The Clash Of Illusion And Reality In Ibsen’s Hedda Gabler

I believe that all classic plays became classic because themes touched there are timeless. Ibsen’s secret of popularity lies in staying relevant to our’s reality. After all, if the play simply does not work for or inspire audiences today, why has it lasted and why do we continue programming it? The fact that Hedda Gabler has been produced countless times all over the world and nineteen (!) times on Broadway alone, with many great actresses including Cate Blanchett and Nicole Kidman starring at, speaks for itself. In this play Ibsen exploring society’s stereotypical gender roles, manipulation, femininity, wealth, reputation, courage, and self-sacrifice. All theme themes still extremely relevant today and probably will never become outdated.

Both onstage interpretations and critical analyses frequently portray Hedda as a complicated, manipulative, unhappy, suffering woman, trapped in a women’s world, who wants something more. But I saw her completely different: cold, spoiled, accustomed to the luxury, loving to live big, but not knowing the real life and normal relationships. For me her story is the story of the woman who doesn’t know how to love and live. Did she ever loved anyone? Maybe the only one who Hedda tried to love was Levborg. But without the experience of harmonious, non-consumer, relationships with people, even before it’s started their relationships were doomed. She was too complicated for him. There are no doubt that she is suffering, but her suffering is because she finally had to face the reality of life and this reality disappointed her expectations. The world doesn’t fall at her feet, spoiled her with expensive gifts as her father did. Her project ”happy marriage” didn’t materialize. Hedda is faced with the bleak prospect of no horses, no servants, no society, and only Tesman for distraction. “This trip never ends,” she says. Very commonly she presented as cold manipulator, protesting her own femininity, but I can’t agree with that. I think she is not trying to achieve anything or apply herself somehow within life, she just ”go with a flow”. Hedda wants her old comfortable life, wants to be the center of the universe, as it always was at her father’s house. But instead she realizes that she made a wrong choice and ended up in the world where she doesn’t know how to live and doesn’t really want to live. The clash of illusion and reality is an eternal theme.