

reflective statement – a doll's house essay sample

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In the play, "A Doll's House" written by Henrik Ibsen, there is a strong statement of existentialism throughout. Interestingly enough, it seems that each of the three acts in the play correspond to a stage within the concept of existentialism, in the order of which they occur.

Act I is in correlation with the Aesthetic Stage. This is the stage where one is obsessed with their appearance, always changing due to a lack of knowing oneself. We see this evident in Nora's character with her interest in the Christmas tree. The placement of the tree in the centre emphasizes the importance she held on presentation; the purpose of decorating it was to search for beauty, and similarly try to please Torvald with it. According to the philosopher Kierkegaard, one has to believe in something consistently in order to truly believe it. This justifies that Edna always valued becoming an independent individual, however was simply unaware of her feelings in the first act. Her actions hinted to her defiance to social standards, such as the macaroons which she discretely hid from Torvald, however she was content, unfamiliar of the negative circumstances that would come with her poor choices.

The Ethical Stage is represented throughout Act II. One who was ethically driven made their choices and developed opinions by what society deemed they should be. Nora is guilty of doing such to act socially acceptable. In the beginning of the act, she is tempted to leave the house and is putting on a cloak - which is something deemed more man-like - in preparation to exit. This is an action she wants to perform as an individual, however she does not execute this in fear of ruining her image. The instant she heard footsteps approaching she throws the cloak away immediately in order to resume her '

rightful' position. The last stage of human existence is what was called the religious stage. In this state, one realizes to accept their own fate, without justifiable reasons morally or aesthetically.

They take their ' leap of faith' which is directly associated with Nora's step out of the door. She consistently tries to break free of Torvald's hold, as she has finally admitted and accepted her desires, and discovers he is her restricting force. Kierkegaard's theory of human existence is directly displayed in Nora's character development, as she undergoes a complete shift when uncovering her own deep-rooted feelings.