

Christina's character motivation and struggles



In Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House*, Christiana Linden (or Linde) must give up her own life to provide for her mother and younger brothers, and finds herself a newfound freedom once widowed. However, Ms. Linden is unhappy having no family to work for and struggles as the only character in the play that is driven by morals instead of social normalities. Her example, though attended by conflict, plays into the idea that obeying societal rules will lead an unfulfilling life.

Each character in Henrik Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* is greatly influenced and swayed by society, one of the main ones being Christina Linden, because she must fulfill her duties and hastily marry a man for his money instead of being with someone she genuinely loves. Ms. Linden's life rapidly changed after the death of her father, and she had to assume control of her household and provide for her needy family, and this opportunity opened an unusual position for Christina because women never hold power within their homes. Unfortunately, Ms. Linden is now a widow and must work for her own wages, but she doesn't have anyone to share her earnings with. In a "catching-up" conversation with Nora, Christina openly admitted that Nora lives a cushioned life and must be delighted "to have what [she] need[s]," (Ibsen 13) because Christina was left with no place to call home or any children to care for from her previous marriage.

Although Christina values the independence she found after her husband died, she can't help but yearn for someone "to live for" (Ibsen 16) and share a life with, because she has these natural instincts to nurture people as either a wife or mother. Christina struggles between the idea of being independent and having complete control of herself, or opening up to the

possibility of forfeiting some of that newfound freedom in order to be happy in a marriage like Nora. As a widow, Christina is perceived as being meek and helpless, so employers will often offer her jobs out of pity. Society doesn't necessarily throw away widowed women, but it does look down on them, so if Christina were to accept society's rules, she'd be unhappy. Marriage is a way to encage and prohibit women from exercising any kind of power, so either route Christina chooses, she'll ultimately have to sacrifice an enjoyable part of her life.

Moreover, Christina's tendency to drive her actions based on moral values instead of instinctual wants or societal norms is a conflict throughout Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, because Christina must influence those around her so they can understand her decisions. Christina is willing to be submissive, because she finds "no happiness in working for one's self," (Ibsen 90) and being alone isn't ideal for a nurturing woman. Being mostly driven by her superego, Christina bases her decisions on her interpretation of morality and does not consider societal norms, so she finds no problem in a woman having control over herself, because she can see past gender and look at all humans as equals. This sort of ideology conflicts with society's perception of gender, because women are meant to be subservient to a man until every male in their life is dead.

Christina pleads with Krogstad, claiming that she needs "someone to tend... and [his] children need a mother," (Ibsen 91) in an attempt to convince Krogstad that a morally stable family consists of two heads in the household. Although Christina wants to be Krogstad's bride, she is not willing to give up her professional life, so she offers herself as the primary breadwinner in the

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household. This kind of assertion is not allowed by society, because women are not meant to outrank their spouse and are certainly not allowed to be the sole provider for a family. Krogstad, who is mainly driven by his ego, must consider the social consequences of Christina's actions, but also understands the argument and ultimately decides that any life with Christina is better for himself and his children. Christina passed herself off as being self-reliant and proud of her role as widow in society, but she was enticed by the idea of having a family to come home to at the end of the work day. Being forced into a loveless marriage then the unstableness of being a widow had Christina in society's watchful eye, but she struggled to throw away the idea of finally being happy with a family and power at the same time.

Thankfully, Christina never gave up on her hopes, and she eventually found the loving and prideful life she dreamed of with Krogstad and his children. Had Christina given in to society's expected role for her, she'd be stuck in a never ending cycle of coming back from a rigorous work day to an empty home. Indeed, Christina Linden found happiness in going against the societal expectations of both a woman and a widow, which she wouldn't have done if she wasn't constantly yearning for a family to love and care.