

Essay on a doll's house by henrik ibsen

[Sociology](#), [Women](#)



Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll House* has been the subject of discussion for many authors and critics. It has been praised for "embracing women's equality" (Metzger) and for the theme of freedom that derives from restricting social situations of life that is depicted (Goonetilleke). However, it has also been attacked for portraying women as unlovable, ill-favored, and loathsome beings without a single instance of depicting them as modest and noble (Styan 55). Most of these authors and critics have emphasized on the actions, persona, and relationship of the protagonist, Mrs. Nora Helmer in the play. Subsequently, to support their conclusions, the rest of the characters are reduced to mere examples. However, if *A Doll House* is closely inspected, it is revealed that some of these characters are more important than they seem. One such character is Mrs. Christine Linde. Even though Mrs. Christine Linde does not appear to be a major character, this argument synthesis paper will prove that she plays a central role in Nora's life, and her presence had a strong influence on Nora's decision to leave her children. In *A Doll House* the character of Christine Linde serves the purpose of developing the plot. It seems as though Henrik Ibsen specifically introduced her as Nora Helmer's old friend so that the protagonist of the story would be able to reveal her inner thoughts to the readers. Christine Linde is first introduced in Act One where she meets Nora, her old, forgotten friend, after being out of touch for several years. Initially Nora was not able to recognize who she is, but once she recognizes her, she exclaims how much Christine has changed (Ibsen 974). They begin an innocuous conversation, discussing their private matters, like the death of Christine's husband and Torvald Helmer's good fortune. Nora also tells Christine that she looks older, thinner, and has

become paler (Ibsen 975).

It becomes apparent that Christine serves as a device to expose Nora's inner thoughts. The widowed Christine tells Nora that she is seeking a job, but instead of listening to Christine's troubles, Nora excitedly starts discussing the recent success of her husband. However, Nora also sees Christine as a courageous and dedicated independent woman since she opened a shop, taught, and did whatever she could possibly do to make ends meet for herself and her family after her husband died (Ibsen 977). The example that Christine initially unknowingly sets in Nora's mind also ultimately encourages her to go her own way and start her own independent life.

When Christine meets Nils Krogstad for the first time, it appears as if they do not know each other that well (Ibsen 981), but it is later revealed later in that Christine had a romantic relationship with him when she was younger, before she got married. Apparently, Krogstad has been bitter toward Christine ever since she decided to get married to someone else. However, Christine believes that she made a justifiable decision by getting married since she did not have any other means of supporting her family. However, at the same time, she also admits that frequently she frequently wondered if she did the right thing by leaving Krogstad (Ibsen 1009). While having this honest and keen conversation, Christine manages to move Krogstad. When Christine tells him that she is still loves him, and is willing to marry him, it has a dignifying, softening effect on him. His good traits are awakened by her sudden establishment of friendship and trust once again (Salomé 228).

It is at this point that it is revealed how Nora's fate is affected by Christine's actions. After being moved by Christine, Krogstad tells her that he will not

send the letter that incriminates Nora of forging her father's signature for a bond. However, Christine changes her mind, she decides that all the "lies and evasion" in Nora (Ibsen 1011) and Torvald's marriage have to be put to an end, and that Nora's dreadful secret needs to be revealed to her husband. This is when Christine deliberately lights the spark that changes everything (Bradbrook 257), ultimately influencing Nora and she decides to leave her husband and children. Even though Nora had forged her father's signature to obtain a bond for her husband, but because of Christine, conflict is raised within the husband and wife's relationship because of what she had done. Upon reading the letter Krogstad had written in which he reveals Nora's unlawful dealing, Torvald becomes afraid of the what might happen now because of the mess his wife has made. Instantly, her world is shattered, she begins to see her husband for the who he really is, a selfish person. At this moment Nora decides to free herself from the authority and control of her husband (Salomé 230).

As Torvald begins reacting fearfully and outrageously, another letter from Krogstad arrives. After snatching the letter from Nora and reading it, it is revealed that Krogstad has returned the incriminating bond. Torvald's attitude immediately changes, he exclaims with relief that 'he' is saved, and he forgives his wife and apologizes to her. However, Torvald's behavior makes Nora understand that her husband is selfish, he only cares about himself, that her marriage is not the romanticized dream that she thought it was, that it is nothing but a lie. Unlike how Nora had always imagined her husband to be, Torvald was not courageous enough to protect his wife, like a husband should, and bear the entire weight himself (Ibsen 999), rather, he

selfishly abandoned her and disapproved of her.

Once her husband's true character is revealed, Nora makes the decision to escape from her life, which is more like a doll house, leaving her husband and children behind. She follows in Christine's footsteps, realizing that a woman can make it on her own, and even though Christine managed to survive because of her love for her family. On the other hand, Nora was motivated by her wish to search for her selfhood, to no longer be treated like a doll, like her husband did (Ibsen 1022). Thus, it becomes apparent that Mrs. Christine Linde plays a central role in Nora's life, and her presence in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll House* influences Nora from a wife, who is treated like a doll, to search for her potential as an actual human being (Thomas 259-260). If Christine and her actions had not set an example for Nora and she had revealed the true nature of her husband, Nora would have never have been able to see her husband for who he really was, and would have continued living like a doll in Torvald's doll house.

Works Cited

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