

Comparison between a doll's house and brenda's got a baby



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In this essay I am going to compare the play *A Dolls House* (1879), written by Henrik Ibsen and the lyrics of the song *Brenda's Got a Baby* (1991), written and rapped by Tupac Shakur. This was released in his first album '2pacalypse.' The easiest comparison to make between the two is that they both share the theme of sexism and the fact that women are inferior to men. Both of them convey this negatively. *A Dolls House* is based in the 1800s and even though Tupac was born in 1971 he still bases the theme of his song, *Brenda's Got a Baby* on domestic violence that females have to go through.

This shows that this social issue has lasted for a long period of time, and it still even exists today as Women are still stereotyped to having a morbid lifestyle, as being mothers and wives and sexism is still a problem in society. Women are often made feel inferior to men. For example they are seen as unable to do physical work like building and mechanics, which is considered as a "man's job". *A Dolls House* was so controversial that Ibsen was forced to write a second ending that he called "a barbaric outrage" to be used only when required.

The controversy was caused by the play challenging the stereotypical expectations for the roles of women in society in the 1800's. Women were generally very submissive to men. Their lives would vary massively between the different classes, but usually they revolved around the home. The controversy centered on Nora's decision to abandon her children, whereas in the second ending she decides that the children need her more than she needs her freedom. Women were expected to stay in their sphere of

domesticity for example cooking and cleaning and being married with children by a certain age.

Men were expected to be the “bread-winners” that supported the wife and the children with no help from the outside world. The male role was defined as the superior and dominant gender in society that overlooked females. The female’s role in life was to simply be the child-bearer, or the person who took care of the house and raised the children. In *A Dolls House* these assumptions are challenged and restrictions and expectations for women created problems for characters in the play. *Brenda’s Got a Baby* is about a fictional 12-year old girl named Brenda, who lives in the ghetto, has a baby, and is incapable of supporting it.

However, the video begins with “based on a true story” and ends with a picture of a girl that Brenda represents in the video. It explores the issue of teen-pregnancy and its effect on the young mothers and their families. Like many of Shakur’s songs, “*Brenda’s Got a Baby*” draws from the plight of the impoverished. Using Brenda as a metaphor for young mothers everywhere, Tupac criticises the low level of support from the babies’ fathers, the government, and society in general. In the end, Brenda’s life transcends down a path of selling drugs and prostitution, eventually leading to her death.

Like *A Dolls House*, this song was centered on women having grief, and being inferiors in life. This is clearly shown in the song: “Now Brenda’s belly is getting bigger but no one seems to notice any change in her figure” This shows that Brenda is being neglected and suggests that she is inferiors. Both

the play and the song show that women are sometimes taken for granted because they are seen as vulnerable people. In the second ending for A Dolls House Nora chooses a family lifestyle, this shows her vulnerability to the outside world.

In Brenda's Got a Baby, Brenda is looked at as quite vulnerable: " In love with the molester who's sexing her crazy" shows her innocence and vulnerability towards her " boyfriend". Family life in the late 1800's in Europe was difficult due to a patriarchal society. This was a society ruled by men. This caused legal restrictions on women's rights. For instance, women were unable to ask for a divorce this could have caused problems for families if women did not get along with their husbands. In addition, women needed to get married; as they were not allowed to own property, therefore they needed a husband to support them.

In A Dolls House Nora says, " I've the most extraordinary longing to say: ' Bloody Hell'". Nora is expressing her desire to rebel against her husband. This is different from Tupac's song as it was written in 1991 and there was no such patriarchal society; " Now Brenda's gotta make her own way", this shows that although the play and the song both portray sexism Brenda's Got a Baby shows more independence for women as Brenda has to stand up on her own two feet and support herself in the easiest possible way she can, even though her job (prostitution) ends up killing her in the end.

In conclusion, I think that A Dolls House and Brenda's Got a Baby are similar in the way that they both portray women getting treated unfairly, in the play Nora feels trapped and isolated in her marriage and in the song Brenda is

treated unfairly as she is neglected and her family don't even realise she is pregnant.

Furthermore her cousin takes advantage out of her by having sex with her, as he knows she is vulnerable. The fact that Brenda got pregnant must mean that she doesn't know much about contraception and reinforces the fact that she is uneducated and goes back to the 1800s (when A Dolls House was set) when most women didn't have a good education as they were expected to just become a domestic drudge.