



ESJ Humanities

Henrik Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*: A Research-Based Study of the Psychosocial Risk Factors of Hedvig's Suicide

Safaa Fahes, MA English Language and Literature
Lebanese University, Lebanon

[Doi:10.19044/esj.2023.v19n20p26](https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2023.v19n20p26)

Submitted: 17 May 2023
Accepted: 24 July 2023
Published: 31 July 2023

Copyright 2023 Author(s)
Under Creative Commons CC-BY 4.0
OPEN ACCESS

Cite As:

Fahes S.(2023). *Henrik Ibsen's The Wild Duck: A Research-Based Study of the Psychosocial Risk Factors of Hedvig's Suicide*. European Scientific Journal, ESJ, 19 (20), 26.
<https://doi.org/10.19044/esj.2023.v19n20p26>

Abstract

Adolescent suicide, an issue raised in literature, represents a key moment in Henrik Ibsen's play, *The Wild Duck*. Even though the literature available on the play refers to the suicidal act performed by Hedvig by accusing either mysterious fate or particular characters of driving the girl to her doom, the interpretations are apparently few and far between and do not provide analysis of the reasons behind the suicide in one detailed research. This paper, thus, provides a comprehensive study of these factors, using a qualitative analysis of the play that relies on study results gleaned from both sociological and psychological researches examining the risk factors that aggravate the probability of suicide in adolescents. Based on this approach, the paper reveals the role of family conflicts, neglect, personal susceptibility in adolescence, isolation, impaired schooling, economic hardship, and inclination towards self-sacrifice for the sake of the family, in causing the adolescent girl's death by suicide in the closing scene of the play. The significance of this research lies in its contribution to a deeper understanding of suicide in literary works. The implications of the study extend beyond the realm of literature, giving more insight into the driving forces behind suicide in adolescents, in the hope that intervention methods may alleviate such factors.

Keywords: Suicide, adolescent, sacrifice, neglect, conflict, family

Introduction

As a growing phenomenon in today's modern world, adolescent suicide is naturally causing the birth of an extensive body of researches and studies in sociology and psychology. A depiction of adolescent suicide in literature is therefore a pivotal issue that makes *The Wild Duck*, Henrik Ibsen's play, worthy of a more up-to-date investigation. Issued in 1884 (Gosse, 1889/2003, p. 81), the play dramatizes suicide – quite a recurrent theme in Ibsen's works. At the end of the play, Hedvig, the adolescent girl, uses a pistol to kill herself in the loft, where the family keep the wild duck. Controversy dominates the critical interpretations of Hedvig's suicide, some construing it as accidental fate, others accusing Gregers Werle, or blaming her father, Hjalmar, and still others seeing her mother, Gina, as the perpetrator. No matter who the culprit is, there seems to be considerable shortage of researches focusing on the risk factors leading to Hedvig's suicide from psychosocial perspectives. Consequently, this paper picks up the gap in existing literature, profiting from sociological and psychological research investigating the suicidal inclinations in adolescents, so as to clarify why the sensitive adolescent girl, Hedvig, takes the matter of ending her life into her own hands. Based on these recent studies, Hedvig seems to have committed suicide not because of one reason in isolation but as a result of a combination of factors, some pertaining to her own nature as an adolescent, and others external, including the weapon used in the suicide, the familial and economic conditions she is surrounded with, and most importantly the final direct stressor that puts her under pressure to kill herself.

Review of literature

Among the critical works analyzing Henrik Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, those investigating the reasons behind Hedvig's suicide are significantly sporadic and more importantly marked by divergence of assessments. There are those which aim to evaluate the act itself and others that seek an identification of the culprit, ultimately accusing one or another of the characters in the play, noticeably without offering detailed evidence.

The moral value of Hedvig's suicide

The first noteworthy split of opinions regarding Hedvig's suicide in the play is concerned with the moral significance of this act. McFarlane (1971) argues that the girl's self-sacrifice is pointless, and that her doom is worthy of "pity" (p. xiv). This attitude is countered by Viesland (2005), who basically contends that this suicide is a positive deed – a suicide effected by the will to die. He claims that although Hedvig is relatively blind, she manages to gain insight in the attic – an insight that takes the form of self-knowledge as Hedvig realizes her oneness with the duck and her separation from the material

linguistic world, in a process of sublimation. In fact, Viesland relies on Freudian, Lacanian, Hegelian and Nietzschean philosophies that see the attic as a subject of fantasy and the wild duck “an object of desire” (p. 49). Hence, he invites the reader to view Hedvig, Gregers, Hjalmar, and Old Ekdal as the Others desiring the wild duck and thus destroying Hedvig (p.50). This exaltation of Hedvig’s suicide matches well an evaluation by Fulsas and Rem (2018), who state that Hedvig is truly the “first tragic hero or heroine of Ibsen’s” (p.127). In such context, then, interpretations do diverge on the value of Hedvig’s act of self-destruction, some expressing wonder at its futility and others lauding its worth.

A mysterious cause of suicide

Moreover, very significant in existing literature is the inclination to see the suicidal act undertaken by the young girl as shrouded by mystery. Durbach (2009), for example, argues that Hedvig’s final decision to kill herself is inscrutable. He contends that Gregers’s instigation and the paradise he is seeking through “forgiveness and transcendence and the confrontation with reality” – which emanate from his “evangelical” perspective that sacrifice will assert Hedvig’s love to Hjalmar – yield neither the outcome he desires nor the “proof” of love that Hjalmar seeks from Hedvig. Durbach asserts that the play fails to produce a clue as to why Hedvig performs this “last unfathomable act”. He wonders whether it is because of “despair, confusion, a sympathetic affinity with her pet” or even the blow of her father’s “hateful rejection”. Thus, he concludes, the audience can do nothing but guess in this “world of mystifying uncertainty” because none can definitely know what takes place behind the scenes, in that “closed-off attic” (p.52). By similar token, according to a pseudonymous notice by ‘Mordred’, *referee* (1905), Ibsen’s incarnation of the suicide of a “poor creature” – Hedvig – seems confusing (p. 430) and therefore vague. Likewise, as claimed in an “Unsigned theatre comment, *referee*” (1905), Hedvig’s suicide is hard to comprehend because the girl never mentions the idea of suicide in the play and because it is foolhardy to think of killing one’s pet to show filial love – as Gregers tries convince Hedvig to do (p.434).

As this first set of interpretations reveals, then, Ibsen fails to clarify the reasons behind the final act of suicide, a fact which leaves the audiences baffled. As Mozić (2019) claims, however, this suicide is by no means a mystery. He considers Hedvig’s death as a tragic outcome of a natural “retribution”, where the forest avenges itself on the Werle and Ekdal families for their carelessness, alienation and most importantly for cutting its trees (p. 190). The mysterious nature of the suicide in the play is also countered by Aarseth (2005), who, explicating the incident of self-inflicted death in terms of Darwinian concepts, sees no “irony” (p. 7) because the girl identifies herself

with the duck and totally lives in “existential illusion” in the world of the loft. As a result, she is imprisoned in the loft, “bound to domestic captivity” as she wants to stay at home (p.8) and thus undertakes the act of suicide as a natural outcome to living in illusions.

A death by accident

On a completely different ground, some analyses try to validate the scenario of accidental death. For instance, Hedvig’s death is portrayed as “an accident that overthrows determinism”, where the young girl’s death is her way out of becoming, like the wild duck, the object of desire of the Other, Gregers (Viesland, 2005, p.51). Østerud (1996) argues that because she is oblivious of the rules of the adults and especially of the game played by her father, Hedvig is “called upon to pull their chestnuts out of the fire” – an act that precipitates her self-demise, which is nothing but an “accident” because she does not know what it means (p.166). Mozic (2019) also corroborates the claim that Hedvig kills herself inadvertently. Basing his argument on Hjalmar’s decision to abandon the home and repudiate his daughter, Mozic claims that Hedvig, distraught by her father’s acts, finds solace in Gregers’ suggestion of sacrificing the duck. This exacerbates her sense of confusion, so much so that she mistakenly shoots herself while trying to kill the duck in that “mysterious space of the loft” (p. 123). By and large, based on these interpretations, Hedvig does not actually commit suicide but rather unintentionally kills herself – an argument that clashes with the majority of other interpretations that point out the instigators of the self-destructive act, mainly Hjalmar and Gregers.

Feminist interpretations

In another set of works, feminist evaluations emphasize that Hedvig is a victim of the patriarchal system represented mainly by her father. Forshey (2008), for instance, describes Hjalmar as a “domineering” (p.8) father who puts his child in such form of captivity that augments her preexistent sense of struggle as a female. As a result of being entrapped by her blind adoration of Hjalmar, whom Forshey describes as having “selfish moods” and “unrealistic ideology”, her growth is so undermined that “she still lives as a child (p.17) – a fact that may have left her unknowing as to the effects of killing herself. Such a feminist approach of suicide echoes that of Mozic (2019), who overtly states that “Hedvig, like her mother, becomes the victim of patriarchal recklessness and hypocrisy” (p. 227) since Hjalmar disregards their untiring attempts to sustain the family when he unhesitatingly forsakes the home based on unsubstantial evidence about the nature of his relationship with Hedvig and the fact of Gina’s affair with Werle, Gregers’s father. Moi (2002/2005) likewise returns the action of suicide to feminine nature. Moi means that

Hedvig, the “frightened, loving” girl who is trying to comprehend the world, undertakes a so-called act of female sacrifice because of her femininity (p. 422). Echoing this is a claim by Harad (2005) that because she is on the threshold of “womanhood”, Hedvig plays the role of females who sacrifice themselves while simultaneously wasting their human “potential” because they are women (p. 411). Hence, based on these analyses, it is because Hedvig is a female exploited by males, particularly her father, that she commits suicide.

Hedvig’s childish character

Another more dominant perspective takes into account the impact of the adult world on Hedvig, the girl who does not yet understand adulthood. Northam (1973/1999) denies that Hedvig kills herself immediately after overhearing what Hjalmar says about self-sacrifice, for “the balance of evidence is against this”. He takes into consideration the thickness of the doors of the attic that allow no sounds to be heard throughout the play (p. 80) and the inadequacy of timing –implausible as it is – since Hedvig needs to overhear, comprehend, decide, and then take action all at once. To Northam, the more credible explanation may be that the suicide is not born of an instant but is rather “the culmination of a process in keeping with her character”, for she is “a thoughtful child” who finds out that there is discrepancy between what grown-ups say and what they mean, so she goes to the attic, with Gregor’s words about shooting the duck on her mind, and she chooses to kill herself, instead, “for love” (p.81). Significantly, Smith (2002) sees Hedvig as a child and argues that she ultimately chooses sacrifice as a form of play that starts off with Gregers’s instigation and drags the girl to believe that she is the wild duck. This, according to Smith, sways Hedvig to “the world of the dreamer or the schizophrenic”, verging even on “insanity” and enacting a “Dionysian sacrifice” (p. 20).

Adults augmenting suicidality in Hedvig

In other works, nonetheless, Hedvig is seen as one victimized by the adults who drag her to commit the act of self-killing. Finney (1994), for example, believes that Gina’s susceptibility plays a role in driving her daughter to the option of suicide. Insofar as she brings into being a “web of lies and deceit” when she remains reticent concerning her relationship with old Werle, Gina is a culprit, as Finney reckons. He contends that Gina seeks a purgation of her history by becoming totally and “compulsively obsessed with order, subordinating humaneness to neatness”, yet to no avail. The moment the truth is unveiled by Gregers, the child is driven to suicide instead of being saved, as is her mother’s wish (p. 99).

Nonetheless, the most analyses of *The Wild Duck* accuse Gregers of enticing Hedvig to commit suicide. Meyer (1967/ 1980) debates that the moment Gregers steps into the Ekdal family home with his holy mission of leading them to an ideal world where “illusions” are unveiled and truth is absolute, he triggers their demise (p.24). Sprinchorn (1980) also argues that Hedvig’s suicide is the outcome of Gregers’s speech. Describing him as “harmful” and as a “fool”, Sprinchorn decries his “pernicious” sway when he “blunders into the happy Ekdal home” and ends up annihilating it (p.127). Intensifying the blame, Sprinchorn compares Gregers to a “demon casting an evil spell on Hedvig” because of his own history of suffering and his miserable childhood (p.128).

Shaw (1891) debates that both Hjalmar and Gregers augment Hedvig’s predisposition to sacrifice herself. He explains that due to Hjalmar’s “theatrical repudiation” of his daughter in the wake of revealing doubt as to her descent, her “ideal” position in the home is shattered, hence becoming an origin of “discord”. Shaw contends that her suicide occurs after she hears the speech of Gregers, the “idealist mischief-maker”, on the “duty and beauty” of sacrificing oneself for the sake of others, even if he at that moment seems unmindful “that he might be taken in mortal earnest” (p.99). Macfall (1907) reckons, too, that both Gregers and Hjalmar have precipitated the death of the “sensitive noble-hearted girl”. The instructions Gregers gives her on self-sacrifice that make him “her sole guide in trouble” and the deep wound Hjalmar’s repudiation cuts into her combine to create in her a belief in the value of sacrificing the wild duck – “her most treasured belonging” – so as to make amends to her father (p. 256). However, as Macfall claims, being agonized by having to sacrifice the innocent duck in order to serve her own purpose with her father, the girl decides to kill herself instead (p. 257).

Likewise, Jones (1891/2003), a champion of Hedvig, acclaims her “irresistibly touching image”. He defends her against her “humberging father”, Hjalmar Ekdal, “the seedy, selfish – subtly selfish and self-deceptive – photographer, in whom nothing is active but the tongue”, and against Gregers, the “transcendent meddler”, the two males who bring about the girl’s ultimate fall (p. 243). Northam (1973/1999) sees the process of Hedvig’s fate as follows: After she is repudiated by Hjalmar, she sinks into “utter despair”. Then, Hedvig finds him the only guide, the sole adult who provides her with solace because he shows “poetic sympathy”. Subsequently, she “delivers herself to him” and sees in his words the relief she badly desires. Because she is confused, the only way she can wipe away the turbulence is following Gregers’ example, like adopting the duck as a symbol (p.77).

On the other hand, Clurman (1977) lays all the blame on Hjalmar who, upon discovering that Hedvig might not be his daughter because Gina refuses to admit to any facts, believes that Hedvig has shattered “the peace” in his life

and accordingly treats her callously. This, Clurman argues, “indirectly precipitates” her suicide (p.136). Hence, describing Hjalmar as an “archetype of self-delusion and self-indulgence”, Clurman condemns the father and husband who plays the role of a spoiled man, doing things the easiest way by throwing the burden on Hedvig and Gina (p.138).

Obviously, then, the plethora of analyses of *The Wild Duck* diverge in pinpointing the reasons behind Hedvig’s suicide, do not provide enough evidence on the reasons altogether, and fail to link this self-destruction to recent studies that investigate the risk factors contributing to teen suicide. This paper thereby attempts a bridging of the gap heretofore ignored, using various studies on adolescent suicide as demonstrated in a multiple of validated research works.

Theoretical framework

In order to validate the argument in this paper and to bridge the gap in existing literature, the results of multitudinous studies and researches in sociology and psychology on adolescent suicide are used to bring together all the risk factors contributing to the suicide of the adolescent girl in *The Wild Duck*.

First, by definition, an adolescent is an individual experiencing a transitional period of development that lies between childhood and adulthood, starting at 10 to 13 years of age, and ending between 18 and 22 (Santrock, 2001, p.17). Suicide, on the other hand, is a “fatal, self-inflicted act with the explicit or inferred intent to die” (Mazza, 2006, as cited in Miller, 2011, p.7). Miller (2011) describes suicide as the final stage in a process that involves suicidal behavior, this latter being divided into four “separate but frequently overlapping conditions that exist on a continuum” (p.3). The process commences with “suicidal ideation”, passes through “suicidal-related communications” and “suicide attempts”, and ends with suicide. However, it ascertained that the suicidal process is variable and may not necessarily incorporate the four stages altogether for all suicidal adolescents (p. 4). Several risk factors compound the predisposition to suicidality in adolescents, based on a lot of researches and studies, the availability of firearms being a significant one.

Access to firearms at home as risk factor

In fact, recent studies on adolescents who commit suicide have unveiled that adolescent suicide is an upshot of several factors combined, one of which is the availability of firearms. In a study conducted in 2003, Shain (2007) asserts that half of the adolescents involved used firearms to commit suicide (p. 669) and that this way is the “second-leading method” of suicide for adolescent girls. Shain emphasizes the factor of fatality in using firearms

since little opportunity of rescue exists in case they are used. That is precisely why, if guns are available at home and are accessible by adolescents, “regardless of whether they are kept unloaded or stored locked”, the probability of death by suicide tends to soar (p.670).

Johnson and Malow-Iroff (2008) clarify that guns play a role in causing over half the deaths by suicide. They present the results of a study conducted by Johnson, Krug and Potter in 2000 that 34% of deaths by suicide in 34 of the richest countries involve a firearm, stating that in the United States alone, the percentage increases to 68 % (p. 76). Likewise, as demonstrated in another research by Otsuki et al. (2014), guns classify as “the most common method” young people follow to commit suicide. As a result, the family home becomes the “the most common location” youth choose to kill themselves by way of a firearm (p. 12).

Psychological and cognitive risk factors

It is proven in other studies that adolescents are prone to commit suicide because adolescence incorporates not mere regular change but marks of significant “upheaval” (Jurich, 2008, p. 29). Nurtanti et al. (2020) explain that adolescents may commit suicide because they suffer physical and mental changes during this critical period (p.174) According to Jurich (2008), adolescents, as opposed to adults, are apt to be suicidal even if they suffer no psychiatric ailments. He nominates ego identity as the major “developmental task” for an adolescent – a task they may fail at realizing when they are unable to achieve autonomy. Subsequently, they are entrapped in an area of ambiguity as regards their identity, in the wake of which their self-esteem is undermined and the risk of suicide is escalated (p.43).

Wagner (2009) also believes that poor self-image during adolescence is a great driver towards suicide. Cognitively speaking, Wagner presents analysis by Rudd (2000), which relies on Beck’s cognitive triad of self, others and the future. In the first category, adolescents perceive themselves as “worthless, ineffective, unlovable”; in the second one, they think others are “critical, rejecting”; and in the last category adolescents are hopeless and governed by a feeling that they are overpowered, thus thinking, for example, that they have to please others so as to avoid being rejected. In order to cope, such adolescents relentlessly try to please others, neglecting their own needs in the process (p.48). Likewise, Carr (2002), while admitting that several reasons lie at the core of the disposition towards committing suicide, affirms that adolescents view suicide as “the only feasible solution” to any crisis connected to “loss or conflict”. Subsequently, they take this option so as to evade an intolerable emotional disturbance, to penalize oneself, to attain others’ attention and to sacrifice the self “for a greater good”, among other purposes (p.41).

Moreover, according to Spirito and Esposito-Smythers (2006), when adolescents are hopeless, they are likely to perform self-destruction. Signs of hopelessness, as Spirito and Esposito-Smythers explain, include “a lowered expectation of obtaining certain goals”. It also entwines with such feelings as “personal futility, loss of motivation, and the expectation that the future will yield negative personal consequences” (p. 246). Thus, based on this research, discontent on the personal level and fear of probable failure in the future amplify the desire to kill oneself during adolescence. Similarly, Hoberman (1989) proffers study results which demonstrate that suicidal adolescents do not have a single particular trait. Rather, as he states, the most common traits, including introversion, loneliness, hypersensitivity, and impulsiveness, necessarily mean that adolescents would not be able to manage emotionally in the face of predicaments (p.72). Haddad et al. (2020) add isolation to the list, basing their findings on studies conducted on adolescents who in their study responded that sadness, loneliness and the lack of support from others or particularly from adults who would listen to them would increase their willingness to commit suicide (p. 4).

According to other researches, an adolescent’s predisposition to commit suicide could be an outcome of their inability to comprehend some life events because they are in a state of cognitive development. Because of their confusion concerning life and their own selves at his stage, as Jurich (2008) emphasizes, adolescents probably grasp the finality of death on the intellectual level, yet they have such a strong ego that prevents them from confirming that if they commit suicide they will never come back to life – so much so that they imagine they will not really die but merely drive others to empathize. This opens the gate to doubt whether such teens are actually aware of the implications of suicide (p.45). Remarkably, this is supported by the finding by Slaby and McGuire (1989) that although not a single concept of death is adopted by all adolescents, teens deem death “transient and pleasant” (p.24). The results of these studies intersect with those by Hedeland (2016), who contends that the impulsive nature of adolescents links to their having “a different time perspective than adults” – a characteristic which pushes them to center their attention on instantaneous impacts of any behavior and to underrate the consequences that may take place in the long run (p. 1). This obviously overlaps with the idea on committing suicide as a short-term solution, the long-term consequences of which adolescents naturally do not take into account.

Perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness and capability as risk factors

Other significant personal risk factors conducive to suicidal inclination, based on other studies, include perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness and capability. Based on the interpersonal-psychological theory,

two interpersonal conditions are at the root of the desire for death by suicide: perceived burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness. According to Ribeiro and Joiner (2009), perceived burdensomeness is a “potentially dangerous misperception” whereby an individual believes that “the self is so incompetent that one’s existence is a burden on friends, family members, and/or society”. As a result of this misconception, Ribeiro and Joiner explain, there originates in the adolescent a personal conviction that “one’s death is worth more than one’s life” (p.1292). Elsewhere, this issue of feeling oneself as a burden on others is referred to as “expendability”, a risk factor involved in suicidal inclination (Miller, 2011, p.110).

Related to this is the concept of “thwarted belongingness”, where the person feels alienated from friends or family. The concurrence of these two factors intensifies the inclination to commit suicide (Ribeiro & Joiner, 2009, p. 1292). In other words, the adolescent should show desire to commit suicide, which in fact includes the overarching states of perceived burdensomeness and failed belongingness (Miller, 2011, p.22). However, for an adolescent to engage in the act of lethal self-injury, the factor of capacity, according to Ribeiro and Joiner (2009), must exist along with burdensomeness and thwarted belongingness. Capacity, they explain, “is acquired through repeated exposure and attendant habituation to painful and provocative experiences” (p. 1293). Consequently, the concomitant existence of perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness, and capacity may facilitate the tendency to commit suicide (p. 1294).

Socioeconomic factors leading to adolescent suicide

Besides the internal and personal risk factors inherent in adolescents, external issues may play a role in suicidality. The first of these pertains to social and economic issues. A study conducted by Berman et al. exposes the finding that suicidality in youngsters may be precipitated by dire socioeconomic conditions (Miller, 2011, p.13). In fact, socio-economic standing and suicide are inversely proportional: the lower people’s socioeconomic status, the higher the suicide rate. For instance, as a survey conducted by Qin, Agerbo, and Mortenson in 2003 on Danish youth reveals that people who suffered socioeconomically were five times more prone to commit suicide than those who were more affluent (Miller, 2011, p.13). Thus, if the adolescent is member of a family that barely makes ends meet, chances are that they may try to commit suicide at one point in their lives.

Improper schooling as a risk factor

Moreover, factors relevant to schooling may lead to adolescent suicide, according to another set of studies. Shain (2007) stresses that when teens face difficulties at school or do not attend school at all, their suicidal inclination is

amplified (p.670). Other studies have also found that teenagers who are not provided proper schooling or who do not attend a school show considerable predisposition towards suicide: “Youngsters who are ‘drifting’, affiliated with neither a school nor a work institution appear to be at substantial risk for completing suicide” (Gould et al., 2003, p.23). This factor is closely connected to a study conducted by Leehey (1991), who states that learning disability compounded by vision impairment could cause a teenager to commit suicide (p. 42). Thus, obstacles to normal schooling belong to the list of risk factors associated with adolescent suicide.

The role of the family

On another scale, studies confirm that factors related to conditions in the family home propel adolescents to commit suicide. Shain (2007) points out “impaired parent-child relationship” as one of the risk factors (p.670). Besides, according to Spirito and Esposito-Smythers (2006), Wagner et al.’s 2003 study demonstrates that “low cohesion, high conflict, and unsatisfying parent adolescent relationships” are frequently available factors in families of suicidal adolescents (p. 247).

Hedeland (2016) agrees that familial conflicts and poor communication with parents form basic risk factors in teen suicidality. In the results of the study, Hedeland confirms that a “significant relationship” exists between adolescent suicide on one hand and “the feeling of not being heard and a dissociated parental relationship” on the other (p.1). King et al (2018) also emphasize that, in accordance with studies already conducted by Fortune et al. in 2016 and Gould et al. in 1996, their own study found poor parent-child communication as factor of youth suicide. They also reveal in their research that, among other familial risk factors of suicide, and irrespective of the age of the adolescent, “having parents who never/seldom tell them they were proud of them, never/ seldom tell them they did a good job” is noticeable (n. p.).

Similarly, Carr (2002) recognizes continuous clashes with parents – especially when child abuse is involved – as roots of suicide in adolescents (p. 40). Diamond et al (2010) consent that family disintegration is a major reason behind suicide in teens, for they argue, referring to Wagner et al, that “family cohesion, emotional support, and appropriate supervision are protective factors in preventing suicide and depression” (p.123). Braga (1989), too, sees that parental indifference and rejection place high among the familial factors of teen suicide (p.6). Moreover, Jurich (2008) states that if a teenager feels “ignored”, “unwanted”, “unloved” or even “unlovable” – a mark of dysfunction in the family – they resort to suicide so as to mask the fact of family instability (p. 53).

Thus, parental neglect and abuse may also contribute to suicidal behavior in adolescents, as Hawton (1986) affirms, even if this occurs only “occasionally” (p. 73). This study is backed up by King et al (2018), who show that neglect is associated with suicidal behavior in adolescents. Likewise, Nurtanti et al. (2020) note that lack of acceptance from parents is a risk factor of suicide in adolescents (p. 174). They ascertain that suicide rates soar during this period, with inadequate understanding from adults being a conducive factor, and they connect these rates of suicide to lack of empathy and to such familial issues as neglect and abuse, among other issues (p. 170). Nurtanti et al. also assert that even in adolescents who do not suffer from depression, “a feeling of not being cared about” is a drive to be suicidal (p. 174). This matches results of studies conducted on native American youth, which emphasize that despite the fact that suicide is an “individual act”, it still connects to a group of factors, one of which is child maltreatment (Bigfoot, 2014, p. 43).

In other different studies, it is ascertained that family history may raise the probability of suicide in adolescents. Carr (2002), for instance, states that, including other issues, depression in parents may lead an adolescent to attempt suicide (p. 43). Jurich (2008) also explains that adolescent suicidality may stem from a parent’s trauma and incapability, where studies show that childhood trauma, caused by abuse, poverty, divorce or other crises, later renders this particular child – when they grow into a parent – incapable of surpassing its implications and eventually becoming depressive. As a result of this depression and the subsequent absence of an adult role-model to follow, an adolescent of such a parent improvises ways to cope and follows “trial-and-error” techniques, one of which might be suicide (p.51). Hence, parental depression effected by childhood trauma is regarded one of the risk factors that may increase probability of suicide in adolescents.

The direct stressor as risk factor

Finally, studies show that a direct stressor is often a prelude to a suicidal act in an adolescent. Hoberman (1989) pinpoints a particular conflict, quarrel or stressor in the family occurring just before the suicide as an act that could precipitate an adolescent’s decision to kill themselves. Hoberman presents other findings that justify the relationship between stressors and suicide. He mentions 90% of Schaffer's (1974) and 64% of Poteet's adolescent samples who encountered “negative event prior to their deaths”, and he calls these stressors “precipitants” (p.71). Spirito and Esposito-Smythers (2006) as well proclaim that, ruling out psychiatric symptoms, “stressful life events” have been proven to associate with suicide during adolescence (p. 252). A similar finding is explicated by Shain (2007), who points out “an argument with a parent” as a stressful incident dragging some adolescents to commit suicide (p. 670).

Profiting from the aforementioned results of recent researches and studies conducted to explore the risk factors that accentuate suicidality in adolescents, it is evident that, besides the availability of firearms and the personal traits of adolescents in general, familial issues, neglect by parents, dire economic conditions and improper schooling may exacerbate the inclination to suicidal behavior in adolescents. These results are harnessed in this paper in order to interpret why Hedvig, the adolescent girl in Henrik Ibsen's *The Wild Duck*, takes the step of ending her life in the loft where the duck is kept within the family home.

Discussion and analysis

Age group and traits

To validate the argument that Hedvig's suicide as a teenager is compounded by the aforementioned risk factors, it is necessary that she be placed within the age group this paper presents. Hedvig is "just about fourteen" as Gina mentions (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.27), and Relling himself asserts her vulnerability as a teenager: "Hedvig is in a difficult age. She may do all sorts of crazy things" (p.58). By this token, the risk factors that studies have found to exist in suicidal adolescents may be of value in order to verify the reasons behind the act of suicide that Hedvig undertakes prior to the closing of the curtain Ibsen's play.

To begin with, Hedvig, as demonstrated in several events in the play, possesses traits of suicidal adolescents. First, loneliness and introversion may be detected in her behavior and reactions. Being always at home, with none but the duck around to play with (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.38), Hedvig is most probably a lonely child. Based on her empathy with the wild duck and her sorrow towards it "because she's all alone, poor thing" (p.40), we sense an indirect confession that she herself is lonely – a conclusion one can smoothly arrive at as Hedvig in the play compares herself to the duck. Not only is Hedvig lonely, but also she is an introvert – a character trait that a lot of suicidal teens share. In Act III, when Gregers asks whether she would like to travel and see the big world, she instantaneously retorts that she wishes to remain at home "always" with her father and mother, and with the photographs, engraving pictures, away from people (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.39). Her desire to stay away from people is quite evident in Act IV, when she goes out for a walk. It is remarkable here that she is back very early because she doesn't "feel like walking any farther" (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.63).

In addition, Hedvig suffers from low self-esteem, which is a trait correlated with suicidality in adolescents. Obviously, in several instances in the play, she is seeking a confirmation of her worth through reactions from her father. Because she does not think highly of herself, she pleadingly asks why her father can stay away from home – from her who needs him around to prove

her value. Crushed by confirmation of insignificance, she persists on asking: “Doesn’t he say anything at all?” and “He’s asleep? Can he sleep now?” (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.69). Besides, when she realizes that her father is abandoning them, she discloses a significantly poor sense of autonomy. Scared of the prospects of staying alone after his departure, she hysterically asks Gina: “What if he never comes back!” (p.68). Inasmuch as she is attached to him, she cannot endure his departure and starts sobbing, and for the first time in the play she says that she wishes to end her life: “I want to die” (p.66). Besides being evidence of a hidden desire to commit suicide unearthed at a critical moment, this sentence shows that Hedvig does not fit into the ranks of autonomous adolescents, which is, as studies have shown, a risk factor in suicide.

Improper schooling and learning difficulties

In addition to the aforementioned reasons that may have caused Hedvig’s suicide, it is worthy of note that the girl has started to show some learning disability, a gradual impairment of vision, which “would most probably” (Ibsen, 1962, p.26) lead to her ultimate blindness, as Hjalmar says. Studies show that adolescents who have learning disabilities, including vision impairment, may show an inclination to suicide. Besides, as research findings have validated in many contexts that irregular or lack of proper schooling may augment suicidality in adolescents, Hedvig falls into this category of individuals. This factor is realized in the play, for Hjalmar tells Gregers that because of the deterioration of her eyesight, Hedvig doesn’t go to school anymore (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.38). Hence, being forced to drop out to go to school, coupled with having little ability to read, combine to create an impairment of schooling that may have paved the way for the final act of self-destruction.

Dire economic conditions

In addition, the socio-economic status of the family may have aggravated Hedvig’s desire to bring her life to an end. The poverty of the Ekdal family is conspicuously depicted in the shabby, worn coat of Old Ekdal (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.2) and in having to use an attic room as a studio (p.17). Hjalmar himself complains of the dire economic conditions that prevented him from completing his studies. As he says, he had only “poverty”, and “there wasn’t any penny left” when he was still a younger man and wanted to attend a university (p.5). Such grim circumstances now drive Gina and Hedvig to calculate the expenses and check the bills with much worry (p.17). Most important, however, is the scene in which the poor girl, Hedvig, is eagerly waiting for her father because she expects “something good” Mrs. Sørby may have sent for her from the party (p.18). For a child to be waiting scraps of food

and persistently asking what her father has brought, the situation must be a dreadful one augmenting all other forces driving her to end her life.

Other clues that the family can barely make ends meet include the status of the house they live in and the mother-daughter's dream of buying new clothes. Hjalmar, for instance, in accordance with the financial scarcity he complains about, says to Gina that their home is "mean and humble" (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.25). In fact, the family seems to live in such abject poverty that Gina and Hedvig chatter gleefully about the prospects of buying some new clothes: "pretty soon we might spend some money on clothes for ourselves" (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.56) – outspoken as this statement is concerning the economic crisis they suffer. The case being so, as an adolescent girl experiencing tight conditions that prevent her from enjoying life as other adolescents do, Hedvig's desire to commit suicide may have gradually risen.

Family conflicts

It is significant, too, that Hedvig, like so many suicidal adolescents, lives in a home where conflicts, quarrels and clashes exist in considerable abundance. Northam (1973/1999) expresses sympathy towards the girl, who, in Act II, sits in deprivation of privacy, unable to read, "hands shading her eyes, thumbs in her ears" (p. 63). Northam also studies the impact of the parental atmosphere on Hedvig, for she has to cope with their moods and thus lives like an "old child". In addition, he states, she has to live with her grandfather's drunkenness (p.64). Quite relevant, too, is the fact that in almost all the scenes Hjalmar communicates with his wife, a dispute erupts. Hjalmar hints at this by contrasting his home to that of the Werles when he is there at the party: "My home is a gloomy one, Gregers" (Ibsen, 1884/1965, p.11). Later on, this so-called gloominess transpires into marital conflicts which start to crystalize in Hjalmar's argument with Gina as to why only two portraits have been ordered so far in the studio: "Is that all? Well, if one doesn't exert oneself, what can you expect?" (p. 23). Dissatisfied with her advertising in the papers and blaming her for not finding anyone to let the room, he verbally lashes at her with grudge and haughtiness (p.24). Further on, they argue when Gina says she disapproves of letting the room to Gregers. Hjalmar responds mockingly: "First you wanted nothing more than to get a lodger, then when we do you don't like it" (p.33).

It seems that the turmoil between the spouses is rooted in their being of two different social backgrounds – a fact that drives Hjalmar to scorn his wife. For instance, when she is unable to pronounce the word "pistol" the right way, he ridicules her: "I believe I have told you that this kind of firearm is called a pistol", not "pestol" (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.41). This intersects with an interpretation by Mozić (2019) assuming that Hedvig kills herself because of the ideological gap between Hjalmar and Gina. Mozić highlights the

ideological disparity between Gina's "attentive upkeep of the home and her pragmatic stance" and Hjalmar's "sedentariness and flawed idealism", a situation that enmeshes Hedvig and drags her to suicide because she cannot resolve the turmoil (p.90). Therefore, living in such turbulent family conditions may be one of the basic factors impelling Hedvig at such a stage to release herself of the burden by committing suicide.

Depression in Hjalmar

Exacerbating the surrounding conditions driving Hedvig to kill herself is her father's depression, or – as he admits to his boyhood friend, Gregers – the devastation of "the inner man" of himself because "everything has collapsed" (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.4). He states that his case is so deplorable that he feels it is "so terribly difficult for [him] to talk about" his home and the wretched condition of his poor father (p.5). Hjalmar puts it to Gregers in clear words upon deciding to leave the party that he "has felt Fate's crushing blow" (p.11) and to Gina and Hedvig just after he reaches home that he is "beset by a host of sorrows" (p.24). This series of expressions unveils a status of depression that has been growing exponentially in the father. In Act III, Gregers evaluates Hjalmar's despair by stating that his friend is settled "in a poisonous marsh" and has "contracted an insidious disease and gone to the bottom to die in the dark" (p.45). Later on, he also confirms his desperation to his wife as he inquires of her: "What do you know about a man's feelings when he sorrows and despairs?" (p.56). All these amount to a conclusion that Hjalmar suffers from depressive moods.

Hjalmar's depression links to Hedvig's suicide insofar as it influences the attention he gives his teenage daughter and the way he deals with her. His absolute preoccupation with himself is revealed in neglecting his duties towards his wife, and more importantly here towards Hedvig, who is on the verge of ending her own life. This depression may have been caused by the traumatic experience Hjalmar had had when his father was imprisoned. That is why he tells Gregers he can't help denying his father (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p. 10) – an action that he unscrupulously takes during the party at Werle's. In fact, when he asks Gina "Is it not humiliating for a man like me to see his gray-haired father treated like dirt?" (p.33), he is bluntly admitting his sense of concomitant inferiority and depression. Moreover, later on, Hjalmar confesses to Gregers how wounded he still is because of his father's plight. Hjalmar is obviously dejected during the scene he has to witness his father's embarrassment in the wake of being seen wearing the lieutenant uniform. Distressing as this scene is to Hjalmar, he admits that it "lacerates [his] heart" (p.44). By virtue of all this, Hjalmar seems to live in a different world, separating himself from his child, Hedvig. Because of his own traumatic experience after his father's imprisonment, Hjalmar is so preoccupied with

himself that he marginalizes his child, thus depriving her of a role-model. According to recent studies, thus, and fitting well into Hedvig's case, the young girl may have tried suicide as a trial-and-error coping mechanism because she, as a troubled adolescent, does not have the role-model that offers her support and guidance.

Lack of paternal love and the inclination to please others

Another familial factor may be added to the list that goads Hedvig to end her own life. According to studies, a lot of adolescents commit suicide because they reckon that they are unlovable. In *The Wild Duck*, Hedvig kills herself after Gregers instigates her to sacrifice the best she has – a fact that he mentions to Hjalmar in the final act when he openly states that the girl did so so that her father would “love her” again (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.80). Thus, since Hedvig deems herself unlovable, she chooses suicide as a means to regain love.

Furthermore, throughout the play, Hedvig persistently tries to please others – particularly her father – and ignores her own needs and desires in the process. This inclination to please others to the extent of neglecting their own selves and sacrificing their lives is a significant characteristic in some suicidal adolescents. Such is the case with Hedvig. For example, even when her father is rude to her when she offers to bring him the flute, she asks whether he wants a glass of beer, brushing aside her own dignity that Hjalmar callously stamps on (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.24). The behavioral pattern Hedvig follows fits very well into the concept of the triad of self. Her father's rudeness towards her breeds in her a feeling of worthlessness and pushes her to imagine that she is unlovable. Judging by this, she construes his rudeness as clue that she is being rejected, and this compels her to feel overpowered. Consequently, she neglects her own desire and her need for support and filial rights, trying to instead satisfy her father. To please him, for instance, she disregards and forgives his carelessness concerning the studio. She does the work in his place so that he can accomplish his so-called mission. She unhesitatingly responds to his request for help by saying: “Oh yes, father!” (p.33), even if she has hard time retouching pictures because of her poor eyesight.

Significantly, later on, when Werle sends her a letter, she does not feel upset that her father wants to read the letter one day earlier. This is because her ultimate ambition is that her father will be in “good” mood and subsequently, to both him and her, “everything will be pleasant again” (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.64). Then after she knows that the letter speaks of money she may inherit, she unhesitatingly says to her father, seeking his contentment: “And of course you will get it anyway, father” (p.65). Thus, to please her father, she commits suicide shortly after she hears Hjalmar saying: “If then I were to ask her: Hedvig, are you willing to give your life for me? (. . .). Oh yes – you'd find out soon enough what answer I'd get!” (p.79). The girl sacrifices herself so as

to shield her father from feeling disappointed. This interpretation in fact echoes an evaluation by Østerud (1996), who debates that Hedvig is deeply committed to the people around her (p.159) and that she shows “naïvety” and “sensibility” that render her quite vulnerable in the context she inhabits (p.160).

Self-sacrifice for the greater good

On a relevant scale, and upon Gregers’ instigation, Hedvig eventually chooses the path of suicide because it is for the greater good, as is the wont of some suicidal adolescents to do. Gregers tells Hedvig: “If only you possessed the true, joyful, brave, sacrificial spirit, then you’d see he’ll return” (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.72). The greater good in the young man’s argument is Hjalmar’s return home, and the path to achieving it is sacrifice. At the beginning, the sacrifice is meant to be that of the duck, but later, because of being compassionate, Hedvig chooses self-sacrifice for this greater good. Gregers himself points out that the greater good has been achieved in the aftermath of Hedvig’s suicide, this good being the release of desirable feelings in Hjalmar: “Hedvig has not died in vain. Did you notice how grief released what is great in him?” (p.83). Johnston (2021) interprets the act as that of “redemption” (p. 133) on the part of the daughter who wishes, by ending her life and not that of the duck’s, to save the relationship between her parents. Thus, she sacrifices herself in order to relieve her father of the burden of having to live with the pain that she is not his biological daughter.

Neglect and abuse

To compound his daughter’s inclination to suicide, Hjalmar relentlessly neglects her. First, he forgets to bring her something good from the party as he has promised (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p. 22), bringing her only the menu (p.23) – an incident that shows how negligent a father he is. Neither does he refrain from complaining that his daughter is upset. In order to create compunction in her, he slyly says “It is really unbelievable all the things a father is supposed to keep in mind. And if he forgets the smallest item –! Long faces right away” (p.23), thereby deterring her from complaining about being neglected. Johnston (2021) reckons it is significant that Hjalmar does not remember his daughter’s request and the promise he has made, thus causing “disappointment to his daughter” and unveiling a failure to listen to her and care for her “emotional needs”. Johnston also sees that the deed of gift that Mrs. Sörby offers Hedvig is a “key catalyst of action” because it shows how unkind he is to his family, particularly to Hedvig, whom he deprives of the chance to become better off financially by rejecting the deed (p.139).

This is all augmented by the fact that Hedvig is a child abused, verbally and psychologically – a factor classified as root of suicide in teens. Goldman (1994/1999) speaks of child abuse in Ibsen and relates it to Gregers’s

“bungling efforts” to have Hjalmar live away from illusions and enjoy truth, which ultimately causes the suicide of his “beloved, if carelessly exploited daughter”. Hedvig, Goldman asserts, is “bewildered” when Gregers persistently asks her to sacrifice the wild duck in order to justify her filial love, so much so that “the fourteen-year-old turns the pistol on herself” (p.203). Socially speaking, Goldman sees that Hedvig is victimized and exploited just like other working children, in the wake of which she threatens her eyes, just for the sake of giving her father a chance to live in fewer hardships (p. 207). Thus, being pressed to work at such young age, Hedvig is a victim of physical abuse. In addition, she is psychologically tormented. After Hjalmar quarrels with Gina, he spots Hedvig moving close by, and instead of showing tenderness to his child for her deep attachment to him, he pitilessly reprimands her, accusing her of spying on him after being instigated by her mother: “Seems to me like you’re snooping around. Have you been told to watch me, perhaps?” This pushes her later to express her frustration by asking him to stop talking in such a “horrid way” (Ibsen, 1884/1965, p.37). Further on in Act IV, in the aftermath of his staying out the home overnight because of discovering the truth of Gina’s affair with Werle, both mother and daughter express enthusiasm at his coming back by rushing to help him in. To their disappointment, he turns them away (p.52). By all means, then, Hedvig is an abused child who could have seen the sole path to safety in suicide.

Hedvig’s sense of perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness and capacity

Furthermore, the suicidal act on the part of Hedvig seems to fit very well into the interpersonal-psychological theory that links an adolescent’s sense of perceived burdensomeness, thwarted belongingness and capacity to suicidality. Hedvig of course feels that she is a burden on the family because she is losing her eyesight. Besides, the tight family income that she is aware of may have been a factor in her feeling that she is a burden. Moreover, in Act II, when Hjalmar is back home without bringing his daughter the food she has been waiting for, Hedvig feels the weight she is exerting on her father as he says that it is almost impossible for a father to remember everything they are asked to do (p.23). Further on, she also dragged into believing she is a burden on her father when Gregers asks her how she was going to read, knowing that she was losing her eyesight. She sadly responds that her father would read for her, but he “hasn’t had the time” (p.38), which means that she senses her presence as burden her father cannot shoulder.

Concomitant with her feeling of burdensomeness, Hedvig feels that she is alienated by her father – a characteristic known in studies on suicide as thwarted belongingness. In the course of action in the play, after comparing herself to the duck, she describes it in a significantly illuminating expression:

“nobody knows her and nobody knows where she is from” (p. 40). Through this single statement, Hedvig unveils that the duck is an unknown creature, and that it has no self because it does not belong anywhere. Thus, by giving the duck these qualities and simultaneously comparing herself to it, Hedvig is projecting its qualities onto herself. Just as the wild duck is alienated, so is Hedvig. Thus, due to her inability to sense belonging to any specific place or to connect to anyone, her predisposition to commit suicide has been augmented. Based on study results, then, this adolescent girl who has trouble finding an anchor to her thoughts about her position in the world, acts on impulse and does not rationally evaluate the decision to destroy herself. That is, hence, a further reason that she triggers the suicide gun.

The element of capacity, the third risk factor that is thought to coexist in suicidal adolescents with burdensomeness and thwarted belonging, exists in Hedvig’s case as well. In fact, Hedvig develops the capacity to perform the act of suicide because she is habituated, as evident even in the short length of the play, to provocative painful experiences. Within the short span of *The Wild Duck*, she is subject to a series of frustrations. First, in Act I, she is disappointed when he breaks his promise of bringing her back some food from the party. Then, after a few moments, he gives her the menu instead so that, as he says, he would tell her later “what the things taste like” (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p. 23). At this instant, Hedvig can do nothing but swallow her tears, as mentioned in the directions by the playwright. In a few pages, Hjalmar chides her for not informing him that Gregers is there while they are in the attic: “And you – not letting us know –!” (p.41). What matters here is not the scolding itself, but the degree of contempt and the derision with which the father expresses his dissatisfaction and thereby hurts his adolescent daughter. All these painful experiences, in addition to imagining that she is a burden and that she does not belong anywhere have led Hedvig to desire suicide as vent for the accumulating agony.

Hedvig’s misconception about death

Besides, Hedvig’s decision to commit suicide matches research findings that suicidal thoughts in adolescents are peculiar since they emanate from an individual lack of understanding of the meaning of death itself. Hedvig does kill herself to satisfy her father, which is a temporary solution to the problem. She acts out impulsively and on the spot, and she does not give herself the chance to think if she will ever reap the satisfaction of seeing Hjalmar’s joy when he recognizes that she loves him. In other words, she thinks of the effects at that instant, but as an adolescent, she cannot comprehend the thought that by dying, she will not live to witness the impact she hopes for: pleasing her father. To her, death is just a transient phenomenon that cannot annihilate her being. Based on Gregers’s comment in the play,

Hedvig wants love back through death. But how can love be retaken after death? This defective character trait, one that a lot of teens share, eventually drives some adolescents to choose suicide as an outlet in conditions of distress. Hence, Hedvig willingly performs the act because she is not aware of the finality of death.

The direct stressor

The major cause of suicidal behavior in Hedvig, as the most literature asserts, is that the girl faces some stressors just before the violent act. Finch & Poznanski (1971) ascertain that, most often, the suicide attempt taken by an adolescent is “a sudden, impulsive reaction” to some stressful events, one of which may be “a quarrel with a parent” (p.3). In *The Wild Duck*, many fights in take place in the home within merely a few pages. First, when Hjalmar expresses his desire to go away with Relling, Gina says that her husband doesn't go on such “escapades”, (Ibsen, 1884/1962, p.60) after which the tension escalates and her husband shouts: “For heaven's sake! Keep your mouth shut!” (p.61). More significantly, the girl herself becomes the subject of disdain as Hjalmar indignantly states before her: “My house is ruins about me” and repudiates her by directly saying: “I have no child” and then driving her away: “Don't come near me, Hedvig!” (p.66). Due to accelerated tension in the home that mainly targets the girl herself, her sense of guilt is aggravated, and she is entrapped in despair. The matter is not resolved even later in Act V, when Hjalmar insists that she not come close to him: “Go away (. . .) get her away from me, I say!” (p.74). Shortly after, this series of stressors drives Hedvig motionless for a while. Afraid and suppressing her tears, she remembers Gregers's speech on sacrifice and blurts out: “The wild duck!” (p.75). Hjalmar's final repudiation, then, is the direct stressor that reminds her of the possibility of salvation through death. It is the last straw that directly precedes the ultimate act of self-shooting.

Conclusion

Based on sociological and psychological researches on adolescent suicide, this paper has provided evidence that Hedvig, the adolescent daughter of Hjalmar and Gina Ekdal, is impelled to destroy herself as reaction to a considerable set risk factors, including availability of a firearm turbulent age, dire economic conditions, lack of schooling, learning disability, introversion, loneliness, lack of love, parental neglect, conflicts in the home and instigation to sacrifice for the greater good. Because of these reasons combined, the girl feels enmeshed and finds her sole release in suicide, even if she mistakenly thinks that after her death she may regain her father's love. This paper, therefore, contributes to the literature available on *The Wild Duck*, as it explains in details, based on scientific studies on adolescent suicide, why

Hedvig kills herself. This kind of investigation may assist other researchers of literature to explore the risk factors in suicidal characters in different literary works, and may even motivate stakeholders to follow intervention methods to curb this growing trend in today's world. However, whilst clarifying the general roots of suicidal inclination in Hedvig, such research, applied on a rather short play, may be backed up with more evidence if undertaken on a longer form of literary works, like novels. The paper, then, will probably pave the way for further research on adolescent suicide in other, longer, works of literature.

Conflicts of Interests: The author declare no conflict of interest.

References:

1. Ibsen, H. (1962). *The Wild Duck*. In O. Reinert (Ed. & Trans.). *Modern Drama: Nine Plays* (pp. 1-83). Little, Brown and Company. (Original published 1884).
2. Aarseth, A. (2005). Ibsen and Darwin: A reading of *The wild duck*. *Modern Drama*. 48(1). 1-10. <https://muse.jhu.edu/article/182712>
3. Bigfoot, D. S. (2014). Native American youth face an increased risk of suicide. In C. Watkins (Ed.), *Teen suicide*. (pp. 40-45). Greenhaven Press. https://archive.org/details/teensuicide0000unse_w9v2
4. Braga, W. d. C. (1989). Youth suicide risk assessment: Process and model. In B. Garfinkel & G. Northrup (Eds.), *Adolescent suicide: Recognition, treatment and prevention* (pp. 1-21). The Howarth Press. https://archive.org/details/adolescentsuicid0000unse_v3r8/page/40/mode/2up
5. Carr, A. (2002). *Depression and attempted suicide in adolescence*. (M. Herbert, Ed.). BPS Blackwell.
6. Clurman, H. (1977). *Ibsen*. The Macmillan Press. <https://archive.org/details/ibsen0000clur/page/126/mode/2up>
7. Diamond, G. S., Wintersteen, M. B., Brown, G. K., Diamond, G. M., Gallop, R., Shelef, K., & Levy, S. (2010). Attachment-based family therapy for adolescents with suicidal ideation: a randomized controlled trial. *Journal of the American Academy of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry*. 49(2). 122-131. <http://jdc.jefferson.edu/phbfp/8>
8. Durbach, E. (2009). Ibsen's evangelical detective: Evidence and proof in *The wild duck*. *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies*. 18. 44-54 <https://core.ac.uk/works/143238138>
9. Finch, S. M., & Poznanski, E. O. (1971). *Adolescent suicide*. Charles C. Thomas Publisher. <https://archive.org/details/adolescentsuicid0000finc/page/n5/mode/2up>

10. Finney, G. (1994). Ibsen and feminism. In J. McFarlane (Ed.), *The Cambridge companion to Henrik Ibsen* (pp. 89-105). Cambridge University Press.
https://archive.org/details/cambridgecompani0000unse_e1q1/page/n7/mode/2up
11. Forshey, C. K. (2008). Ibsen's female characters in captivity: An exploration of literature and performance. [Master's thesis, Liberty University]. <https://core.ac.uk/works/33148058>
12. [From a pseudonymous notice by 'Mordred', *referee*]. (1905, October 22). In M. Egan (Ed.). (2003). *Henrik Ibsen: The critical heritage* (pp. 429-432). Routledge. <https://www.pdfdrive.com/henrik-ibsen-critical-heritage-series-e159043074.html>
13. [From unsigned theatre comment, *Referee*]. (1905, October 29). In M. Egan (Ed.). (2003). *Henrik Ibsen: The critical heritage* (pp. 432-444). Routledge. <https://www.pdfdrive.com/henrik-ibsen-critical-heritage-series-e159043074.html>
14. Fulsas, N., & Rem, T. (2018). *Ibsen, Scandinavia and the making of a world drama*. Cambridge University Press.
https://books.google.com.lb/books?id=i_o6DwAAQBAJ&printsec=frontcover&dq=Ibsen,+Scandinavia+and+the+Making+of+a+World+Drama&hl=en&sa=X&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=Ibsen%2C%20Scandinavia%20and%20the%20Making%20of%20a%20World%20Drama&f=false
15. Goldman, M. (1999). Eyolf's eyes: Ibsen and the cultural meanings of child abuse. In H. Bloom, (Ed.). *Henrik Ibsen: Modern critical views* (pp. 197-218). Chelsea House Publishers. [Reprinted from "Eyolf's eyes: Ibsen and the cultural meanings of child abuse, 1994, *American Imago*, 51(3), 279-306].
<https://archive.org/details/henrikibsenmcbvl00haro>
16. Gosse, E. (2003). Ibsen's social dramas. In M. Egan (Ed.). *Henrik Ibsen: The critical heritage* (pp. 77-94). Routledge. [Reprinted from "Ibsen's social dramas", 1889, *Fortnightly Review*, 14, 107-21].
<https://www.pdfdrive.com/henrik-ibsen-critical-heritage-series-e159043074.html>
17. Gould, M. S., Shaffer, D., & Greenberg, T. (2003). The Epidemiology of Youth Suicide. In R. A. King & A. Apter. (Eds.). *Suicide in Children and Adolescents* (pp. 1-40).
https://archive.org/details/suicideinchildre0000unse_m8x9/page/40/mode/2up
18. Haddad, K., Lindquist-Grantz, R., Vilvens, H., Boards, A., Jacquez, F., & Vaughn, L. (2020). Empowering youth to build BRIDGES: Youth leadership in suicide prevention. *Collaborations: A Journal of*

- Community-Based Research and Practice*, 3(1), 1–10. Empowering Youth to Build BRIDGES: Youth Leadership in Suicide Prevention - Collaborations: A Journal of Community-Based Research and Practice (miami.edu)
19. Harad, A. (2005). Ibsen's themes and symbols. In C. B. Johnson (Ed.), *Four great plays: A doll's house, the wild duck, hedda gabler, the master builder* (pp. 410-412). Pocket Books. https://archive.org/details/fourgreatplays00ibse_0
 20. Hawton, K. (1986). *Suicide and attempted suicide among children and adolescents*. Sage Publications. <https://archive.org/details/suicideattempted0000hawt/page/n5/mode/2up>
 21. Hoberman, H. (1989). Completed suicide in children and adolescents: A review. In B. Garfinkel and G. Northrup (Eds.), *Adolescent suicide: Recognition, treatment and prevention* (pp. 60-88). The Howarth Press. https://archive.org/details/adolescentsuicid0000unse_v3r8/page/40/mode/2up
 22. Johnson, P. B., & Malow-Iroff, M. S. (2008). *Adolescents and risk: Making sense of adolescent psychology*. https://archive.org/details/adolescentsriskm0000john_z8o0/page/n9/mode/2up
 23. Johnston, D. (2021). Ibsen's phenomenology of kindness: Self and Other in *The wild duck*. *Performance Paradigm*. 16. 132-147. <http://www.performanceparadigm.net/index.php/journal/article/view/244>
 24. Jones, H. A. (2003). The unfortunate depravity but enlivening influence of Ibsen. In M. Egan (Ed.), *Henrik Ibsen: The critical heritage* (pp. 233-234). Routledge. (Reprinted from "The unfortunate depravity but enlivening influence of Ibsen", 1891, *Era*). <https://www.pdfdrive.com/henrik-ibsen-critical-heritage-series-e159043074.html>
 25. Jurich, A. P. (2008). *Family therapy with suicidal adolescents*. Routledge. <https://archive.org/details/familytherapywit0000juri/page/n7/mode/2up>
 26. Leehey, K. (1991). *Teens at risk: How to recognize and prevent adolescent suicide*. <https://archive.org/details/teensatriskhowto00leeh/page/42/mode/2up>
 27. Macfall, H. (1907). *Ibsen: The man, his art and his significance*. Morgan Shepard Company.

- <https://archive.org/details/ibsenmanhisartan00macfuoft/page/256/mode/2up?ref=ol&view=theater>
28. McFarlane, J. W. (1971). Preface. In J. W. McFarlane (Ed. & Trans.), *Ibsen: Plays; An enemy of the people, the wild duck, Rosmersholm* (pp. ix-xxv). Oxford University Press.
<https://archive.org/details/ibsenplays00ibse/page/128/mode/2up>
29. Meyer, M. (1980). Ibsen: A biographical approach. In E. Durbach (Ed.), *Ibsen and the theatre: The dramatist in production* (pp. 14-26). New York University Press. (Reprinted from *Biography of Ibsen*, by M. Meyer, 1967, Hart-Davis)
<https://archive.org/details/ibsentheatredram0000unse/page/26/mode/2up>
30. Miller, D. N. (2011). *Child and adolescent suicidal behavior: School-based prevention, assessment and intervention*. The Guilford Press.
<https://archive.org/details/childadolescents0000mill>
31. Moi, T. (2005). "It was as if he meant something different from what he said – all the time": Language, metaphysics, and the everyday in *the wild duck*. In C. B. Johnson (Ed.), *Four great plays: A doll's house, the wild duck, hedda gabler, the master builder*. (pp. 421-422). Pocket Books. (Reprinted from "It was as if he meant something different from what he said – all the time": Language, metaphysics, and the everyday in *the wild duck*, 2002, *New Literary History: A Journal of Theory and Interpretation*) https://archive.org/details/fourgreatplays00ibse_0
32. Mozić, J. (2019). Figurative transportations and the performativity of home: A dramaturgical study of the representations of home in the prose plays of Henrik Ibsen and their reverberations in the work of Mona Hatoum and Bobby Baker. [Doctoral dissertation, University of Roehampton]. <https://core.ac.uk/works/18662532>
33. Northam, J. (1999). *The wild duck*. In H. Bloom (Ed.), *Henrik Ibsen: Modern critical views*. (pp. 59-85). Chelsea House Publishers. (Reprinted from *Ibsen: A critical study*, by J. Northam, 1973, Cambridge University Press)
<https://archive.org/details/henrikibsenmcbvl00haro>
34. Nurtanti, S., Handayani, S., Ratnasari, N. Y., Husna, P. H., & Susanto, T. (2020). Characteristics, causality, and suicidal behavior: A qualitative study of family members with suicide history in Wonogiri, Indonesia. *Frontiers of Nursing*. 2. 169-178.
<https://sciendocom/article/10.2478/fon-2020-0016>
35. Otsuki, M., Kim, T., & Peterson, P. (2014). Teen suicide is a major health problem. In C. Watkins (Ed.), *Teen Suicide*. (p.p. 10-17). Greenhaven Press.
https://archive.org/details/teensuicide0000unse_w9v2

36. Østerud, E. (1996). Henrik Ibsen's theatre mask. Tableau, absorption and theatricality in *the wild duck*. *Orbis Litterarum*. 51(3). 148-177. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/230547936_Henrik_Ibsen's_Theatre_Mask_Tableau_Absorption_and_Theatricality_in_The_Wild_Duck
37. Ribeiro, J. D., & Joiner, T. E. (2009). The interpersonal-psychological theory of suicidal behavior: Current status and future directions. *Journal of Clinical Psychology*. 65(12). 1291-1299. <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/19827114/>
38. Santrock, J. W. (2001). *Adolescence*. McGraw-Hill. https://archive.org/details/adolescence00sant_0/page/n5/mode/2up
39. Shain, B. N. (2007). Suicide and suicide attempts in adolescents. *Pediatrics*. 120(3). 669–676. <https://doi.org/10.1542/peds.2007-1908>
40. Shaw, G. B. (1891). *The quintessence of Ibsenism*. Walter Scott. <https://archive.org/details/quintessenceofib00shawrich/page/98/mode/2up?ref=ol&view=theater>
41. Slaby, A. E., & McGuire, P. L. (1989). Residential management of suicidal adolescents. In B. Garfinkel & G. Northrup (Eds.), *Adolescent suicide: Recognition, treatment and prevention* (pp. 23-43). The Howarth Press. https://archive.org/details/adolescentsuicid0000unse_v3r8/page/40/mode/2up
42. Smith, M. W. (2002). *The wild duck: A play of a play*. *Modern Drama*. 45(1). 9-22. https://www.academia.edu/20570378/The_Wild_Duck_A_Play_of_Play
43. Spirito, A., & Esposito-Smythers, C. (2005). Attempted and completed suicide in adolescence. *Clinical Psychology*. 2(237). 237-266. <https://www.annualreviews.org/doi/abs/10.1146/annurev.clinpsy.2.022305.095323>
44. Sprinchorn, E. (1980). Ibsen and the actors. In E. Durbach (Ed.), *Ibsen and the theatre: The dramatist in production* (pp. 118-130). New York University Press. <https://archive.org/details/ibsentheatredram0000unse/page/26/mode/2up>
45. Viesland, J. (2005). The ethics of aesthetics: Decadence in Henrik Ibsen's *the wild duck*. *Ibsen Studies*. 5(1). 48-63. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15021860510032790>
46. Wagner, B. M. (2009). *Suicidal behavior in children and adolescents*. Yale University. <https://archive.org/details/suicidalbehavior0000wagn/page/n5/mode/2up>