Your Name

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Title: A Doll’s House

The role and social position of women have been the topics of debates, and literature throughout history. A Doll’s House is no exception to the rule. The play highlights the social position of women in the Victorian Era and in the 19th century. There are many themes and the author may have several intentions while writing the play, but one that seems obvious is showcasing the social status and position of Victorian women. Women were considered as doll-like creatures and by no means, they were given the authority to make decisions. Men used to be the heads of house, whether husband or father. A Doll’s house illustrates the social status of women in the Victorian era, reflected by the protagonist Nora through family sacrifices, belittling of women by society and her life choices.

The play is centered on a couple, Nora and Torvald. Nora is the ideal woman of Victorian society. The Victorian era is known for the male dominance in the society and women were restricted to managing house chores and taking care of children, according to the traditional family patterns. As the play begins, it is very easy to observe the social status of women and Ibsen’s beliefs about it. Nora’s behavior is exactly what is expected of her as a woman and an ideal wife. She gave into everything as her husband desires and took in all his orders and commands. Her husband accuses her of doing excessive shopping, taking so many sweets and gaining weight. He also insults her on many occasions considering that women are the silly creatures unfamiliar of how to handle the matters. Though Nora takes the decision to save Torvalds’s life by borrowing money. She says, “In any case, Torvald, a man, proud to be a man- how do you imagine he’d feel if he knew he owed anything to me? It would break us apart. Our lovely home, our happiness-al gone” (Ibsen, 36).

Nora, the protagonist of play who is the wife of Torvald Helmer sees like an innocent playful childlike character, not knowing enough of her surroundings and the world outside her home. However, her decision to take a loan and save her husband’s position reveals that she is not as innocent and silly as her husband considers. In comparison with the other female characters of the play, she is financially advantaged but lives a complicated life due to societal expectations. As society indicates that Torvald must be the marriage governing partner. She hides the loan she took to save his life because she knows, being a man he would never accept the idea of a wife, a woman helping her financially. In addition, she needs to work in secret to play back the loan since it is not legal for a woman to attain any loan without the approval of her husband. Nora’s husband’s behavior and attitude of society leave her disposed to Krogstad’s extortion.

Another aspect of the social position of women as highlighted in the play is the economic dependence of women on men. Women were not allowed to take a loan or have control on money without the permission of her husband or father who was considered as the owners of women. In addition, they were not educated enough to participate in financial matters. Nora feels vulnerable to both these inequalities, by taking the loan from a bank without the permission and authority of her husband. Also, out of her innocence, she thought she would get away of the matter by the falsification of signature. This economic dependence of women on men adds to the insubordination of women.

The play, in fact, paints the picture of the sacrificial role of women in Victorian society and the way their choices are influenced by others desires and orders. The other female characters of the play also epitomize Nora’s claim that men refuse to sacrifice their integrity. Hundreds of thousands of women sacrifice their lives and integrity to support their families and children. Mrs. Linde abandons Krogstad to back her mother and two younger brothers and marries a rich man in comparison to Krogstad. The Nanny also abandons her children and becomes a caretaker and feels lucky to have a job otherwise would have led astray.

Nora’s role and position in her house were like a Christmas tree that serves the purpose of adding allure and visual appeal to the home merely. As she tells the nurse that children should not be allowed to see the Christmas tree unless decorated and tells her husband that none of the guests must see her before she gets dressed. In addition, she knew that her husband’s love will also fade with her looks, “a time will come when Torvald is not as devoted to me, not quite so happy when I dance for him, and dress for him, and play with him” (Ibsen, 36).

At the end of the play, she finds clarity in their relationship and with that, she gets the power to free herself from her situation. She tells Torvald that she has been doing a lot for him and did everything as per his desires. She realized that his husband and father have done her a great wrong, and because of them she has made nothing in her life. At this point in time, she finally realizes that her husband and father and she lived all her life satisfying them, and somehow lost her own identity. Though she realizes and takes a decision on her own, but not every Victorian woman was able to do that. After portraying the social position of women, Ibsen also encourages women to change their predetermined position the society.

# Works Cited

Ibsen, Henrik. *A Doll’s House*. A&C Black, 2008.