

Perspectives of marriage in literary work – a dolls house and pride and prejudice...

[Life](#), [Love](#)



Perspectives of Marriage In Literary Work In A Dolls House by Henrik Ibsen, and in Jane Austen's Pride And Prejudice marriage is a major theme. It is a theme not always about love but about money, appearance, and self worth. This theme of marriage directly ties these two stories together and it also emphasizes character development and enlightenment. As these stories progress we see dramatic changes in our main characters. These changes lead to a realization about the true meaning of love and marriage. Minor characters also play a large part in the theme of marriage. They can act as foils to our main characters in their perspectives of marriage. Similarly, these two stories view marriage as a means of gaining land, money, support and image and not always about love and happiness.

From the beginning of A Dolls House Ibsen portrays Torvald as the dominate male and as the controller of the household and Nora as the little house wife acting childish and immature. As the story progresses, over a span of only a few days, Nora grows up tremendously and she realizes that her relationship with Torvald was not one out of love. She realized that her relationship with Torvald was very similar to that of her father. Torvald, she realizes, treated her like a doll, and likewise Nora treated their children like Dolls.

" You have always been so kind to me. But our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I was papa's doll-child; and here the children have been my dolls. I thought it great fun when you played with me, just as they thought it great fun when I played with them. That is what our marriage have been, Torvald." (Pg. 64, A Dolls)" This passage by Nora sums up their entire marriage. Their marriage was not an

unhappy marriage, yet it was not a happy marriage. Nora feels as though she was treated as a possession and that Torvald never really loved her as she never really loved him. They did not share the responsibilities of the household in fact Nora didn't even have access to the mailbox. Nora had no say in the affairs of the house, she acted solely as a "wife ought to". She remarks to her husband, "We have been married now eight years. Does it not occur to you that this is the first time we two, you and I, husband and wife, have had a serious conversation?" (Pg. 63, A Dolls)

Nora realizes that throughout their entire marriage she was not happy "only merry." This realization led to Nora's leaving Torvald. She believes the only way she can become free is to be educated. Throughout the entire scene where Nora is explaining to Torvald why she must leave him he is still trying to think of ways to make her stay. He even asks her, "But can't we live like brother and sister-?" Torvald is terrified of what his image will be after his wife leaves him. This is a time period when divorces were very much out of the ordinary and almost never did a woman leave her husband and children. Yet, at this point Nora believes her children will be "in better hands" than hers. Their marriage becomes an appearance to Torvald. When she left he was truly upset, but not because he truly loved her necessarily, but because he couldn't deal with the reality of living alone or the reaction of the public.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth is a spontaneous, high-spirited, vivacious, witty, and a warm young lady. Her attitude on marriage is a very realistic one, and she does not feel marriage should be made solely as a means of support. Her views are very similar to that of Nora's, at the end of *A Dolls*

House. Elizabeth's major flaw is her over prejudice of Darcy who, at first, comes off as a very proud and conceded man but she eventually learns to love him. Darcy's views on marriage are directly related to his over sense of pride. When he first meets Elizabeth he tells his friend, " She is tolerable, but not handsome enough to tempt me."

Later, he talks about the Bennets lack of status and convinces Bingley, his good friend, not to marry Elizabeth's older sister Jane. As the novel progresses however, his view of marriage changes when he falls in love with Elizabeth. He learns that marriage should be about love and not about class and income. He then advises his friend differently about not marrying Elizabeth's sister. Elizabeth and Darcy start off with confused views of each other but eventually get over their pride and prejudice and realize that they are in love. In A Dolls House, the idea of mixed feelings and realizations came far too late and ended the marriage where as Darcy and Elizabeth's realization led to their marriage and happiness.

In A Dolls House, we also learn of Mrs. Linde's first marriage. Nora asks Mrs. Linde, " Is it really true that you did not love your husband? Why did you marry him?"(Pg. 10 A Dolls) Mrs. Linde's response was, " My mother was alive then, and was bedridden and helpless, and I had to provide for my two younger brothers; so I did not think I was justified in refusing his offer. "(Pg. 10, A Dolls) This is an example of marriage not out of love for one another but out of necessity. Mrs. Linde found it necessary to marry this man because she had no other means of supporting her family. Similarly in Pride and Prejudice, Charlotte a local girl marries Mr. Collins a pompous,

pretentious and hypocritical man. Elizabeth is shocked at the news because not only does she have very little respect for Mr. Collins but also because she rejected his proposal of marriage just a few days prior.

In response to Elizabeth's reaction Charlotte tells Elizabeth, " I am not romantic, you know. I never was. I ask only a comfortable home; and considering Mr. Collins character, connections, and situation in life, I am convinced that my chance of happiness with him is as fair as most people can boast on entering the marriage state." (Pg. 108 *Pride*) Charlotte's view on marriage was very different from that of Elizabeth. And her decision was obviously one stemmed from Mr. Collins wealth and possession and not for love at all. Charlotte also remarks that you should not look too far into the person you are about to marry because you don't want to see too many of their negative qualities before marriage. Charlotte's family boasts about the marriage and are very pleased with their daughter for marrying such a wealthy man. Charlotte and Mrs. Linde marry for similar reasons and those reasons are not out of love.

In *A Dolls House*, and in *Pride And Prejudice* the development and transformation of characters leads to a better understanding of love and marriage. Nora eventually realizes her misunderstandings of marriage and happiness and leaves to hopefully find true happiness, not just merriness. Elizabeth's prejudice and Darcy's pride are pushed aside and Darcy learns the true meaning of marriage. Mrs. Linde and Charlotte on the other hand marry out of the belief that was common of the time, the belief that

marriages should be made to allow for a comfortable life were outward appearance and income mean more than love.