

Themes of a doll house



A Dolls House by Henrik Ibsen, social convention is a burden on the main characters, especially Nora. The conflict between social convention and freedom is a major theme throughout the play.

Social convention in the play is expressed clearly in the gender roles that Nora and Helmer assume, more specifically, the role of husband and wife. As Helmers wife, Nora is expected to obey his wishes and try to please him. Nevertheless, this conflicts with her freedom to indulge in her desires, for example, macaroons. Helmer forbids her to have macaroons in order to prevent her from ruining her teeth. This may also be due to the convention that a successful man like Helmer is expected to have an attractive wife.

Another example between Noras freedom and the convention that she has to obey and please Helmer takes place during the fancy dress party. She wants to stay at the party and enjoy herself but Helmer forces her to go back home early after she dances the tarantella because of his own desire not to spoil the effect and because he feels that [an] exit should always be effective. In this example, Noras freedom is in conflict with the convention that she has to obey her husbands wishes. Of further interest is Helmers other motive in getting Nora to leave the party: he wants to have sex with her.

When Nora refuses, he reacts angrily with the lines Wont! Wont! Am I not your husband The repetition of wont and the use of exclamation marks emphasize his anger. This reveals that conventionally, women are expected to be compliant and that they are not supposed to have the freedom to decide when to have sexual intercourse. Helmer, as the husband, expects to

be obeyed when he wants to make love to her, regardless of whether she wants it or not.

Noras freedom to refuse his advances conflicts with the convention that she must comply with her husbands wishes. [http://www. helium. com/items/1019740-freedom-versus-social-convention-in-a-dolls-house-by-henrik-ibsen](http://www.helium.com/items/1019740-freedom-versus-social-convention-in-a-dolls-house-by-henrik-ibsen)