

Paragraph from *Hedda Gabler's Last Dance*

Sample essay written by Steve Lyne for English 122 at the University of Victoria

From <http://web.uvic.ca/wguide/Pages/SampleEssaysLit.html>

Note the structure. How would you improve it?

Raised by a general (Ibsen 1444), Hedda has the character of a leader and is wholly unsuited to the role of "suburban housewife" (1461). Since she is unable to have the authority she craves, she exercises power by manipulating her husband George. She tells Thea, "I want the power to shape a man's destiny" (1483). Hedda's unsuitability for her domestic role is also shown by her impatience and evasiveness at any reference to her pregnancy. She confides to Judge Brack, "I've no leanings in that direction" (1471). Hedda desires intellectual creativity, not just the procreative power that binds her to a limited social function. But because her only means of exercising power is through a "credulous" husband (1490), Hedda envies Thea's rich intellectual partnership with Eilert Loevborg (1484), which produces as their creative "child" a bold treatise on the future of society (1473-74, 1494). Hedda's rivalry with Thea for power over Eilert is a conflict between Hedda's dominating intellect (symbolized by her pistols) and the traditionally feminine power of beauty and love (symbolized by Thea's long hair).