

A doll's house by henrik ibsen research paper sample

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



A Doll's house is a novel by Henrik Ibsen that centers on the life of women and how they manage the affairs around them. The theme of sexuality has been prominently presented as the characters display themselves in the best way they know how. The story shows different kind of men and women who are exposed to unique circumstances. Each of them has to survive and behave, as the situation requires them. Depending on how a person looks at it, it is both beneficial and detrimental to their life. Even though they are living in a similar environment, their situations are different which ultimately determines the decisions they take in their life. It is all about survival and the best way they can (Grazia 154). Each character seems to be satisfied with the decisions they make even though it may not have been the best. They are confident that they did it for the common good of their families and their lives. In this paper, we shall be critically analyzing the characters in line with the theme of sexuality and how it is displayed.

Starting with class, the characters in the story are distinguished by the kind of lifestyle they adopt. This has to do with their economic situations and the responsibilities they have. Nora is the main character in the story and displays the character of a housewife who longs for a better lifestyle. She is an example of a modern woman who believes that she has a responsibility to play in managing her family both emotionally and financially (Wheeler 5).

This is especially displayed when she gets involved in fraudulent activities just to afford a better lifestyle and prove a point to herself and her family. The society looks at women as innocent beings who only need to be involved in house chores and not get involved in other external activities. This hence makes Nora live a lie as she deceives her husband who ultimately believes

her. In the process of wanting to please her husband and her family that expects much from her, she hurts within as she knows that what she is displaying is contrary to what she really is.

Torvald who is the husband to Nora seems to underestimate her capability simply because she is a woman. This also reveals to us as an important feature of the society. While Nora seems to be comfortable about the developments happening around her, but her husband fails to realize how much she hurts, he does not take her serious and simply looks at her as some silly person (Garton 163). Even though it was on a lighter note, it actually sends the message that no matter the situation; she cannot manage to outsmart her since she is a mere homemaker. This is because their nature of sexuality puts a man on top of everything. The assumption that Nora is an innocent and naïve person whom she manages to display makes Torvald blind to the loan that she took to pay for his medical bills.

Ego is a characteristic that is usually associated with male sexuality. This is displayed in the two male characters in the story. Torvald seems to understand the fact that his wife is just a housewife who cannot scheme up anything behind his back. This makes him feel like he is the sole decision maker and he will be consulted for any issue. To maintain this, she continually refers to his wife as a girl just to remind her that she is still the head of the home. He may not have the ability to prevent his wife from making decisions of the family yet her position in the family makes him be assured of receiving the respect he deserves from the wife. (Durbach 87). He plays his role of guiding and advising his wife and seems to be succeeding not realizing that he is being fooled. The moment Torvald realizes that his

wife was just an actor in the marriage and never meant his action is disturbing. He was surprised at the fact that the woman he had lived with and known for quite sometime could be playing fool out of him. He must have learned an important lesson of not imposing responsibility and submission to a woman who has different character altogether.

Society has defined certain roles for both men and women. These are to be followed irrespective of the situation. Traditionally, it was possible for a man to impose any form of rules and requirements to a woman because he was the sole provider and automatically the overall decision maker. However, society has changed where women also want to feel part of the decisions made in the family. A woman however faces the challenge of having to be herself and manage the situations around her and being the kind of women the society wants her to be. Blending such two characters and nature is quite challenging especially when reality hits. However, just because a woman does not want to be considered a rebel, she has to scheme out her own survival means (Cunningham 492). Nora decided to blindfold her husband by pretending to be the successful yet submissive woman of the society. In the real sense, she knew she had personal issues that she had to cover up. Even though she had to suffer for them, it was the best decision she could make at that moment.

The failure of the society to accept change haunts the characters of the novel. It may have been considered to be a personal predicament, but as the story proceeds, we realize how all the characters are affected by such denial. If Nora would have acted herself, she may have lost a husband or even a family yet the situation may not have exploded on her negatively. She

pretended to be happy and satisfied with her life, yet deep within, she was a frustrated woman who was involved in fraudulent activities (Siddall 50). On the other hand, if Torvad had not placed such high demand on her wife, she would have saved her the need to pretend just to please her. He would have to live with some frustrations but not be stressed realizing how he had been fooled all along.

Krogstad is another character we encounter in the story. He is the antagonist who has had a taste of life's frustrations. Compared to Nora who is in denial of her situation, Krogstad lives his life knowing that he was driven by circumstances (Mistele 38). He is a character who has faced the bad side of a modern woman who would rather go for material gain rather than wealth. Having had to lose his love to a wealthier man, he struggles his way to ensure that he makes it in life. Krogstad suffered from what may be because of his situations and circumstances, nobody understood and accepted him. He has therefore learned the bitter lesson that one has to scheme his ways to survive in this world (Kurtiz 308). His is a situation of necessity where by he is involved in fraud just to take care of his family. Even in his genuine conduct, the society seems to care less and brands him a criminal. In addition, the same society will not accept and appreciate him if he were unable to take care of his family.

Sexuality and the need for a man to care and protect for a female counterpart has also been revealed in the relationship between Krogstad and Nora. These friends in crime know how everything started and why they did so. We however realize that Nora is overwhelmed when everything becomes known. She is frustrated to the point of contemplating suicide. Krogstad on

the other had does not feel sorry for what he had done as he had no alternative. This reveals to us more on how different sexes respond and handle situations that befall them. Men seem to accept their predicament and move on with life, as women feel overwhelmed by the same. This is because of the expectations that the society has for both sexes (Ibsen 43). As a man may not be condemned much because of his role of providing for the family, the woman is expected to be the angel that the society wants her to be. When this does not add up, the woman feels guiltier of not being able to meet the demands of the society.

The distinctive role of a man to protect a woman has been displayed in the story through the antagonist and the protagonist. Krogstad plays a significant role in Nora's life at a time when her husband failed to understand her. Having been in a similar state of situations, Krogstad becomes a pillar to Nora who was in the verge of committing suicide. He counsels and advises and encouraging her not to feel guilty, as it was the only alternative, she had to survive. These words made a lot of sense to Nora who decided to live her life once again. Realizing that it was all the fault of the society to demand so much from a woman consoled her.

Sexuality, which is defined by the different roles played by men and women, continues to be a constant bother to the society. As the environment changes and there is need to change responsibilities, it becomes impossible for either sexes to understand each other. The woman has always been overwhelmed by the changes that happen around her even as she struggles to fit in the society. Despite the need for some space and freedom, there are those feminine expectations that she cannot run escape. The man on the

other hand is constantly surprised at the level to which a woman goes just to prove her capability and strength. The result is a frustrated society where men and women no longer understand each other (Snodgrass 340). It has been a struggle for existence and maintenance as each one finds a way to express themselves. It has become necessary for the society to understand that as time changes adjustments are inevitable. The sooner we accept the surprises that come with such change the sooner we adjust and stop blaming ourselves and others for what happens around.

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