importance in its development. In realistic drama this is particularly true for the women here may be true to themselves and may have definite, independent characters. The earliest development of drama was along classic lines and the women were treated as noble heroic persons who gain our admiration but whose perfection makes them seem far removed from us. This might be called the period of the ideal woman in drama. Later, when drama was introduced through the medium of the Church women were naturally subordinated and became tempters and mischief makers, as in the Towneley plays. These religious plays led gradually into others of a secular type but women were still represented in an uncomplimentary manner. Just before the time of Shakespeare, the romantic period in the treatment of women

in drama began. During this period women were treated as creatures entirely dependent on love and their chief duty was to welcome the returning heroes. Shakespeare varied the formula somewhat and created a few very interesting women but they are all essentially romantic in treatment. The Restoration comedies brought in the woman of intrigue, the basest of all conceptions of women, and this type has continued in France and is to be found in other countries in musical comedy but in serious drama it has given way to the modern ideal of woman.

When we characterize this as the period of the real woman, it is easy to see that there is no particular type in the ascendant. No two women are alike and drama which aims to present them as they are and not as they ought to be will have as many types as there are women. This is what gives a great degree of interest to modern drama. The women are all different and even if the inciting action is similar in two cases, we know that the response of the women involved will be different. We watch with interest the actions of the characters for we know that there is no particular way in which they are supposed to act and that they are apt to do the unexpected.

We cannot tell what the future of drama may bring but it seems reasonable to suppose that whatever improvement there may be in drama will be greatly aided if not made possible entirely through the new and sympathetic conception of woman by the dramatists of the present. Woman is attaining her natural place beside man in drama as in other fields and perhaps more rapidly in drama because dramatists have a broad, human way of looking at important subjects which people in more restricted fields cannot understand. The dramatist sees life. That is his work and he can grasp the relative importance of issues and events. He has seen that woman has not been treated with justice -- that she has not been allowed a fair share of either the rights or the duties of life, and he has constituted himself her champion by seeking to interest in her behalf that most conservative of masters -- public opinion. He has done his part with earnestness and sympathy. With a broad and tolerant attitude toward his women and an artist's vision and feeling.

The dramatists who are the most interested in the woman question are the ones who make the strongest appeal

as writers of serious plays. They have created real women with definite, universally appealing problems. They have made women central in their plots and worked out their characters with psychologic care. They have treated their women with sympathy and dramatic skill and in all their works they distinctly show in contrast to the earlier plays a new conception of woman in modern drama. †