

## A Critical Analysis on Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* according to Feminist Point of View

ARIFUL INSAN EMON

M.A. & B.A. (Hons) in English

Assistant Professor

Department of Languages

IUBAT – International University of Business Agriculture and Technology

Dhaka, Bangladesh

### Abstract:

*Henric Ibsen's A Doll's House is one of the best literature work of literary history. Here we find my modern philosophy to readjust our mind and diction. A Doll's House mainly a play written by Ibsen but as its value, it has become, more than just a play. It has become a new dimension for women freedom. By this play, we come to the inner feelings and the sprit of Women's mind. In my study on A Doll's House I have tried to go through a deep analysis on Nora Helmer's, other female characters and there circumstance in play. But when I get into it I feel a vivid description of that times women is needed. I discuss almost every aspect regarding Henric Ibsen's A Doll's House. And objective was to find out the message of Henric Ibsen in his play. In his play we find a light in the long tunnel or the crimson flash on the eastern sky after a long night . Here we find the voice of women freedom and refusing the force full domination of male society over women. From this play we get a clear path of a new era that women would be self dependent and she would able to express her feelings , thoughts according to her will. As Nora Helmer's last reaction towards society in the play , her decision may be judged wrong by many person but it's the right answer towards the male dominated society we live. The freedom form the bindings, form the chain of emotional black mailing , from the life which called Dolls life. After rejecting the dolls life Nora become human being as she wanted to be form the since day she has realized she is just a doll in the society and just living life to full fill other man wish . Henric Ibsen is very much clear and*

*successful in his this play called A Doll's House. This play is still inspires millions of readers all over the world and regarded one of the best feminist masterpiece of all time. Nora has become virtually a name of spirit in the women freedom.*

**Key words:** Feminist, Henrik Ibsen, Nora Helmer, Krogstad, Women Rights, Doll's House, 19<sup>th</sup> century's women, Rebellion against society

## INTRODUCTION:

Henrik Ibsen was one of the most influencing Dramatists of 19<sup>th</sup> century. This literature genius was born in 1828 on the east coast of Norway. His literature works are too large in number to be introduced individually. Among all of his drama *A Doll's House* is a very special one. This play perhaps gives some evidence of vastness, richness and high quality of his work. Although there is now a days a tendency to regard Ibsen's work as out-dated, his achievement and his contribution as a pioneer of modern drama can hardly be ignored. He portrayed strong, realistic character in whose in whose lives people recognized their own. Anticipating Freud, he probed man's unconscious mind and recognized the meaning of dramas, fantastic and nightmares. He was first among the modern playwrights to demonstrate that tragedy could be created out of the lives of middle class common people. out was his declared aim to create new awareness among the people through the medium of art . However, one concern that reminds undiminished throughout Ibsen's work is the importance of freedom and self realization. Each one of his serious characters moves towards an awareness of who he or she really is. On this particular point let us turn our attention to *A Doll's House* which is perhaps its illustration. When Ibsen wrote *A Doll's House* in 1879, he was already fifty one years old and living in Rome. For some years, the question of women's rights had been a subject of public debate and much controversy. Several champions of the women's cause gave

public speeches and aroused sympathy. For a long time, critics have regarded the play as essentially about women's rights. It was believed that since the question of women's right was very much in the air, Ibsen wrote *A Doll's House* specifically to serve that cause. This view was earlier suggested by George Bernard Shaw in his book *Quintessence of Ibsenism*. Shaw was a great admirer of Ibsen and his book was trying to defend Ibsen against hostile criticism. But in case of this play, Shaw offered an explanation that made Ibsen merely a feminist and made the play look like a piece of propaganda. It is true the cause of women's rights had aroused Ibsen's sympathy and as has been seen, he supported it in every manner possible. The problem of discrimination against women is still alive all over the world and to that extent *A Doll's House* is socially very relevant. But to suggest that this play is only about the meaning of *A Doll's House* had started in Ibsen's life time. Ibsen was accused of trying to destroy the sacred institution of marriage which is the bedrock of social and moral stability in any society. However, his own clarification serves as a useful guide to his position on the subject. Nearly twenty years after the writing of *A Doll's House*. Ibsen was invited to speak at a meeting of the Norwegian society for women's Rights. He was welcomed as a great champion of the cause.

## **NORA HELMER**

At the beginning of *A Doll's House*, Nora seems completely happy. She respond affectionately to Torvald's teasing, speaks with excitement about the extra money his new job will provide, and takes pleasure in the company of her children and friends. She does not seem to mind her doll-like existence, in which she is coddled, pampered, and patronized.

As the play progresses, Nora reveals that she is not just a "silly girl," as Torvald calls her. That she understands the business details related to the debt she incurred taking out a

loan to preserve Torvald's health indicates that she is intelligent and possesses capacities beyond mere wifehood. Her description of her years of secret labor undertaken to pay off her debt shows her fierce determination and ambition. Additionally, the fact that she was willing to break the law in order to ensure Torvald's health shows her courage. Krogstad's blackmail and the trauma that follows do not change Nora's nature; they open her eyes to her unfulfilled and underappreciated potential. "I have been performing tricks for you, Torvald," she says during her climactic confrontation with him. Nora comes to realize that in addition to her literal dancing and singing tricks, she has been putting on a show throughout her marriage. She has pretended to be someone she is not in order to fulfill the role that Torvald, her father, and society at large have expected of her.

Torvald's severe and selfish reaction after learning of Nora's deception and forgery is the final catalyst for Nora's awakening. But even in the first act, Nora shows that she is not totally unaware that her life is at odds with her true personality. She defies Torvald in small yet meaningful ways—by eating macaroons and then lying to him about it, for instance. She also swears, apparently just for the pleasure she derives from minor rebellion against societal standards. As the drama unfolds, and as Nora's awareness of the truth about her life grows, her need for rebellion escalates, culminating in her walking out on her husband and children to find independence.

## **TORVALD HELMER**

Torvald embraces the belief that a man's role in marriage is to protect and guide his wife. He clearly enjoys the idea that Nora needs his guidance, and he interacts with her as a father would. He instructs her with trite, moralistic sayings, such as: "A home that depends on loans and debt is not beautiful because it is not free." He is also eager to teach Nora the dance she performs at

the costume party. Torvald likes to envision himself as Nora's savior, asking her after the party, "Do you know that I've often wished you were facing some terrible dangers so that I could risk life and limb, risk everything, for your sake?"

Although Torvald seizes the power in his relationship with Nora and refers to her as a "girl," it seems that Torvald is actually the weaker and more childlike character. Dr. Rank's explanation for not wanting Torvald to enter his sickroom—"Torvald is so fastidious, he cannot face up to anything ugly"—suggests that Dr. Rank feels Torvald must be sheltered like a child from the realities of the world. Furthermore, Torvald reveals himself to be childishly petty at times. His real objection to working with Krogstad stems not from deficiencies in Krogstad's moral character but, rather, Krogstad's overly friendly and familiar behavior. Torvald's decision to fire Krogstad stems ultimately from the fact that he feels threatened and offended by Krogstad's failure to pay him the proper respect.

Torvald is very conscious of other people's perceptions of him and of his standing in the community. His explanation for rejecting Nora's request that Krogstad be kept on at the office—that retaining Krogstad would make him "a laughing stock before the entire staff"—shows that he prioritizes his reputation over his wife's desires. Torvald further demonstrates his deep need for society's respect in his reaction to Nora's deception. Although he says that Nora has ruined his happiness and will not be allowed to raise the children, he insists that she remain in the house because his chief concern is saving "the appearance" of their household.

## **KROGSTAD**

Krogstad is the antagonist in *A Doll's House*, but he is not necessarily a villain. Though his willingness to allow Nora's torment to continue is cruel, Krogstad is not without sympathy

for her. As he says, "Even money-lenders, hacks, well, a man like me, can have a little of what you call feeling, you know." He visits Nora to check on her, and he discourages her from committing suicide. Moreover, Krogstad has reasonable motives for behaving as he does: he wants to keep his job at the bank in order to spare his children from the hardships that come with a spoiled reputation. Unlike Torvald, who seems to desire respect for selfish reasons, Krogstad desires it for his family's sake. Like Nora, Krogstad is a person who has been wronged by society, and both Nora and Krogstad have committed the same crime: forgery of signatures. Though he did break the law, Krogstad's crime was relatively minor, but society has saddled him with the stigma of being a criminal and prohibited him from moving beyond his past. Additionally, Krogstad's claim that his immoral behavior began when Mrs. Linde abandoned him for a man with money so she could provide for her family makes it possible for us to understand Krogstad as a victim of circumstances. One could argue that society forced Mrs. Linde away from Krogstad and thus prompted his crime. Though society's unfair treatment of Krogstad does not justify his actions, it does align him more closely with Nora and therefore tempers our perception of him as a despicable character.

### **NORA IS A SYMBOLIC REPRESENTATION OF 19<sup>TH</sup> CENTURY'S WOMEN:**

One of the most complex characters of 19th century drama, Nora Helmer prances about in the first act, behaves desperately in the second, and gains a stark sense of reality during the finale of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.

In the beginning, Nora exhibits many childish qualities. The audience first sees her when she returns from a seemingly extravagant Christmas shopping excursion. She eats a few desserts which she has secretly purchased. When her condescending husband, Torvald Helmer, asks if she has been sneaking macaroons, she denies it whole-heartedly. With this

minor act of deception, the audience learns that Nora is quite capable of lying.

She is most child-like when she interacts with her husband. She behaves playfully yet obediently in his presence, always coaxing favors from him instead of communicating as equals. Torvald gently chides Nora throughout the play, and Nora good-naturedly responds to his criticism as though she were some loyal pet.

However, Nora has been leading a double life. She has not been thoughtlessly spending their money. Rather she has been scrimping and saving to pay off a secret debt. Years ago, when her husband became ill, Nora forged her father's signature to receive a loan to save Torvald's life. The fact that she never told Torvald about this arrangement reveals several aspects of her character.

For one, the audience no longer sees Nora as the sheltered, care-free wife of a banker. She knows what it means to struggle and take risks. In addition, the act of concealing the ill-gotten loan signifies Nora's independent streak. She is proud of the sacrifice she has made. Although she says nothing to Torvald, she brags about her actions with her old friend Mrs. Linde the first chance she gets! Basically, she believes that her husband would undergo just as many hardships, if not more, for her sake. However, her perception of her husband's devotion is quite misplaced.

When the disgruntled Krogstad threatens to reveal the truth about her forgery, Nora realizes that she has potentially brought scandal upon Torvald Helmer's good name. She begins to question her own morality, something she has never done before. Did she do something wrong? Was it not the right thing to do, under the circumstances? Will the courts convict her? Is she an improper wife? Is she a terrible mother?

Nora contemplates suicide as a means to eliminate the dishonor she has wrought upon her family. Yet, it remains debatable as to whether or not she would truly follow through

and jump in the icy river. Krogstad doubts her ability. Also, during the climactic scene in Act Three, Nora seems to stall before running out into the night to end her life. Torvald stops her all too easily, perhaps because she knows that, deep down, she wants to be saved.

Nora's epiphany occurs when the truth is finally revealed. As Torvald unleashes his disgust towards Nora and her crime of forgery, the protagonist realizes that her husband is a very different person than she once believed. Torvald has no intention of taking the blame for Nora's crime. She thought for certain that he would selflessly give up everything for her. When he fails to do this, she accepts the fact that their marriage has been an illusion. Their false devotion has been merely play acting. She has been his "child-wife" and his "doll." The monologue in which she calmly confronts Torvald serves as one of Ibsen's finest moments.

Since the premiere of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, much has been discussed regarding the final controversial scene. Why does Nora leave not only Torvald but her children as well? Many critics and theatre-goers questioned the morality of the play's resolution. In fact, some productions in Germany refused to produce the original ending. Ibsen acquiesced and grudgingly wrote an alternate ending in which Nora breaks down and cries, deciding to stay, but only for her children's sake.

Some argue that Nora leaves her home purely because she is selfish. She does not want to forgive Torvald. She would rather start another life than try to fix her existing one. Or perhaps she feels that Torvald was right, that she is a child who knows nothing of the world. Since she knows so little about herself or society, she feels that she is an inadequate mother and wife. She leaves the children because she feels it is for their benefit, painful as it may be to her.

Nora Helmer's last words are hopeful, yet her final action is less optimistic. She leaves Torvald explaining that there is a slight chance they could become man and wife once



again, but only if a "Miracle of miracles" occurred. This gives Torvald a brief ray of hope. However, just as he repeats Nora's notion of miracles, his wife exits and slams the door, symbolizing the finality of their relationship

## **A DOLLS HOUSE - NORA'S REBELLION AGAINST SOCIETY:**

The central theme of this play is Nora's rebellion against society and everything that was expected of her. Nora shows this by breaking away from all the standards and expectations her husband and society had set up for her. In her time women weren't supposed to be independent. They were to support their husbands, take care of the children, cook, clean, and make everything perfect around the house.

Nora's first rebellion was when she took out a loan so that she could pay for her husband, Torvalds medical treatment. It was against the law for women to take out a loan without their husbands consent. When she did this she proved that she wasn't as submissive and helpless as Torvald thought she was. He called her a "poor helpless little creature". A perfect example of Torvalds control and Nora's submissiveness was when she got him to re-teach her the tarantella. She already knew the dance but she acted as if she needed him to re-teach her the whole thing. When he says to her "Watching you swing and dance the tarantella makes my blood rush". This shows that he is more interested in her physically than emotionally. Then when she told him to stop he said to her, "am I not your husband?" Again, this is an example of Torvalds control over Nora, and how he thinks that she is there to fulfill his every desire on command. Torvald doesn't trust her with any money and with the little money that he does entrust her with he is afraid that she will spend it on Macaroons, a candy that he has forbid her to eat. He calls her his "little squirrel", "skylark", and he says she spends money very foolishly.

Nora's second rebellion was when she left Torvald and her children. The society she lived in demanded that she should submit to her husband and that she should take a place under him. Society considered women to be property of their husbands and that they should fulfill their every command. When Krogstad tries to blackmail Nora, and Torvald didn't even support her she realized that there was a problem. Then finally when Torvald realizes that his social stature will not be harmed he displays his real feeling for Nora, both physically and emotionally. It is at this time when Nora decides that she doesn't want to be controlled by Torvald anymore and she told him that she was going to leave him. By leaving Torvald she is not only shutting him out but also forgetting everything in her past. When Torvald tries to reconcile with her she explains that all her life she was treated like a child. And how she was "always merry, never happy", she never got to make any decisions on her own. Then she explains to him how she wants to grow into a responsible mature woman. She describes herself as a "Responsible human being" and wants to live her own life. - Nora's rebellions were deliberate and well planned. She knew what was expected of her and she still did what she thought was right in her own mind. The author uses these rebellions to show the faults in society in that day. Even though she did what, was right she was still looked down upon by society. It was wrong for Nora to forge her husband's signature to take out the loan to pay for Torvald's medical treatment, but she was in a way forced to do it. If Nora didn't do it her husband would have died. She did it out of love and compassion. Torvald, along with all of society condemned her for doing it.

Throughout the whole play Nora was looked down upon, and treated as Torvald's possession and she is only there for show and to please her husband. He is looked at as the provider and he is the decision-maker. This was, at that time "a perfect marriage", the only thing it lacked was love and understanding.

This was shown when got mad when he found out that she took out the loan to save his life.

Ibsen uses Nora's rebellions to show that society's expectations of a woman's roll in a marriage were wrong and that there should be more equality, love, and understanding in Torvalds and Noras marriage.

## **A DOLL'S HOUSE AND WOMAN LIBERATION:**

In reading Ibsen's *A Doll's House* today, a person could find it hard to imagine how daring it seemed when Ibsen wrote it over hundred years ago. A main subject of this play is the emancipation of women from the restrictions that society and men place on them. When Ibsen wrote this play he was making a statement about a woman's role in Victorian society. That statement is that society should allow women to be independent, and that women should free themselves from the restrictions that society places on them. In Act I, there are many clues that let us know what kind of marriage Nora and Torvald have. It seems like Nora is controlled by her husband in every way. She relies on Torvald for every thing in her life, from the way she thinks, to the way that she gets money from him. "Torvald, surely we can afford to be extravagant now, can't we? Just a teeny-weeny bit. You are getting quite a good salary now, and you are going to earn lots and lots of money.. .Money...Ten, twenty, thirty, forty. Oh thank you, thank you, Torvald."( Ibsen 1416). The most obvious example of Torvald's control over Nora is his reteaching of the tarantella. Nora pretends that she needs Torvald to teach her every move in the dance. While reading the story we can see that Nora already knows the dance. This shows us the submissiveness that Nora has, when it comes to Torvald. After he teaches her the dance Torvald says, "as I watched you darting and swaying in the tarantella, my blood was on fire" (Ibsen 1458). This shows how Torvald is more interested in Nora physically than emotionally.

When Nora responds to Torvald by saying “Go away Torvald! Leave me alone. I won't have it”(Ibsen 1458). Torvald responds to her by saying, “Aren't I your husband?” (Ibsen 1458). By saying this, he is implying that one of Nora's duties as a wife is to physically pleasure him at his command. Another window from which we can look into Nora and Torvald's marriage is the way they talk to each other. They use pet names every time they talk to each other. “Is that my little sky-lark chirruping out there? Yes it is. Is that my little squirrel frisking about? Yes! When did my little squirrel get home?” (Ibsen 1415). The only time in the story in which they don't use these pet names is when Nora is leaving Torvald. This represents her breaking away and leaving behind the restrictions that society and her husband have placed on her. During the course of the play Nora sees that some women can live independently. Mrs. Linde shows her this. Mrs. Linde is an example of an independent woman in society, but only because she is a widow. Widows are expected to be independent, and work to take care of themselves and their families. According to Victorian society married women are supposed to stay at home and take care of the children. Mrs. Linde shows Nora that she can be an independent woman and free herself from the shackles that society has placed on her. Throughout the course of the play we see that Torvald treats Nora like a child. His distrust of her with money shows this. Whenever Torvald departs with his money, and gives it to Nora he worries what she will do with it. He thinks that she is very bad with money and that she will just spend it on something foolish. “If only you could really hold on to the money gave you.” (Ibsen 1416). This statement not only shows how Torvald sees Nora, but how the Victorian society sees women in general. Torvald treats his wife like a child, and Mrs. Linde sees this. She shows Nora what Torvald is doing. This statement by Mrs. Linde shows this “Nora! In lots of ways you are still a child.”(Ibsen 1438). In the play we see that Nora's duties are very restricted. She is restricted to caring

for the children, doing housework, and working on her needlepoint. A problem with her responsibilities is that most important obligation is to please Torvald. The other obligations such as caring for the children, she can let the maid take care of. Her children are another concern in the play. If Nora continues to let Torvald dominate her than her children are doomed to follow in her footsteps. The children are being raised to know their role in society. The Christmas presents that are bought for them show this. "Look some new clothes for I vary and a little sword...And a doll and a doll's cot for Emmy."(Jbsen 1416). The boys get new clothes and a toy sword; the girl only gets a doll. These presents represent a man and a woman's place in society. The new clothes and the sword show that a man's place is out in the world and his job is to care for his family. The doll that the little girl receives shows that a woman's place is at home, and she is to care for the children. The problem in *A Doll's House* is not only in Torvald, but the entire Victorian society. Torvald himself represents the Victorian society. The way that Torvald treats Nora is the way that most men treated their wives in that time. The play is a statement about the way that women were treated in the Victorian society. The play shows the way that women were seen as objects to men. Nora starts to realize something is wrong with her life after Krogstad exposes her. When Torvald doesn't immediately offer to help Nora, she sees the problem. By waiting until after he discovers that he will suffer no social harm, Torvald reveals his true feelings. Torvald puts what people will think of him ahead of his feelings for his wife, he claims to love. When Nora sees this, she decides that it is time for her to leave Torvald. When Torvald tries to make Nora stay, she explains to him how she feels like she has been treated like a child all of her life. She feels that both Torvald and her father treated her this way Both of the major males in her life had denied her the right to think and act the way that she wanted to, thus limiting her happiness. This shows the way that males

in a Victorian society dictate what females are allowed to do. When Nora finally slams the door on Torvald, she is also slamming the door on everything else in society that dictates what a woman's place is. This statement shows Nora finally breaking away from Torvald, and social norms and becoming her own woman. "You are talking like a child. You understand nothing about the society you live in. No I don't ... I must try to discover who is right, society or me." (Ibsen 1467). Torvald represents the way that society treats and views women. Ibsen is making a statement about this in the play. The way that Nora takes her life in her own hands and liberates herself makes the statement that society is wrong. *A Doll's House* is a very feminist play. Ibsen is trying to tell women to stand up and take control of their lives. He does this through the way he shows Nora going through a drastic change and slamming the door on a society that restricts her. Through the course of this play Nora fights to remove the restrictions that the men in her life and society have placed on her.

### **A DOLL'S HOUSE AND WOMEN RIGHTS:**

*A Doll House* is no more about women's rights than Shakespeare's *Richard II* is about the divine right of kings, or *Ghosts* about syphilis. Its theme is the need of every individual to find out the kind of person he or she is and to strive to become that person." (Bloom 28) Ibsen portrays this behavior in *A Doll House* through one of the main characters, Nora Helmer, by setting the scene in Norway in 1872. In the late 1800s, women did not play an important role in society at all. Their job was mainly to cook, clean, sew, take care of the children, and keep the house in order. They were treated as a material possession rather than a human being that could think and act for themselves and looked upon as a decorative member of the household. Women were robbed of their true identity and at the end of the play, Nora leaves everything behind to go out into

the world to seek her identity. This behavior can be traced back to the beginning of time when women were to stay home and gather nuts and berries, while the men would go out and do the hunting and fishing. The male always dominated over the women and it was not viewed as unfair." Male children would go to school to get an education in history, mathematics, science, English writing, while the female would go to school to learn how to cook, sew, clean; and do household chores. The male could then further advance his education by attending a college or university, whereas no college would accept a women student. "The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of men toward woman, having in direct object the establishment of an absolute tyranny over her." (Declaration of Sentiments) It was believed that women were the inferior gender and had to have special attention given to them. This idea dates back to the Medieval Period in history and is where the whole idea of chivalry came about and men having to provide special care. One can see that the idea of male superiority can be referenced back to very early on in civilization to the day *A Doll House* was written. "Torvald: You stay right here and five me a reckoning. You understand what you've done? Answer! You understand?" (Ibsen 187) Torvald says this to Nora when he finds out that she took out a loan without his consent and forging a signature. It is prevalent that Torvald is in a state of anger and he is dominating the situation, letting Nora know who is in charge and not even wanting an explanation to "why?" she took out a loan. Women were very limited in their rights in 1872. Such rights included: women had to submit to laws when they had no voice in their formation, married women had no property rights, husbands had legal power over and responsibility for their wives to the extent that they could imprison or beat them with impunity, divorce and child custody laws favored men, giving no rights to women and when women did work they were paid only a fraction of what men earned, women were not allowed to enter

professions such as medicine or law, and women were robbed of their self-confidence and self-respect, and were made totally dependent on men. (Declaration of Sentiments) Ibsen makes references to this using Christine Linde, widow and a friend to Nora. Christine's husband died and left her penniless and being that her father passed away, she is able to apply for a position at the bank. This is the only exception society made in women holding a job outside the household. It is apparent that women have come a long way since 1872, gaining the right to vote in 1920 under the 19th amendment in the constitution, gaining a right to an equal education, owning property, and having a job. These were all results of the women's rights movement amongst others. Throughout the play, Nora plays the role of a typical woman in the 1800s, staying by her husband's side, taking care of the children, and doing all the household chores. She does, however, go behind Torvald's back when she takes out the loan. When she realizes that she is unfit to do anything in life and announces her remedy-"I have to try to educate myself" (Ibsen 192) she walks out the door and expresses a deal of feminism universally agreed-upon base for women's emancipation, telling Torvald that she no longer knows how to be his wife and no longer knows who she is. (Eisenberg 32) It was uncommon for women to walk out on their husband's as they do today because they were taught since they were little, to always please their husband and do everything in their power to satisfy and make him happy. This does not include walking out on him and leaving him with the children. Nora did not know any better because she came from being treated like a material object in her own house by her father, to being treated like one by Torvald. "You're not the man I thought you were. Both you and my father have both treated me like a doll." (Ibsen 191) Therefore, her whole life was based around other people making decisions for her and conformed to their way of thinking until the end of the play, when she walks out and makes her own decision. Nora shows her childish ways



throughout the play by eating macaroons, listening by Torvald's door, and by playing with the children. It is apparent that she is confused about marriage and her role as a woman in the 1800s. She does, however, make the right decision to leave although society views this as an immoral thing to do. This was considered sinful and God would punish you if you committed such an act of wrongdoing. In conclusion, I think that women have made an incredible appearance and have play an immense role in today's society. Women are basically treated with equality today with men and the times sure have changed. Ibsen's play is a very good example of how life was like for women in the past and they have obviously made progress since then. I am very proud of what women have done for today's society and I know that they will continue fighting this never-ending battle for equality until the very end as Nora did.

## CONCLUSION:

At last do we find Nora a victim? In what ways at fault? Nora Helmer, the wife of Torvald Helmer and mother of three children, is a very complex and brave woman for her time. She plays the main role in the play and is essential to its plot. She is both a victim of her circumstances and also at fault for actions which she committed. Nora is a victim. Throughout her entire life, she has never been taken seriously by anyone. She has been treated like a doll by both male characters in her life, her father and her husband, and has acted accordingly. She has believed whatever they have told her without any question because she feared it would anger them. "At home, Daddy used to tell me what he thought, then I thought the same. And if I thought differently, I kept quiet about it, because he wouldn't have liked it... and he played with me as I used to play with my dolls. Then I came to live in your house..." ( Henrik Ibsen: Act III, pg. 1465) Therefore, she constructs a life of dishonesty because she encompasses different morals than her husband,

and their minds never meet. Torvald Helmer has straight principles and knows clearly where he is, where he is going and how he is going to get there. Nora has conflicting goals because she does not have a clear-cut path for her future and she writes her own story. Nora is at fault. She makes decisions on her own, borrows money to save her husband, and makes the decision to forge her father's signature, and is excited about what she is doing which is the worst mistake. She also does not follow the expected female behavior for her time, which causes her problems. A good example of that would be when she borrowed money from Krogstad. This decision alone was not even a possibility for a woman of her time nor was her decision to borrow without the consent of a male such as her husband or father. Her biggest and most grave mistake is forgery of her father's signature on the IOU in attempt to spare him any worry on his deathbed. She is also at fault because she has principles which are in conflict with the law. An example of that would be the manner in which she views that her crime of forgery was permissible because she meant good and was not trying to actually commit the crime for her own benefit, but rather with good intentions. She does not understand that a crime committed is a crime committed whether or not the intentions were good or bad and that she will be held accountable by the law regardless of what she feels is right. This play has many themes which add to Nora's character and position such as conflicting values and principles, the gender issue which is the expected male behavior and the expected female behavior, and how the female role is unsatisfying, restricting and false. Are these themes still concerns for women in the present day.

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