

Re-interpreting *A Doll's House* through Post-modernist Feminist Projections

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For long centuries, women in the traditional social order and system have always been considered subservient to men. In patriarchal Bourgeois society, the matriarchal community has been "humiliated", "afflicted", "silenced" and "tortured" socially, politically, culturally and economically. With the post-modernizing age, women began to see the universe with their own eyes and not through the male gaze. In this paper, I want to focus on the powerful woman character, Nora Helmer as impacted on Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Through this adventurous and revolutionary woman, my purpose is to reach the feministic message out to the post-modern generations. It aims to depict and examine critically feministic issues through portraying Nora Helmer who is the representative of not only the 19th century Scandinavian Bourgeois order and custom but also the universal feminism. She has raised a fiery voice or initiated a dreadful revolution against the traditional customs and gender discrimination with a view to equalizing human rights. In the play, the dramatist has prioritized the female domination and power more than the male pelf and rule. The aim of the playwright is to emphasize upon the female power with a view to repressing the male domination and tradition. Actually, the purpose of my paper is to focus on the feminist message as articulated in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Considering the *femme fatale* character of Ibsen, the most renowned and powerful playwright, also known as the father figure of the post-modern era writing in Norwegian language, especially the powerful and domineering female protagonist cum heroine, Nora Helmer. This paper proposes to draw attention to the dramatic art as a paradigm of the post-modern feminism as well.

Henrik Ibsen (20 March 1828-23 May 1906) was the major 19th century Norwegian playwright of the realistic plays. Ibsen is often referred to as the "father of modern drama" and is one of the founders of modernism in the theatre. Ibsen is held to be the greatest of Norwegian author, celebrated as a national symbol by Norwegians, and one of the most important playwrights of all time, and many regard him as a feminist author.

Henrik Ibsen's plays can be viewed as a gallery of portrait of various kinds of male and female through being trapped in societal realism and caught in the triviality of human life while struggling to seek truth and freedom out. Among Ibsen's dramatic roles, the unusual Scandinavian women of strong characters are marked with great devotion towards their ideals and enormous resolution in pursuit of individual freedom and

existence. They are actually bold, rebellious and revolutionary women warriors with independent and intelligent psychology and aspiration for the spiritual emancipation. According to scholars, Ibsen's women characters may be classified into at least two categories. Since these women are classified into two categories, what are the characteristics of them? These two categories of unconventional and conventional women confirm to a "triangle theory." One of the established critical approaches to Ibsen's women roles is: a man is caught between a pair of opposing women, one is strong, independent and deviant, and the other is weak, tame and obedient namely "the demon" and "the darling" opposites. The unconventional heroines are based on powerful personalities consisting of strong-willed, independent, intelligent and full of vitality. With their strong personalities, women are usually doomed to be trapped in a male-centred society where they are deprived of the basic right as human beings in its full sense. Ibsen has, insightfully, described a range of rebellious characters and unveiled the spiritual pilgrimage; they have gone through in their persistent pursuit of emancipation, freedom and in their bitter struggle to regain their identity as human beings. It was Ibsen who gave women a vigorous and fair voice through creating the powerful women characters including Nora Helmer in *A Doll's House* (1879), Mrs. Alving in *Ghosts* (1881), Rebecca West in *Rosmersholm* (1886), and Hedda Gabler in *Hedda Gabler* (1890) with a view to breaking conventional custom and conservatism, and to focus on how women were viewed to male gaze of his contemporary age.

Here, in this research paper, I will focus on Nora Helmer as the paradigm of the 20th century and 21st century Feminism along with different judgments of several critics and scholars based on the circumstances of the women's community.

According to many critics, Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is a manifesto of universal feminism. Through this play, Ibsen has earned popularity and fame as one of the leading playwrights in the modern era. To many, this play demands the appreciation. Again, on the contrary, it is mostly criticized play of Ibsen. Nora is one of the top of the topic and criticized female characters among Ibsen's women. It may be expressed that Ibsen's treatment of women has been impacted much through this character. With the passage of time, the play, *A Doll's House* has been interpreting, translating, and staging in many languages of the world. Truly speaking, Ibsen has proposed the issue of woman's empowerment through Nora. For this reason, we may fancy Nora as one of the powerful female characters. In this paper, my intention is to highlight Nora as the embodiment of power structure along with the post-feminism.

A month after the official birthday celebration being over, Ibsen and his wife Thoresen Ibsen were invited to a banquet in his honor given by the

leading Norwegian feminist society. Ibsen's speech at the Festival of the Norwegian Women's Right League, Christiana (present Oslo), May 26, 1898 given below:

I am not a member of the Women's Rights League. Whatever I have written has been without any conscious thought of making propaganda. I have been more the poet and less the social philosopher than people generally seem inclined to believe. I thank you for the toast, but must disclaim the honor of having consciously worked for the Women's Rights Movement. I am not even quite clear as to just what this Women's Rights Movement really is. To me, it has seemed a problem of mankind in general. And, if you read my books carefully, you will understand this. True enough, it is desirable to solve the woman problem, along with all the others; but that has not been the whole purpose. My task has been the description of humanity. To be sure when ever such a description is felt to be reasonably true, the reader will read his own feelings and sentiments into the work of the poet. These are, then, attributed to the poet, but incorrectly so, every reader remolds the work beautifully and neatly, each according to his own personality. Not only are those who write, but also those who read poets. They are collaborators. They are often more poetical than the poet himself. With these reservations, let me thank you for the toast you have given me. I do indeed recognize that women have an important task to perform in the particular directions; this club is working along. I will express my thanks by proposing a toast to the League for Women's Rights, wishing it progress and success. The task always before my mind has been to advance our country and to give our people a higher standard. To achieve this, two factors are important. It is for the mothers, by strenuous and sustained labor, to awaken a conscious feeling of culture and discipline. This feeling must be awakened before it will be possible to lift the people to a higher plane. It is the women who shall solve the human problem. As mothers, they shall solve it. And, only is that capacity can they solve it? Here lies a great task for women. My thanks! And, success to the League for Women's Rights! (Johnston 2004: P.437)

This statement is, perhaps, best understood against the background of Ibsen's frequently voiced disinclination to belong to parties or societies of any kind. In general, it seems unproductive to regard these three causes: the socialist cause, the women's cause, and the human cause-as mutually exclusive for Ibsen. His concern with the state of the human soul cuts across class and gender lines.

His speech to the Norwegian Women's Rights League notwithstanding, the younger Ibsen makes a number of claims which indeed qualifies him for the position of 'social philosopher'. While making notes for *A Doll's House* in 1878, he wrote: "A woman cannot be herself in contemporary society; it is an exclusively male society with laws drafted by men, and with counsels and judges who judge feminine conduct from the male point of view"(V, 436, quoted in Finney 1994: P. 90). Bearing out this sentiment, in a speech delivered the following year to the Scandinavian Society in Rome. Ibsen urged that the post of librarian be filled by a woman and that the female members of the society be granted the right to vote in the meetings. Even more politically charged was his support in 1884 of a petition in favor of separate property rights for the married women; in explaining why women and not men should be consulted about the married women's property bill, Ibsen has commented that "to consult men in such a matter is like asking wolves if they desire better protection of the sheep"(Finney 1994: P.90).

In the seminal book, *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (1978), Judith Fetterley remarks, "though one of the most persistent of literary stereotypes is the castrating bitch, the cultural reality is not the emasculation of men by women, but the emasculations of women by men"and that "... women are taught to think as men, and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values, one of whose central principles is misogyny."This paper attempts to conceptualize of Ms. Fetterley's 'Emasculation Theory'to reveal that Ibsen's Nora wins a place for herself by refusing to remain a "doll"any longer in the Helmer's household. An act confirms Nora's birth as a dissident. By slamming the door, Nora offers the much-awaited resistance as a necessary counter to the pressure of emasculations.

Judith Fetterley's notion of emasculation provides a momentum to the ever-expanding horizon of feminist thinking. By emasculations, Ms. Fetterley refers to the process by which the female readers are being taught to identify with a male perspective. The introductory chapter of her celebrated book entitled *The Resisting Reader: A Feminist Approach to American Fiction* (1978), republished in *Literary Theory: An Anthology* (1998) as "On the Politics of Literature"focuses a discussion on American literature to make the unsettling revelation:

American literature is male. To read the canon of what is, currently, considered classic American literature is perforce to identify as male... Our literature neither leaves women alone nor allows them to participate. It insists on its universality at the same time that it defines that universality in specifically male terms (Ahsanuzzaman 2002:P.67).

To further her thesis of male-domination in literature, Fetterley considers a number of classic American fictions including Hawthorne's *The Birthmark* which, to her, is a story emphasizing "men's power over women." She is critical of Hawthorne, because he "obscures the issue of sexual politics behind a haze of "universals" and clothes the murder of wife by husband in language of the idealism" (Ahsanuzzaman 2002:P.68).

Elaine Showalter (1971) registers the impact of emasculation on women: "By the end of the freshman year a woman student would have learned something about intellectual neutrality; she would be learning, in fact, how to think like a man." The effect is one of devastation as underscored by Showalter (1971):

Women are estranged from their own experience and unable to perceive its shape and authenticity ... they are expected to identify as readers with a masculine experience and perspective, which is presented as the human one ... (Ahsanuzzaman 2002:P.68).

Almost a hundred years ago, Ibsen was very much aware of the damaging effect of emasculation in society. It is fascinating to note how Ibsen, the creative artist, "lived through" the experiences of his characters, "spirituality" to have a firm understanding of emasculations which, in turn, has contributed to the creation of a dissenting voice like Nora.

The notes to *Ghosts* have following entry: "These modern women, ill-used as daughters, as sisters, as wives, not educated according to their gifts, prevented from following their calling, deprived of their inheritance, embittered in temper –it is these who furnish the mothers of the new generation. What will be the result?" (Cole, 1961: P. 155, quoted in Ahsanuzzaman 2002: P. 69) And, in the notes to *Hedda Gabler*, Ibsen writes much in the same manner: "If an interesting female character appears in a new story or in a play, she believes that it is she who is being portrayed. The masculine environment helps to confirm her in this belief" (Cole 1961: P. 156, quoted in Ahsanuzzaman 2002: P. 69). Thus, evidently an acute awareness of the predicament of women in an absolutely male dominated society acts as the driving force behind Ibsen's creation of monumental female characters like Rebecca West, Mrs. Alving, Nora Helmer, and Hedda Gabler. Nevertheless, it is to be mentioned that emasculation has taken a heavy toll on all of them. Saether (1997) observes: "On the one hand, the women have been subject to exclusive male protection; on the other, they have been raised according to male expectations, been placed in a male role pattern." And, as described in Ystad (1997: P. 52), Sandra Saari (1985) dwells upon the fate of the emasculated female characters who "go under precisely because they are forced into such socially created roles; and ... that if these women should attempt to become actively involved in society, they would discover that

society in an external sense has no place for them in living out their lives."Therefore, emasculation as a system confirms to ideology and ideological state apparatuses of which patriarchy is the most prominent. However, Osterud (1997) observes, "Nora's revolt"not as a "decisive break"with "the whole patriarchal discourse", because Nora "moves out into the society"to enter "into that phallogocentrism to become a part of it."In fact, in his opinion, Nora has not been able to rise beyond emasculation. But, as professor Mori (1997) has demonstrated Nora by rejecting "the money –dominant male society"has emerged as a true pioneer of "Post-modern Feminism."By leaving her husband, children, home behind, Nora offers the resistance as a necessary counter to emasculation.

But significantly, Nora is seen under the spell of emasculations right from the start of the play. She is Helmer's "little sky- lark,""little squirrel", "little spendthrift,""little singing bird,""pretty little pet,"and what not. Barring her act of forger and that happened in the past before the start of the play, Nora has been always a very, obedient housewife, and led her life the way her husband wanted it:

Helmer: Nora, Nora! Just like a woman! Seriously though, Nora, you know what

I think about these things. No debt! Never borrow!

There's always something inhibited, something unpleasant about a home built on credit and borrowed money....

Nora (Walks over to the stove): Very well, just as you say Torvald. (Act I, P.25)

From her conversation with Torvald Helmer, the audience and readers gather more information about Nora how she saves from her scanty allowance, burying her desire "to be well dressed,"and how weary and tired she becomes as she shuts herself "up every night and sits and writes through the small hours of the morning"to earn some extra ducks to pay off the bank loan. Nevertheless, the sense of pride Nora has about herself is perceived essentially in male terms: "But, it is tremendous fun all the same, sitting there working and earning money like that. It is almost like being a man"(Act I, P.48).

This is how Nora being emasculated has, unconsciously, become an advocate of patriarchal structures –structures which, according to Ibsen, judge the women by "man's law, as though she were not a woman but a man"(Cole 1961, quoted in Ahsanuzzaman 2002: P. 70). In fact, emasculation, contrary to its literal meaning, stands for silencing the real woman for good i. e. the voice of the real woman is never allowed to be pronounced. And, why did Nora forge her fathers'signature enables her to get the requited money to save Helmer? The answer is not at all difficult to

ascertain. It provides her with an opportunity of acting male role as the savior. Nora confides in Linde, "Papa gave me penny. I was the one who raised the money"(Act I, P.44). It gives her a profound sense of satisfaction that she acts like a man to her husband's life. In fact, Nora does everything out of her love for Helmer. However, the idea of love is conceived in male terms. Osterud (1997) discusses the significance of "the masquerade of metaphor" in the play that highlights the cause of Nora's emasculation. Osterud sees the masquerade as a collective metaphor for the married life of husband and wife:

As far as Nora is concerned, it has been a succession of stage performance. She has played the lark, the gambler, the prankster, the squirrel, the songbird and the elf girl for Helmer...Similarly, Helmer's contribution to the marriage has consisted in directing Nora. He has specified her role and has handled the direction of her performance. His concern has been adapting the real Nora to the expectations of the role in his mind (P.76).

The result is obvious. Nora is emasculated. She is, in fact, no one. However, Ibsen cannot allow Nora to remain emasculated. Slowly but gradually, Nora wakes up from slumber to find out that her glasshouse has been broken into pieces and that she realizes that there is no point living in an ivory tower any more. The revelation comes as shock when, contrary to her expectations, "miracle" does not happen. Helmer just believes like an ordinary husband preoccupies with the values and ethics of patriarchy. Set against these social standards, Nora is the vile woman who has ruined her husband's life. Helmer says: "I'm done for, a miserable failure, and "It's all the fault of a feather-brained woman!"(Act III, P.155) In pain, Nora learns that the real Nora does not have a place in the Helmer world. But, minutes later when the threat of disgrace and public humiliation is gone; Helmer is back to his previous self: "You can't yourself believe I've forgiven you: But I have, Nora, I swear it. I forgive you everything. I know you did what you did because you loved me"(Act III, P.158). Helmer would once again invite his "little song-bird", now frightened, to his world of fatherly care and protection: "Here I shall hold you like a hunted dove; I have rescued unscathed from the cruel talons of the hawk, and that will come gradually, Nora, believe me"(Act III, P.159-160). What Helmer fails to grasp from his stand point of patriarchy is that it is he no one else, not even Krogstad, who has been the "hawk" devouring upon her silently but surely all these years of their conjugality. It is quite expected that Helmer should possess a sense of superiority considering himself to be the rescuer of Nora which lets the whole situation all the more ironic. This is the moment of revelation for Nora, and it is time she gets out of the shell of the patriarchal system and culture:

Nora: Sit down, it'll take some time, I have a lot to say to you.

Helmer (sits down at the table opposite her): You frighten me, Nora, I do not understand you (Act III, P.161).

The real Nora is a living terror to Helmer. She, then, underscores the process through which she is emasculated:

What I mean is: I passed out of Papa's hands into yours. You arranged everything to your tastes ... I lived by doing tricks for you, Torvald. But, that's the way you wanted it. You and Papa did me a great wrong. It's your fault that I've made anything of my life (Act III, P.163).

Nora shall not remain the doll any more. She must kill the so-called image of hers in the mirror because it is "a male construct, the 'pure gold baby' of male brains, a glittering and wholly artificial child" (Gilbert and Guber 1980). And, Nora must come out of Helmer's home. She must leave behind everything including her children because she "can never be anything to them." Helmer appeals to her that she stays the night with him under the same roof. Nora, blatantly, replies: "I can't spend the night in a strange man's room" (Act III, P.173). Nora leaves the house and frees Helmer from all responsibility for her: "I can at any rate free you from all responsibility. You must not feel in any way bound, any more than I shall" (Act III, P.174). Ibsen does not want to project the separation in an abstract fashion. He wants his heroine to be truly liberated from the clutches of the patriarchy. She must defy the society and with all its institutions. Her slamming of the door is directed at Helmer, towards the society, against the very system of patriarchy from which Nora has, finally, freed herself with a view to acquiring her actual empowerment. From Fetterley's comment upon Nora as the emergence of a dissenting voice, it is apparently manifested that Fetterley, actually, has wanted to bestow upon Nora as the embodiment of woman's empowerment of the 20th century and 21st century feminism through getting rid of the clutches of the male dominated Bourgeois society.

In *The Modern Ibsen*, G. Wilson Knight observes in Ibsen's plays, the theme of respecting Women's Rights features predominantly since women are the pillars of society. Ibsen, whom Hans Heiberg describes as "the champion of women's causes," is certainly influenced by his strong views on Women's Rights at the time of writing *A Doll's House*. Rolf Fjelde records that, when in February 1879 Ibsen's proposal to the Scandinavian club in Rome that its female members be granted equal voting rights was narrowly defeated, he fiercely criticized the male majority. He challenged with them to assert that women were not in any way inferior to men in culture, intelligence, knowledge or artistic talent. Weigand, who describes Ibsen as "an ardent champion of Woman's Rights" and an "apostle of freedom and

individualism,” states that Ibsen’s indignation against organized society’s attempt “to keep woman in a state of virtual slavery” influenced his conception of the characters of *A Doll’s House* and the play’s plot (*The Modern Ibsen*, PP. 74-75). Apart from Ibsen’s soft spot for the women’s cause, another factor which influences him when he writes *A Doll’s House* is, according to George Bernard Shaw, “the rising energy of the revolt of women against idealism.” The influence of gender issues on *A Doll’s House* is seen in Ibsen’s own “Notes for the Modern Tragedy.” Ibsen writes: “There are two kinds of spiritual law, two kinds of conscience, one in man and another, altogether different in woman. They do not understand each other; but in practical life a woman is judged by man’s law, as though she were not a woman but a man. The wife in the play ends by having no idea of what is right or wrong; natural feeling on the one hand and belief in authority on the other have altogether bewildered her” (Chilala 2002:P.109). In other words, as Bradbrook observes, *A Doll’s House* deals with the conflict of two worlds, male against female: “... the woman’s world of personal relationship and human values against the man’s world of legal rights and duties ...” (Chilala 2002:P.109). Ibsen’s preoccupation with women’s cause leads to his being wrongly thought to be a member of the Women’s Movement. Ibsen, however, is never keen to join a movement of any kind, and is made it a point to clarify his position. It is difficult to know where to draw the line between what Ibsen has written purely as a poet, and what he has written to comment on gender issues in the Norway of his day.

In *The Modern Ibsen*, Weigand writes of the turn-around in the story when Nora rebels: “We can follow Nora’s indictment of Torvald and conventional man-governed society with the most alert sympathy; we can be thrilled by her spirited gesture of emancipation; we can applaud her bravery; We can enjoy watching Torvald’s bluffed expression turn gradually into a hangdog look of contrition he winces under her trouncing and gets worsted in every phase of the argument.” Nora feels that, in the male-dominated society which has treated her as a doll, her rebellion is justified, as is her forgery and little lies. The real crime, the real corruption, from her viewpoint, as Fjelde observes, “The male conspiracy to debase the female.” Nora’s rebellion is a way of demonstrating to Helmer that, contrary to what he thinks, and what she has made him believe in their eight years marriage, she can, in fact, do without him. She can actually help him, as she does with his treatment, instead of being a mere recipient of his provisions. Helmer wrongly believes that Nora is totally dependent upon him spiritually, intellectually, and materially. Cleverly, she plays along with his misconception, if only to divert his attention from the real source of money uses for his treatment. Weigand puts it in this way: “She very cleverly inculcates the idea in Torvald that she is dependent upon his

counsel even in such matters as choosing a fancy dress”(*The Modern Ibsen*, P. 65, quoted in Chilala 2002:P.111).

Generally, in marriages, the husband is stereotyped as the dominant force, the provider, the protector, and controller. The wife is, on the other hand, the weaker being, the dependent being and the humble follower. In strictly traditional settings, wives are not allowed to participate in major decision making. They only have to accept and go along with the decisions made on their behalf. Similarly, many women, especially those with no reliable source of income of their own, enter into the marriage bond believing that their husband is the one to provide security for their lives.

Actually, Nora tries heart and soul to achieve her power and concealed identity. Ibsen’s Nora is an embodiment of the Scandinavian and Universal Feminism. The main motto of Nora is to get rid of the patriarchal norms and dominations. That is why, she hits upon a plan that by hook or by crook she must be able to gain her true freedom with a view to getting self-employed like a human being. In fact, Nora wants to see the unseen, and to know the unknown through her own inner eyes, but not through the male gaze. In this way, we may realize Nora’s rebellion against the patriarchal order to gain freedom as articulated in Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*.

A Doll’s House is no more about Women’s Rights than Shakespeare’s *Richard II* is about “the divine right of kings, or ghosts about syphilis ... It is theme which is the need of every individual to find out the kind of person he or she is to strive to become that person”(Bloom 28), Ibsen portrays this behavior in *A Doll’s House* through one of the main characters, Nora Helmer by setting the scene in Norway in 1872. In the late 1800s, Women did not play an important role in society at all. Their job was mainly to cook, clean, sew, take care of the family, and keep the house in order. They were treated as a material possession rather than a human being that could think and act for them and looked upon as a decorative member of the household. Women were robbed of their true identity, and at the end of the play, Nora leaves everything behind to go out into the world to seek her identity. This behavior can be traced back to the beginning of time when women were to stay home and gather nuts and berries, while men would go out and do the hunting and fishing. The male always dominated over the female and it was not viewed as “unfair”. Male children would go to the school to get an education in history, mathematics, science, English writing, while the female would go to school to learn how to cook, sew, clean, and do household chores.

The male could advance his education by attending a college or university, whereas no college would accept a woman student. “The history of mankind is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations on the part of men towards woman, having in direct object the establishment of an

absolute tyranny over her.”It was believed that women were the inferior gender and had to have special attention given to them. This idea dates back to the medieval period in history, and where the whole idea of chivalry came about and men having to provide special care. One can see that the idea of male superiority can be referenced back from the very early civilization to *A Doll’s House* was written. Women were very limited in their rights in 1872. Such rights included: women had to submit to laws when they had no voice in their formation, married women had no property rights, husbands had legal power over and responsibility for their wives to the extent that they could imprison or beat them with impunity, divorce, and child custody laws favored men, giving no rights to women and when women did work they were paid only a fraction of what men earned, women were not allowed to enter professions such as medicine or law, and women were robbed of their self-confidence and self-respect, and were made totally dependent on men. Ibsen makes references to this by using Mrs, Linden, widow and a friend to Nora. Christina’s husband died and left her penniless and being that her father passed away. She is able to apply for a position at the bank. This is the only exception society made women in holding a job outside the household. It is apparent that women have come a long way since 1872, gaining the right to vote in 1920 under the 19th amendment in the constitution, gaining a right to an equal education, owning property, and having a job. These were all results of the Women’s Rights Movement among others. Throughout the play, Nora plays the role of a typical woman in the 1800s, staying by her husband’s side, taking care of the children, and doing all the household chores. When she realizes that she is unfit to do anything in life and announces her remedy –“I have to try to educate myself”(Act III, P.165). She walks out of the door and expresses a deal of feminism universally agreed –upon base for women’s emancipation, telling Torvald that she no longer knows how to be his wife and no longer knows who she is (Eisenberg 32). It was uncommon for women to walk out without their husband’s permission as they do today because they were taught since they were little to always please their husband and do everything in their power to satisfy and make him happy. This does not include walking out on this and leaving him with the children. Nora does not know any better because she comes from being treated like a material object in her own house by her father, being treated like one by Torvald. Therefore, her whole life is based around other people making decisions for her and conformed to their way of thinking until the end of the play, when she walks out and makes her own decision. Nora shows her childish ways throughout the play by eating macaroons, by listening to Torvald’s negligence, and by romping with the children. It is apparent that she is confused about marriage and her role as a woman in the 1800s. She makes the right decision leave although society views this as an immortal thing to do.

This was considered to be sinful: "God would punish you if you committed such an act of wrongdoing". Women made an incredible appearance and played an immense role in today's society. Women are, basically, treated with equality today with men. Ibsen's play *A Doll's House* is a very example of how life was like for women in the past, and they have, obviously, made progress since then. What women have done for today's society will continue fighting this is never ending battle for equality until the very end as Nora has done. Many critics have pointed out that such an immature, ignorant creature could never have attained the understanding and revolutionary qualities that Nora has at the same time she leaves her home. Ibsen, however, has carefully constructed Nora so that her independent and farsightedness might have always shown through her adolescent capriciousness. Although her father and husband have, seriously, injured her practical education, Nora has retained enough native wisdom to confront an emergency. That she bungles the situation by a careless forgery provides credence to her independence of thought as well as to her lack of sophistication. This mixture of wisdom and childishness is Nora's strongest quality. It enables her to oppose the knowledge of books and the doctrines of her worldly husband and to test by experience the social hypothesis which declares duty to the family is the most sacred. Only an innocent creature can be brave the perils of the outside world to her identity. Shocked audiences who objected to Nora's solution of her marital status, and critics who considered her character unable to withstand the severe trial neglected to take account of the artistic truthfulness of the slammed door. One of the most common themes enduring in folklore and in less spontaneous works of art is the notion of the innocent journeying through the world to discover basic human values. The significance of these mythic themes is that only an innocent, fearless creature has the power of vision to see through false values of sophisticated society. In Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, the story of Siegfried, Fielding's *Tom Jones*, and even in Thomas Mann's *The Magic Mountain*, we find the recurrent idea of youthful inquiry prevailing over worldly experience. Ibsen's Nora, though deriving from a much closer and realistic setting, is raised to a mythic level as she accepts her inevitable quest, the sacred pursuit of her identity, freedom, and power.

Finally, we may express that Ibsen has created Nora as a manifesto of the post-modernist feminism, and an advent of self-sacrificing soul. To achieve her power and freedom, Nora becomes homeless voluntarily leaving her husband, children, and family. Through Nora's character, Ibsen has not only created the female situation of the 19th Scandinavian middle class society but also upheld the illogical aspect of his mood before all. Ibsen's female creation also symbolizes a big difference between patriarchy and matriarchy of the 19th century Scandinavian Bourgeois. In fact, the

modern dramatist has created such type of character, Nora with a view to awakening a neglected female community around the world. In *A Doll's House*, We find Nora as an embodiment of identity, freedom, power and emergence of a dissenting voice, rebellious protest against the male dominated rule, and tradition. In this way, Nora is seemed to be our attitude as the "Never-fading" symbol of the 20th century and 21st century Feminism.

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