

"a doll's house", "the storm" and "the victims" research paper



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The authors of the three stories are influenced by strong feministic perceptions to challenge existing social systems that make it difficult for women to advance. The three stories highlight various issues faced by women in different eras before the clamor for women's rights gained momentum. As a result, women have more inferior social roles compared to men and this makes it difficult for them to attain personal satisfaction. The three authors make readers understand their intent through metaphors and other symbolic representations.

Henrik Ibsen's "A Doll's House" takes a look at the position of a woman in the domestic setting and how the protagonist makes a lot of sacrifices without her efforts being appreciated. Kate Chopin's "The Storm" explores how a woman endures an unexciting marriage as she reflects on her past maiden days. Sharon Olds' "The Victims" discusses divorce and domestic abuse and how these two issues affect the way children in a home grow up.

The three authors reveal their inner feelings towards various issues that affect people in societies they are living in. In the "Doll's House", Ibsen shows the constant sacrifices Nora has to make to make all family members happy.

She reduces the amount of money she spends on herself to make her husband and children live in comfort. She says, "For myself? Oh, I am sure I don't want anything" (Ibsen 1447) In "The Storm", Calixta yearns for a more passionate relationship and she feels that her husband is not a perfect match for her. She misses the moments she spent with her lover, Alce who is now married to Clarissa.

She is miserable because she is in love with someone else yet social norms forbid a woman from loving another man who is not her husband. In "The Victims", Olds begins to focus on her dysfunctional American society where divorce is becoming rampant. Through the innocent eyes of a child, she probes the impacts of domestic abuse and parental neglect on family disintegration.

The three authors discuss in detail how women look for independence to make their lives more fulfilling. They show their dissatisfaction with unreasonable societal expectations they are required to observe in their homes and communities. In "The Victims" the narrator describes difficulties they endured with their mother when her father was still working and living with them.

The narration reveals that the father has failed in his responsibilities and cannot safeguard his family's wellbeing. She says "She took it and took it in silence, all those years and then kicked you out, suddenly, and her kids loved it" (Olds 1057). The story discusses the dilemma of a child who has to learn various things by herself after her parents part ways acrimoniously.

The metaphorical use of the title in "The Storm" shows the inner spirit of energy and vitality in Calixta which is largely repressed by societal expectations. Calixta yearns for sexual satisfaction though societal expectations make it difficult for her to attain her aspirations. Her pent up emotions are described as a brewing storm likely to erupt any time, "Calixta put her hands to her eyes, and with a cry, staggered backward" (Chopin).

In the story, the storm is used to represent the outpour of her emotional feelings which have been largely repressed by her role as a wife and mother. The presence of Alce in her home liberates her from the yoke of marital gloom she has experienced for a long time. She shows that she is ready to be in control of her own desires regardless of what other people think.

Nora is zealous and ready to protect her marriage at any cost in "A Doll's House." She takes part in various activities to protect her husband from any harm that is likely to befall him. She cuts on domestic spending to ensure she has enough money for other important necessities in her home. As a result, the author uses her to show the input of a financially conscious woman in making her home stable.

This is a demonstration of her independence because she does everything she can to make her family live comfortably (Ibsen 1451). She later uses her father's signature fraudulently to acquire a loan to help her husband travel to Italy. Her husband's frugal ways do not seem to diminish her desire to take all the necessary steps to make her family live in comfort.

The three authors explain their own attitudes about female empowerment in an era when patriarchal ideals were taken more seriously. The three stories bring to light feminine ideas that enable protagonists to take charge of their own lives by overcoming various challenges they are facing. Even though Nora is loyal to her husband in the "Doll's House", she is brave enough to look forward to a future on her own due to her husband's unwillingness to become more considerate.

In the "Victims" the narrator supports her mother's decision to look for a better life away from their father who is consumed by arrogance. He has failed to perform his marital as well as parental duties. Olds' poem is an inspiration to women who are willing to work hard without the support of their spouses to help their children live more comfortably. The "Storm" is a compelling story about an adventurous woman who is willing to take any risk to fulfill her physical and emotional desires.

The issue of how societal roles given to women determine their destiny is highlighted in all the three stories. In a "Doll's House", women are expected to turn a blind eye to their husbands' transgressions even when they affect their personal wellbeing.

Nora's husband is a difficult person to deal with who is not willing to spend money to make his family live in comfort. He treats his wife like a little pet as shown through, "It's a sweet little spendthrift, but she uses up a deal of money. One would hardly believe how expensive such little persons are!" (Ibsen 1450).

In the 19th century, women were expected to do all they can to make their husbands and their families live comfortably. As a result, any sign of feminine independence or rebellion was discouraged. Nora even forges her father's signature to get a loan from Krogstad, an act that was rarely done by women during that time. She shows her ability to think on her own by taking serious risks that will in future erode her husband's trust in her.

The "Victims" poem takes place at a time when women are being forced to take on extra roles that have traditionally been performed by men. The <https://assignbuster.com/a-dolls-house-the-storm-and-the-victims-research-paper/>

narrator describes how her father is unable to perform roles expected of most men and how this affects her family's happiness. Her father's mistreatment and abuse make her bitter and she feels that her mother did the right thing to kick him out.

Feelings of despair the child has are resolved when her mother decides to make sacrifices to make them have a better and more comfortable childhood. The poem exemplifies an era when men had begun to suffer from an identity crisis. The father in the poem is portrayed as emotionally distant from his children (Olds 1057). The recklessness portrayed by the father is symptomatic of the whole society where communal values that unite families are being disregarded.

"The Storm" is a testimony of a woman's struggle to overcome prejudices that block her from achieving personal pleasure and satisfaction in her life. The story shows that marital union serves as a bondage that makes it difficult for Calixta to express herself emotionally without being judged by other people.

She feels that her husband does not meet all her needs and the oppressive marital life makes it difficult for her to be in control of her own desires. Since Calixta and her husband, Bobinot are Acadians, they are treated as people of a low social class. This is shown through " She sat at a side window sewing furiously on a sewing machine" (Chopin). As a result, marriage and intimacy is influenced by social status and this explains the reason Calixta and Bobinot stay married even though they are emotionally incompatible.

The three authors manage to portray social roles observed by in contemporary societies where the three stories were written in. Ibsen manages to show how Nora shoulders the burden of her husband's shortcomings despite doing all she can to please him. In the society, Torvald is typecast as the ideal man other women would want to marry and as a result, a fact Nora is aware of. She challenges the societal view that women need to be docile and should not go against their husbands' wishes.

Calixta lives with Bobinot because she was not able to get married to Alce, her soul mate who belongs to a higher social class. Therefore, she has to live with the fact that Bobinot will never excite her in the same way Alce does. Societal female roles treat women's emotional needs as secondary to those of men and they are not given the attention they deserve. Olds uses the narrator to show her anger towards irresponsible men who mistreat their families.

Risks associated with various actions women take to become more independent are highlighted by the authors. All protagonists are struggling to have their own identities by getting more satisfaction in their personal lives. In the "Doll's House" Nora takes several risks that put her on a collision course with her husband. When she tries to plead to her husband to resolve the differences he has with Krogstad, she is driven by a guilty conscience that makes her look for ways to cover up her mistakes.

She says to Mrs Linde, " Papa didn't give us a shilling. It was I who procured the money" (Ibsen 1462). Later, this becomes the source of all her marital problems with her husband. Torvald uses a self righteous tone as he

reprimands Nora for her fraudulent actions and he considers her a bad influence to their children.

In "The Victims" the narrator realizes towards the end that maybe they were too hard on their father. Even though the author advocates for feminine independence, she also realizes that children need to be brought up by both parents to make them more responsible when they become adults. The narrator says, "Father. Now I pass the bums in doorways, the white slugs of their bodies gleaming through slits in their suits of compressed silt" (Olds 1057).

The narrator realizes that even though her father was abusive and irresponsible, she still needs his guidance and love. The author seems to suggest that even though men are irresponsible, they need to be guided to make them perform their societal roles more effectively. Olds uses a sinking ship metaphorically to show the emotional and psychological burden the narrator endures because she did not find a chance to know her father better.

Calixta knows that she cannot let the passion she has for Alce get the better of her because they come from different social backgrounds. She understands that the norms practiced where she lives do not allow a married woman to be unfaithful to her husband.

Calixta just like other women living in her society knows that any act of infidelity against her husband is likely to strain her marriage and this will make her an object of shame in the society. However, as the storm rages on she yields to her uncontrollable desires as shown through, "And when he
<https://assignbuster.com/a-dolls-house-the-storm-and-the-victims-research-paper/>

possessed her, they seemed to swoon together at the very borderland of life's mystery" (Chopin).

She takes a big risk in her own husband's home to experience a moment of passion in Alce's arms without considering what will happen if Bobint finds them together. The encounter she has with Alce in her home brings joy into her life as shown by, " the sun was turning the glistening green world into a palace of gems" (Chopin).

The three protagonists have varying experiences through which they are able to demonstrate their feminine instincts and independence. Nora after getting chastised by her husband decides to separate from her husband to face life on her own. She says, " I have heard that when a wife deserts her husband's house, as I am doing now, he is legally freed from all obligations towards her" (Ibsen 1497).

She has realized that she sacrificed her own happiness for too long to please the self righteous Torvald. The narrator in Olds' poem is still bitter with the manner in which her father treated them and in hindsight, she feels that there are so many questions she still wants to ask her father. She says, " I wonder who took it and took it from them in silence until they had given it all away" (Olds1057).

Calixta's passionate exchange with Alce helps her overcome her restlessness, which makes her feel relaxed. However, deep inside, she is aware that she rebelled against the norms observed in her society and if her secret leaks out, she will be in a lot of trouble.

Chopin, Kate. "The Storm." American Literature. American Literature Anthology, 6 June 2013. Web.

Ibsen, Henrik. "A Doll's House." The Victims." Norton Introduction to Literature. Eds. Alison Booth and Kelly J. Mays. New York: WW Norton & Company Incorporated, 2010. Print

Olds, Sharon. "The Victims." Norton Introduction to Literature. Eds. Alison Booth and Kelly J. Mays. New York: WW Norton & Company Incorporated, 2010. Print.