

## Revision of Student Essay after Peer Revision

Just as Edna in *The Awakening*, Ginny in *A Thousand Acres* realizes through the influence of her adulterer that life as a housewife doesn't bring satisfaction or contentment. Each yearning for self-identity and respect as an individual, they set out on a quest of self-discovery and *freedom*. Though Edna is searching for women's rights and Ginny aspires to become a more assertive and strong woman, both share the common struggle of **escaping the grasps of a husband unsympathetic to their feelings or needs who binds them to their dismal life**.

Both women wanted to rid themselves of their passive wife roles and gain the freedom to become a woman respected as an individual **instead of identified as their husband's faithful spouse**. Edna was bored of her meaningless life as a wife and mother. She felt her days were filled with trivial tasks **such as preparing meals and caring for children** and yearned to feel useful and important. **Edna's marriage was one of convenience, not love. The two never really spent time together, her husband would go off and do his own thing, knowing that when he returned home, his obedient wife would be waiting. He thought Edna was insane and stubborn when she expressed she was unhappy with her life and wanted some independence.** Her husband thought women were created to have babies and serve their husbands and didn't support Edna in her search of self-sufficiency. Ginny's husband Ty was quiet and passive, and like Edna's *spouse* believed women should keep their opinions to themselves. **Not one to be an assertive attacker himself**, he was angered by Ginny's new aggressive stand she took against her father and didn't *feel* it was appropriate behavior. Ty's **philosophy of life was not to get involved in disputes and let people do their own thing in attempt to keep peace. He believed in following the rules and not breaking tradition which is why he couldn't empathize with Ginny's plight of being dissatisfied with her role as a farmwife. Because of his own beliefs, he didn't understand why Ginny wanted to break away from the typical farmwife stereotype and didn't support her in her quest of self-discovery and independence.** Though both women longed for the freedom to be an individual, neither received any assistance from their husband.

Edna and Ginny each had an affair with a younger man they felt understood them and helped them where their husbands had failed. *Robert* was the only one who actually treated Edna as a person rather than a mother or wife by really listening to her when she talked and respecting her opinion, something no one else had ever done. He made her feel important **by spending all his free time with her, encouraging conversation and true expression of her feelings**. Her love for Robert however, was not necessarily with him as a person, but rather the idea that someone saw her as an individual and treated her with respect. Ginny had an affair with Jess Clark, an old childhood playmate who left the farm years before and returned an exciting yet mysterious stranger. Jess was **educated and well traveled and seemed to spread jovialness and gaiety whenever he was around**. He was the antithesis of Ty as he didn't hesitate to speak his opinion or do things his own way. **The land was Ty's first love and priority, not Ginny. Jess made Ginny feel beautiful and special again by treating her with respect and making her believe that someone loved her above anything else.** Like Edna, Ginny wasn't truly in love with Jess, but the excitement and

change he brought to the life she was tired and bored of and the idea that someone loved her more than the land. Both Ginny and Edna have an affair with men who seem to fit the change they are yearning for in their unsatisfying lives.

As each succeeds in breaking away from their original unhappy lifestyle, they discover that although they gained freedom, they failed in their attempts of finding a life that would bring them solace. Edna was unhappy because Robert left her, **for he knew their love was forbidden**, and she was left with no one who understood or supported her individual lifestyle. Her husband and society thought she was going insane and believed her dreams and aspirations were inappropriate and weird. She was a woman ahead of her times trapped in a world that supported old-fashioned beliefs. **In those times it was uncommon for a woman to want her own identity or break away from her husband's protective care.** With no strength or support from others **except Mme Reiz who taught Edna to follow her dreams no matter what people thought, Edna only succeeded in secluding herself even more, for the wise Mme Reiz was also an outcast of society.** Edna saw no other solution to her dilemma than to commit suicide **which admitted her defeat in her efforts to find happiness through independence.** Ginny lives her dream of being out on her own **and separated from a husband whose passiveness she had outgrown and was tying her down**, but like Edna she is not content. [—] **Betrayed by both Jess and Rose as Jess left Ginny for her sister, Ginny is hurt that her lover no longer loves or is interested in her and Rose who has been her best friend since childhood traded their special love for the affection of a man. Ginny no longer has someone who cares for her or offers emotional support.** Although she broke all ties with her family like she had originally wanted to, things still felt unfinished and problems unresolved as the entire family either left or died without making amends. **Society looked down on Ginny because of the harsh manner in which she treated her father. It was rumored that she and Rose drove Larry insane and she receives only bitter resentment and hostility from the public. Without a friend in the world, all Ginny did was work and sleep. She had nothing to live for or bring joy in her life. Ginny won the battle of escaping her unhappy life as a farmwife but lost the war as she discovers independence also brings discontent.** Edna and Ginny both wanted freedom unaware that it would also bring lonely solitude.

Edna and Ginny were both trapped in boring unsatisfying lives. They wanted independence from their husbands who they believed were the reason they were without their own identity and kept them from escaping from their miserable lives. As each broke away and attained control of their own life, **the one person who they had trusted and depended on for strength and support along the way left them isolated and alone in a world that didn't expect or understand their thirst for freedom.** They discovered that complete independence from everyone is not what they needed, but someone who understood that they wanted to be respected as an individual.