**Einsame Menschen**

**COMPARE NORA AND KATHE?? – BOTH ‘CHILDLIKE’ BUT SHE CAN NOT REMAIN MARRIED TO JOHANNES**

**LEAVING OF THE FAMILY**

* In Hauptmann’s naturalist dramas, the consideration of the emancipated woman has seen much debate, particularly in regard to Anna Mahr of Hauptmann’s ‘Einsame Menschen’.
* Her character is one that has come under different interpretation, some siding quite heavily with the critique that she does not conform to the ideals of female emancipation.
* Andreas Salome who many would consider as a prime example of an emancipated woman and had a close relationship with Hauptmann was very much in favour of this notion.
* Being very much under the impression that she herself had influenced Hauptmann in his writing of Anna Mahr, she very much rejected the idea of being identified with her, suggesting **‘als Studentin aus Zurich sei sie nur erkenntlich, weil sei als solche bezeichnet sei’.**
* Consequently, this led to ‘**die zunehmende Entfremdung zwischen Lou und Hauptmann‘** as Hauptmann did not potray ‚**jene Geistes und Charaktereigenschaften der modernen Frau, die Lou am höchsten** **schätzte.‘**

The prose plays

* In Hauptmann’s ‘Einsame Menschen’ The exploration of the theme of female emancipation comes in a different form in comparison to that of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House.* Although the character of Anna can be considered to demonstrate ideals of the emancipated woman by representing the age of new enlightenment, due to the lack of development within the character herself, many critics seem torn in advocating the argument in favour of her emancipation which has led to differing interpretations of Anna.
* Perhaps it would be significant to quickly note the outline the nature of the characters in this piece of work in comparison to Hauptmann’s earlier plays: ‘**the figures of Einsame Menschen are no longer specimens chosen to demonstrate a specific thesis, they are no longer isolated from the world around them, and Hauptmann no longer dislikes them. He has achieved simultaneously both fuller characterization and a more sympathetic understanding of his people, has found for the first time in the drama, his true focus.’** P.37
* With this notion in mind, this perception holds true for the characters of Kathe, whose role of the average German housewife seems fitting, alongside the older Vockerats, **who ‘are of a sturdier material, more practical more dogmatic, more certain of themselves and of their world’** and who’s ‘**conception of the nature of man and of God are rigid, absolute, and unswerving’. P.39**
* Additionally, the character of Braun also remains close to this notion, who ‘**as a harmless Mephisto to Johannes’ crippled Faust, he provides an excellent foil for his impatient friend’.** P.39
* Collectively, ‘**there has been general agreement that all of these people, Kathe, Braun, and the father and the mother, are both intensely alive and completely fitted to their roles in the total economy of the play**.’ P.39
* Yet, for the characters of Johannes and Anna, this is not the case, as agreed upon by other critics as ‘**the serious representatives of the new generation offered problems of presentation and of comprehension which the other characters did not, and problems which Hauptmann die not always solve easily and completely**.’p.39
* With this in mind, the ambiguity of Anna’s role and function in the play is seen as one of the contributing factors to the debate surrounding her argument as an emancipated female.
* Point of comparison being that she is NOT an emancipated woman, despite demonstrating a times to be one.
* In citing Wilhelm Heise, his analysis of Anna Mahr concluded that **‘the dramatist (Hauptmann) has not made it clear what kind of woman she is.’ P.40.** Much of Heise’s misunderstanding towards Anna stems from many of her contradictory features. In reference to Johannes and Kathe’s marriage, Anna implies that it was just youthful folly: ‘**Er war noch Student…’** and she says to Kathe, ‘**Du warst noch sehr jung…’.**
* Despite this, many critics including Heise question as to why Anna did not decide to stick to her original plan and leave having stayed for two weeks after realizing how Käthe was suffering. However, she appears sincere in the end when she explains to Johannes that she must leave for the sake of his marriage. Additionally, she remains ‘**too sensitive to the feelings of others to attempt to defend herself when Frau Vockerat asks her to go’p.40.** For these reasons**, ‘a woman with such contradictory features is, according to Heise, not feasible’** p.40.

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* However, in viewing Anna’s departure from a different perspective, we can consider it to be a form of self-sacrifice and thus draw a parallel to that of Nora and Mrs. Linde. If we carry over the notion from Einsame Menschen in which ‘**the habit of making sacrifices gives women self-respect’. P.34 ,** Anna’s departure can be considered to adhere to this as she decides to leave for the sake of Johannes and Käthe’s marriage despite her love for Johannes herself. Drawing upon this comparison, we can consider Anna to demonstrate ideals of the emancipated woman if we apply the notion of self-sacrifice being an example of female emancipation across all the afore mentioned female characters. EMANCIPATION. SACRIFICE
* Nevertheless, Anna still features holes and contradictions in her character. However, for arguments sake it would be significant to note how **‘Hauptmann understood better than some of his critics what may happen to a woman when she moves into fields formerly considered the province of men’.** Anna’s past and upbringing may position her in favor of an emancipated female; she was brought through hard education and **‘she has had to stand alone, in a new position, in a changing world, with little money’p.40.** Her experiences echoed in her cry: ‘**Ach! Freiheit!! Freiheit!! Man muss frei sein in jeder Hinsicht. Kein Vaterland, keine Familie, keine Freunde soll man haben‘.** With the knowledge of Anna’s upbringing in mind, it seems less incredible that in the warming presence of family life which is new to her combined with the love she has for Johannes, Anna can be seen to relax as she finds comfort in her surroundings and in **‘understanding Käthe’s limits, she cannot always refrain or feel that she ought to refrain from moving towards the possession of the man whom she loves.’ P41.** As ‘**Hauptmann was never given to underestimating the power of hearth and eros even on enlightened and clear-sighted people’ p.41**, it serves to provide some explanation in her choice of characterization and also serve to alleviate some critique towards her actions.
* Anna’s inability to refrain from that which would object to her ideal of ‘Freiheit’ eg. ‘keine Familie’ and ‘keine Freunde’, is exactly what would alleviate her from being assumed as a female ideal. Although seemingly contradictory, her actions make her more human as she, in the first time in in her life she finds herself among a family. In contrast to *A Doll’s House,*  Anna’s integration into family life and acceptance of such is precisely what objects her to the ideal of the emancipated female whereas the exact opposite is the case for Nora and Mrs. Linde. As both Nora and Mrs. Linde wish to fulfill the role of the mother and create a family as it provides them with a sense of fulfilment, this is considered as a form of emancipation as it is a role they are choosing to assume, rather than viewing it as self-sacrifice. However, a direct comparison that distinctly separates the two from one being an example of not conforming to the ideals of female emancipation and one that does demonstrate such ideals may not be accurately drawn here as the circumstances differ between character to character. In the case of Anna, her motivations do not align with that of Mrs. Linde and Nora who want to create a nurturing family rather in comparison to Anna who just finds herself in one so naturally the interpretations between the characters will conclude differently. Nevertheless, there is a clear point illustrated in each narrative where the concept of family orientation favours female emancipation in one and subverts this idea in the other. NOT EMANCIPATION
* **NORA//ANNA- BOTH NOT EXAMPLES OF FEMALE EMANCIPATION**
* It is clear that the problems surrounding Anna are only indicated rather than being fully explored by Hauptmann. For this reason, as already stated, it makes the character of Anna open to interpretation. However, much of the debate regarding her position as an emancipated female can be disputed when we regard Anna only as a secondary character and thus justifying Hauptmann narrative choice in her lack of development. In viewing the central theme of the play to predominantly revolve around the Vockerat family and **‘on the breakdown of their middle- class ideals of marriage, faith, and a settled career in the service of church or state’ p42,** Anna assumes a secondary role, as we mainly see ‘**her reaction to their problems, to the life such a family is accustomed to lead, and its attraction for her’ p.42.** In this sense, her traits of being a philosophy student and an emancipated woman are overlooked as the main themes of the play take their course. With this in mind, Hauptmann’s treatment of the theme of female emancipation contrasts quite significantly with that of Ibsen. In ‘A Doll’s house’, the theme of female emancipation is explored significantly as one of the main themes of the narrative through Nora, who is one of the central characters of the play. Additionally, Mrs. Linde also acts as a central figure in exploring the ideals of female emancipation as she serves to illustrate a similar point as her marriage is presented in contrast to Nora’s to portray what is necessary for a woman to feel emancipated within her own marriage. With this in mind, the exploration of the theme of female emancipation is naturally going to differ between both plays if in one play (Einsame Menschen) the central narrative does not revolve around exploring such a theme and if the assumed female representative of emancipation (Anna Mahr) is regarded as a secondary character whereas Nora and Mrs. Linde are more central characters to the plot and are used to represent the ideals of Ibsen and Collett.