


Symbolic Realism in Ibsen's A Doll's House: An Overview			Literature Keywords: A Doll's House, Ibsen, Nora, realism, symbolism, and Torvald Helmer.
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Abstract			
<p>In this article, our purpose is to focus on Ibsen's realistic attitudes towards the 19th century Scandinavian bourgeois society. It also attempts to make use of symbolism, metamorphosis, art of characterization, plot-construction, and unity of opposites of Ibsen's moral, social, and economic problems. Here, we have purposefully exposed Nora not only as a symbol of Ibsen's contemporary feminism but as a universal feminism. Ibsen was concerned with the crisis of liberalism, the conflicts of the bourgeois families, woman's emancipation, and the psychological dilemma of the individual and the power of economy over human relations in capitalist society. It also aims at unveiling women's everyday problems and social reality through applying symbolic realism in the play, <i>A Doll's House</i>. Actually, our aim is to look at Ibsen's subtle viewpoints towards socio-realistic criticism with a view to exposing the then Scandinavian women's problems and social reality of the bourgeois family, the brief discussion of realism, symbolic realism as in shown in this play through unveiling Ibsen's art of characterizations.</p>			

1. Introduction

Henrik Johan Ibsen (1828-1906) was an important Norwegian dramatist, social critic and agitator for women's rights. He is known to be the father of realism and has been a pioneer in the transformation and revolution of the modern drama. Ibsen was a leader in the campaign for a modern radical and realistic literature in the cultural life of Scandinavia, and challenged the values of bourgeois class society and formulated the basic rights and liberties of the individual. Charles Lyons describes him as "the realist, the iconoclast, the successful or failed idealist, the poet, the psychologist, the romantic" (Lyons 4). He was one of the four great ones with Alexander Kiell (1849-1906), Jonas Lie (1833-1908) and Bjornstjerne Bjornson of the 19th century Norwegian literature. In his realistic plays, Ibsen is merciless in his quest to expose all social facade, hypocrisy and pretense. He is an inflexible and destructive dramatist of all false idols and corruption and dynamiter of all social and economic deceit and dishonesty. He endeavors to deracinate every stone of the social structure. He looks for truthfulness and freedom. There is hardly a literary work that means to women's liberation in practically all cultures all over the world as impacted in *A Doll's House*. In this article, we have tried to show Ibsen's psychology of socio-realistic criticism with a view to exposing the then Scandinavian women's problems of the bourgeois family, the short definition of realism, symbolic realism as in shown in this play through unveiling Nora's and Torvald Helmer's characters.

2. Ibsen as a Socio-realistic Critic

In Scandinavia, realism appeared as a social and political need. The Scandinavian realists wanted to debate social issues not only for aesthetic reasons, but to bring about social change. The women's question is a good example. Women had no right to vote, could not hold political office, and were not entitled to control their own property. They had no access to higher education and were expected to spend their lives as wives and mothers. If they did not marry, they could usually look forward to a difficult old age in the home of a brother or a sister. Most of the reforms that improved the lives and economic situation of women were first advocated by writers of novels, short stories, and plays. And, Ibsen was one of them.

Realism coexisted with late romantic idealism in Scandinavian literature throughout the 1840s, 1850s, and 1860s, but an event in 1871 marks its complete triumph on the Scandinavian literature. *A Doll's House* (1879) is about a couple with three children who live a pleasant middle class life until individual, economic and social realism force a change in the wife's attitude which leads her to leave her family seeking her own freedom. The play is often considered a masterpiece of Realist Theater. The account of the collapse of a middle-class marriage is regarded as innovative and daring due to its emphasis on psychological conflicts rather than external action.

Ibsen entered a period of transition for which he continued to deal with modern, realistic themes and premises, but made increasing use of symbolism, metaphor, metamorphosis, characterization and unity of opposites of his moral, social and political ideals and criticism. The themes of Ibsen's plays are dealt with incarnations of his own moral and socio-political points of view. They seem to be some central questions of the modern, bourgeois and capitalist age. Ibsen wrote in the second half of the 19th century. At that time the Scandinavian societies went through an enormous transformation by the break-through of modernization, capitalism and bourgeois society. Ibsen focused in many of his plays on problems of mature and capitalist society.

Ibsen was born into and grew up in a society that was underdeveloped compared to the rest of Western Europe. When he went into his voluntary exile on the European continent in 1864, he left a backward province only beginning to get a modern industry. After twenty seven years, he returned to a society that had undergone rapid development, capitalist industries had emerged at a fast pace, political conflicts were sharp and a strong national literary and artistic tradition had emerged. Ibsen had a European distance to the problems created by rapid change in a society in the periphery of capitalism. In Scandinavia, the phases of capitalist development were pressed together in time, so the changes appeared as harsh and contradictory. Ibsen made these conflicts visible in their psychological effects. His dramas thus gave a core understanding of the social process that dealt with the basis of late capitalist society. In most of Ibsen's production, there are some central fields of problems that are examined. These problems become perceptible in various forms, but are often expressions of a basic understanding of capitalist society. Ibsen has connected to the liberal utopia, the ideals of 1789, that to his generation become alive again in 1848. He exposes that bourgeois society is unable to achieve the proclaimed liberty, equality and fraternity. The central conflict is the vacillation of liberalism between adjustment to practical politics and the maintenance of the utopia. Central to liberal thought is the concept of the free and autonomous individual. Ibsen determines the problem of individualism over and over as a social reformer of his contemporary age.

The bourgeois family as an institution is full of conflicts and also creates conflicts. The family is, in Ibsen's plays, something people enter into after having abandoned their happiness, or they enter blinded with the illusion that the family is a place of happiness. The bourgeois individuals sell their love in favour of a marriage without love, but with economical advantages. Husband, wife and children were victims. The family is also a place where power is executed, where all relations appear as fight for power and domination. At the outset of his plays, the family appears as isolated from society. It seems that Ibsen stuck to the myth about the family as a place for emotional intimacy and commitment. However, conflicts are drawn into the scene. They appear through relationships between family members. They enter as demands from society outside the family. The conflicts could not be locked out, and the myth about isolated happiness in the family breaks down under the pressure from a society where there is no happiness. The family is interconnected with these institutions in society. Women suffer more than men under these circumstances, but they carry a vision about freedom and another kind of life. According to Ibsen's moral ideals, women should be strong and independent enough to stand up to an oppressive and patriarchal society; Nora, in *A Doll's House*, abandons not only her husband, but her entire family, in an effort to discover herself and become a liberated woman. It is a strong blow directed to a male-dominated society, by showing not only that a woman could break free from the social handcuffs, but that

men are actually quite powerless in the face of a strong woman; Nora's husband, Torvald Helmer is left weeping as she leaves him at the close of the play. As far as females are concerned, Ibsen lays a great stress upon the emancipation of the individual, especially of female. He relentlessly studies a variety of human relationships: sister and brother, father and son, husband and wife etc. He endeavors to tell the audience that such relationships are usually based on sentimentalism, on misogyny, on patriarchy, on hypocrisy and lies. He thinks that woman cannot be herself in the society of the present day, which is an exclusively masculine society, with laws framed by men and with judicial system that judges feminine conduct from a masculine point of view. Ibsen criticizes the old corrupted morality of these people who still tied to the conventional thoughts from which they cannot release themselves. As a social reformer and self-conscious critic of his contemporary age, he has minutely observed unnoticed situations with his pragmatic viewpoints.

Ibsen writes of his times, his contemporaries, and the social and economic concerns and problems of his day. He is the first dramatist in modern drama who criticizes severely the social and political circumstances vale of misery and tears of his society. He puts under debate the relationship between sexes, social and political moralities, commercial considerations versus general social considerations, environmental consideration, the individual emancipation etc. For him liberty means the spiritual regeneration of humankind. To Ibsen, the word 'Liberty' does not know any limitation or restriction, and whenever man says 'Now I have it,' shows that he has lost it.

3. What is Realism?

Realism is the artistic portrayal of life or reality as it is. It is thus not concerned with idealization, with rendering things as beautiful when they are not presenting them in any guise as they are not. Realistic drama is an attempt to recreate life on stage. It is expressed in theatre through the use of symbolism, character development, stage setting and plot-construction. Realism continues to provide a medium through which playwrights can express their views about social values, attitudes and morals. The artist's function is to report and describe what he sees as accurately and honestly as possible. Thus drama becomes an experience closely impinging on the conscience of the audience. Realism is conceived as a laboratory in which the ills of society, familial problems, and the nature of relationships can be presented for the judgment of impartial observers. Realism is the rebellion against romantic imagination. People are more skeptical against society and want to show its faults - they want to show that the world is not perfect.

4. Ibsen's Attitudes towards Social Realism

Ibsen initiates the realistic period with plays focus on contemporary, day-to-day themes that skillfully reveal both sides of a conflict through brilliantly capturing psychological detail. At the beginning of his literary career, Ibsen writes few romantic history verse plays but they find no critical or financial success. He then adopts the craftsmanship of the well- made play and he assimilates the play-formula for his own dramatic purposes. He finds in that dramatic technique the vehicle for his social and political drama. In all schools of realism objectivity of some kind is a main tenet. The realist, in his most elementary guise, wishes to present reality by allowing characters and events to appear in his work with as little sign of his personal intervention as possible. While he does not deny the imaginative faculty, he often minimizes its importance. As a realist, Ibsen offers his work as a means of communication among men, dealing with large subjects in a comprehensible way, form subordinated to content. Frequently he upholds a theory of natural determination to explain the objective conditions that control both his characters and himself as writer. Ibsen has added to his social and political realistic plays some symbolic touches to create a dual meaning and an exhaustive and deep rationalization to the dramatic complications and dialogues in his plays. He surpasses realism and enters into the realm of "symbolic realism."

Ibsen uses symbols when he is unable to seize the meaning of that particular reality, or when he cannot accept the synthesis to which the development of that reality leads. He then employs symbols when he cannot solve difficult, sometimes insoluble problem. If thought can easily penetrate reality, it does not need to wander forth into the realm of symbolism. This is conditional since drama is a mirror of reality - then clearly using symbolism with a realistic context needs a kind of social consciousness of a given society. In other words, Ibsen never intends to break down his device of the realistic form of writing; at the same time, he does not want to remain within that form, either. The outcome is his within-revolt to his own writing form. He attains this half escape as he carefully instills symbolic meanings in the very soil of realism. In so doing he seems to surpass the limit of photographic presentations of human reality. Ibsen in his career tries to leap into the unknown by means of the symbolic device, refusing to be satisfied with his previous contrivance.

5. Symbolic Realism in *A Doll's House*

In the play, *A Doll's House*, the title itself symbolizes the dependent and dehumanized role of the wife within traditional middle-class marriages. Of the conventional symbolism Ibsen's work has no trace. His work gives, first and foremost, a sense of intense reality of actuality even. The mechanism of Ibsen's symbols is constructed on the idea that symbols stand, first, for a character of the play; and second for the meaning of the play as a whole. An object or event is used as a central theme or motive of the play. Towards this symbol the ostensible action of the play moves, and from it, it recedes. This object or event as the tarantella in *A Doll's House* stands for the character of the play, Nora, whose soul is the stage of the real action of the play; and thus the symbol stands, at last, for the play itself.

Ibsen's use of symbol is altogether distinctive. The symbols are presented in a very everyday ordinary, realistic setting. Everything, that Ibsen's male protagonists possess a twofold meaning, that which is realistic, symbolic, signifying events and judgments of the spiritual world. Ibsen is interested not so much by the psychology of people, as rather by the problem of spirit. The realism of everyday life is transformed into the 'symbolic' of another level of being, of spiritual happenings. Ibsen is the first modern playwright of realism, which results from his courageous revolt to the tradition of romanticism. His symbolic plays must be a crystal of his realistic writing. In his plays, he revolts to social realism. He revolts to himself, not as completely deriving from the realistic mode but rather implicitly planting symbolic meanings in the very realistic soil. In so doing he seems to surpass the limit of photographic presentations of human reality. Although Ibsen was not a modernist, his complex representation of women led him away from previous staging techniques and forms of characterization in viewing social and political issues. He was a trigger for theatrical modernism through the realism of his female characters.

Ibsen was one of the main advocates for social revolution. He was notorious for weaving controversial topics into his plays, as well as for including female major characters. He knew very well that society's oppression over women was a prime example of the hamper it placed over every person's potential. Writing about women allowed him to make a universal call, not only to women, but to every sensible being. In *A Doll's House*, Ibsen portrayed the altruistic nature instilled into women by society, the consequential stunt of their development, and the need for them to find their own voice in a world dominated by men. In this play, Ibsen does a wonderful job of presenting Nora's character as a person who goes through an awakening about her life. In the beginning, she concerns herself only with being a perfect wife and mother according to the social norms of the time. Later, she realizes that she cannot continue just being her husband's shadow. Eventually, she decides that she has duties to herself that are above of those of being a wife. She confronts the fact that she is not a complete being the way that her husband, society and the church want for her to be. Nora is the beloved wife of Torvald Helmer. They have a very nice, comfortable house, three kids and lovely friends. They have been married for eight years. Torvald was just promoted for a higher position in the bank. This is what we see in the

beginning of the play. Nora discovers that her life is just a bundle of lies and a stretched line of subjection to the masculine power of her husband, family and society which turned her into a mere 'doll'. Finally, she decides to leave everything behind to find her own identity outside, facing life and having her own experience.

Torvald Helmer the handsome, young, successful husband of Nora and whose reputation controls his life and work is one of the main characters in the play. He has always been a good picture of how people are expected to be in the middle class society, and the moral rules he follows are nothing other than those that society enforces on middle class people. For Torvald Helmer as with most of the people of his class, to be worthy is to be in the 'right'. His job as a bank manager is very dear to him and so far we can say that he has earned his way up. Torvald is an intelligent man, but his intelligence is limited and bound to the social rules around him.

In other words, Torvald's self-image is portrayed by how people think and see him, the way he sees himself is the way others see him and judge him. His opinion of others is wholly determined by how they affect his social position. Torvald's moral codes are derived from society's expectations, meaning that everything he does has to be well calculated before he dares to take one step ahead. In short, he is an ideal representative of the mentality of the 19th century patriarchy. People to Torvald are classified differently according to their importance to him and their social context. A perfect example is that how he treats Mrs. Linde and Krogstad. In the case of the first, Torvald treats Mrs. Linde carelessly as she has no significance to him what so ever. When Nora asks him to find a job for Mrs. Linde, he replies grimly, "Ah! Well, it's very likely I may be able to find something for you" (Act I, 18). But in Krogstad's situation, he treats him very badly and he wants him gone out of the bank as Krogstad's conversations with him are too embarrassing for his new position as a bank manager. Nora is a fragile character and she relies on Torvald for her identity. This reliance keeps her from having her own individuality. Yet when it is discovered that Nora only plays the part of the good typical housewife who stays at home to please her husband, it is then understandable that she is living not for herself but to please others. From early childhood, Nora has always held the opinions of either her father or Torvald, hoping to please them. She considers herself fortunate. Indeed, she worships her husband, believes in him unreservedly, and she is sure that if ever her safety should be mentioned, Torvald, her idol, her god, would perform the miracle. This mentality makes her childish, showing that she has no ambitions of her own. Because she had been pampered all of her life, first by her father and now by Torvald, she tells her husband, / mean that

I was simply transferred from papa's hands into yours. You arranged everything according to your own taste, and so I got the same tastes as you - or else I pretended to, I am really not quite sure which - I think sometimes the one and sometimes the other. When I look back on it, it seems to me as I had been living here like a poor woman - just from hand to mouth. I have existed merely to perform tricks for you, Torvald (Act III, 63).

It is obvious that the influence Nora's father had on her was impacting because of his imposing male authority over an innocent female whom he "toys" with as a doll that developed into the image that her father expected of her following the social prejudiced values. Torvald wrongly thinks that Nora is stupid, and must be controlled. He controls her housekeeping budget and how much she can spend on certain purchases. He does not know, and he does not want to know that Nora, herself, can earn some money. Instead, he expects her always be dependent on his salary. Nevertheless, the matter is different; Nora did many things throughout her married life that were regarded as sins by the masculine society she was living in. The first sin was that when Nora worked secretly to help her husband financially. At that time, woman was not allowed to work without her husband's consent. She reveals her secret to her friend Christine:

Well, then I have found other ways of earning money. Last winter, I was lucky enough to get a lot of copying to do; so I locked myself up and sat writing every evening until quite late at night. Many a time I was desperately tired;

but all the same it was a tremendous pleasure to sit there working and earning money. It was like being a man (Act I, 14).

The second sin was that she had borrowed two hundred and fifty pounds from Nils Krogstad by forging her father's signature. She spent the money to save her husband's life. She thought that her love for father and husband would justify her crime, forgery. In fact, she could not take out the loan herself because she was a woman and only men could take out loans; woman could only take out a loan if she had the consent of a husband or a father. Nora was afraid that if Torvald knew that she had taken initiative to borrow money to help him, it would be "painful and humiliating" for him.

Mrs. Linde: And since then have you never told your secret to your husband?

Nora: Good Heavens, no! How could you think so? A man who has such strong opinions about these things! And besides, how painful and humiliating it would be for Torvald with his manly independence, to know that he owed me anything! It would upset our mutual relations altogether; our beautiful happy home would no longer be what it is now (Act I, 13).

Nora hides the fact that she has done something illegal from Torvald. She is given the opportunity to tell him and get his support or advice on the situation, and she lies to him to hide the truth. These lies are followed by a third one in which she becomes the victim of two masculine powers. When Torvald becomes manager of the bank in which Krogstad is employed, and threatens the man with dismissal, Krogstad naturally fights back. He asks Nora to help him, "Mrs. Helmer, you will be as good as to use your influence on my behalf" (Act I, 21). When she refuses to submit to his demand, he threatens her, "if I lose my position a second time, you shall lose yours with me" (Act I, 25). Later, she tells her husband that the reason she does not want Torvald to fire Krogstad is that "this fellow writes in the most scurrilous newspapers... He can do [Torvald] an unspeakable amount of harm. I am frightened to death of him" (Act II, 34). Torvald does not know that if he fires Krogstad, the consequences will affect his whole life. The fourth lie is that Nora hides her own potency of revolution from her husband until the end of the play. She always plays the role that she has accustomed to, being the doll. She does not show any sign of dissatisfaction or uprising to Torvald. When she finds the appropriate moment to rebel, she leaves everything behind and slams the door. Ibsen sets up Act I by first introducing us to the central issue: Nora and her relation to the outdoor world. She serves as a symbol for women of the time; women who were thought to be content with the comfort of modern society with no thought or in which they lived. She appears childlike and coquettish. She orders Helene in an excitable tone to hide the Christmas tree as the children "mustn't see it till tonight" (Act I, 3). Nora's secretiveness in attempting to hide the tree, extends further, and is a constant theme. As the play reveals, Nora does delight in material wealth, having been labeled a 'spendthrift' from an early age. She projects the attitude that money is the key to happiness.

One of Torvald's fatal masculine faults, he fails in scrutinizing Nora's depth and her psychology adequately. He treats her as a pet using animal images and phrases in addressing her. The masculine pride and selfishness inside the Victorian male prevents him from understanding what the wife actually needs and expects from her husband rather than shelter, food, children and sex. Torvald, referring to Nora, asks, "Is that my little lark twittering out there?" (Act I,3). Nora replies to him "Yes, it is" (Act I, 4), running up to Torvald like a puppy. It is evident that Nora is a cheerful woman, always wants to please her husband in order to get money from him. In addition, Torvald thinks that she is his spoiled bird. After Calling Nora 'a lark', Torvald, in contrast, calls her "Is that my squirrel rustling?" (Act I, 4). He calls her 'a squirrel' because he knows she hides something from him. She hides away the bag of macaroons from him. She willingly accepts Torvald comparing her with a little animal and even seems to identify with this image, "You haven't any idea how many expenses we skylarks and squirrels have, Torvald" (Act I, 6). Nora appears completely submitted to her husband, ready to accept whatever he would say or do. Torvald scolded her as if she were a child, "Hasn't Mrs. Sweet Tooth was breaking

rules today in town..." (Act I, 6). Then, Nora would respond as a young child who would face punishment, "I shouldn't think of going against your wishes" (Act I, 6). Their relationship consists of nothing truly real. Everything is fun and games and for show. This type of communications cannot be healthy in any relationship, and greatly held up the relationship between the two. Finally, when Nora realizes that they need to seriously converse the timing is too late, "We have been married now eight years. Does it not occur to you that this is the first time that we two, you and I, husband and wife, have had a serious conversation?" (Act III, 62-63). This lack of seriousness and practicality in their relationship will be one of the central factors of their separation. The external factors in the play have a significant dramatic role in constructing the characters' catastrophe. One of the main turning points in Nora's life is Christine's visit. Christine gives the reader an initial impression of Nora's opposite. Christine Linde is a pale, worn woman who is completely independent. Her conversation with Nora reveals that Christine was left poor and alone after her husband, for whom she did not care, passed away. Linde accepted to stay with her husband because she reasoned her present situation would leave her no other option. She felt she had to take care of her two brothers and bedridden mother. If she had not married this wealthy man, she would have had her freedom, but it would have been a difficult struggle. Instead, she surrendered her freedom for an easier life. Eight years later, the death of her husband gave her enough of a jolt to set her back in control of her own life. Linde represents the initial impulse that pushed Nora ahead in her metamorphosis. She is the first character who recognizes that Nora's marriage is built on lies. Furthermore, we may see in Nora's future destiny of a rebellious woman against all social conventions towards finding her female identity. Still there is a hope for Linde to renew her old relationship with Krogstad after her tragic failure in life as Nora may return to Torvald to begin a new life in the future.

The another crucial turning point in Nora's life is that when Torvald decides to dismiss Krogstad from the bank, Krogstad told Nora that she either had to get him his job back or that he was going to tell Torvald about the loan and forgery. Nora is terrified and she begs him not to do it for the sake of her children:

Nora: show it, then; think of my little children.
Krogstad: Have you and your husband thought of mine? (Act II, 42)

The spark of her metamorphosis starts when Krogstad tells her that he is going to destroy her husband by this letter and he and nobody else will be the new manager. Nora replies,

Nora: That's a thing you will never see!
Krogstad: Do you mean that you will -?
Nora: Have courage enough for it now.
Krogstad: Oh, you can 't frighten me. A fine, spoilt lady like you -
Nora: You will see, you will see (Act II, 43).

Nora's confrontation to Krogstad refers to the fact that she begins to discover her own identity as a female, no more weakness or subjection or servitude of any kind to anyone. She has the same quantity of courage Krogstad has now in defending his job and family. "I have courage enough for it now" refers in fact to her potential as a new woman who should restore her self-defense against those intruders, tyrants and oppressors. Krogstad leaves the house and Nora's eyes follow him. She goes to the hall door, opens it slightly and sees Krogstad drop the letter into the box. Nora utters a stifled cry, and runs across the room to the table by the sofa. She whispers with herself, "In the letter-box. (Steals across the hall door.) There it lies - Torvald, Torvald, there is no hope for us now!" (Act II, 44) Before Torvald confronts her with the letter, Nora is on her way to commit suicide, determined that Torvald should not have to sacrifice his life for her. In this way, they have an equal relationship. However, she is tremendously disappointed to discover that he clearly does not intend to sacrifice himself for her. When Torvald reads the letter he knows the secret of the loan, he gets angry accusing Nora of ruining his

life, telling her that she will no longer be able to see her children or maintain their marriage except in public appearances. "You will still remain in my house that is a matter of course. But I shall not allow you to bring up the children; I dare not trust them to you" (Act III, 60). Nora even asks him whether he would give his life for her and her fears are confirmed when he answers that he would never sacrifice his honor for a loved one.

Nora recognizes how egocentric her husband is after he reads Krogstad's letter. He rewards Nora for her sacrifice to save his health by accusing her of being a very bad wife:

What a horrible awakening! All these eight years - she who was my joy and pride - a hypocrite, a liar - worse, worse - a criminal! The unutterable ugliness of it all! - For shame! For shame! ...all your father's want of principle has come out in you. No religion, no morality, no sense of duty (Act III, 59-60).

The accumulation of Nora's recognition increases the tension of action. She asks her angry husband, "Let me go. You shall not suffer for my sake. You shall not take it upon yourself." (Act III, 59) Torvald sees no use of this since his reputation will be destroyed. He tells his wife, "Do you understand what you have done? Answer me! Do you understand what you have done?" (Act III, 59). She replies, "Yes, now I am beginning to understand thoroughly" (Act III, 59). When Krogstad's second letter comes in which he promises not to show them up or to accuse them lawfully, Torvald gets happy crying,

*Nora! No, I must read it once again -, yes, it is true! I am saved! Nora, I am saved!
Nora: And I?
Helmer: You too, of course... (Act III, 61).*

Torvald realizes that neither his pride nor his social reputation will be touched. Nora feels that she has spent her life with an alien. Her recognition of the self illuminates her way to discover her authentic female identity which in turn will shape and decide her real relationship with her husband and with the outer world. She is now able to become an independent human being and not just an elegant doll. She gets a lesson that Linde has learned fully. Therefore, Nora must educate and support herself in facing the outer world as well. Even the term 'freedom' in *A Doll's House* takes various connotations and denotations. For instance, Nora's understanding of the meaning of freedom evolves throughout the play. In the first act, she believes that she will be totally "free" as soon as she has repaid her debt, because she will have the opportunity to devote herself fully to her domestic responsibilities. She says:

My goodness, it's delightful to think of, Christine! Free from care! To be able to be free from care, quite free from care; to be able to play and romp with the children; to be able to keep the house beautifully and have everything just as Torvald likes it! (Act I, 15)

After Krogstad blackmails her, she reconsiders her conception of freedom and questions whether she is happy in Torvald's house, subjected to his orders:

We have been married now eight years. Does it not occur to you that this is the first time we two, you and I, husband and wife, have had a serious conversation? (Act III, 63)

By the end of the play, Nora seeks a new kind of freedom. She wishes to be relieved of her familial obligations in order to follow her own ambitions, beliefs, and identity. Nora finally succeeds in diagnosing her relationship with her husband and consequently, resolves to leave him. She believes that true marriage is impossible between them because neither of them loves the other. Nora says, "You have never loved me. You have only thought it pleasant to be in love with me" (Act III, 63). Nora realizes that, before she can be a wife, she must first discover herself through venturing out into the world.

Helmer: Before all else, you are a wife and a mother.

Nora: Don't believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as are - or, at all events, that I must try and become one. I know quite well, Torvald, that most people would think you right, and that views of that kind are to be found in books; but I can no longer content myself with what most people say, or with what is found in books. I must think over things for myself and get to understand them (Act III, 65).

When Nora closed behind her the door of her doll's house, she made the correct choice and opened wide the gate of life for woman. She would start her life as Linde had done and Torvald would continue his life without change - for he valued honor above the love of Nora. Only perfect freedom of having one's identity and communion can make a true bond between man and woman. Finally, Ibsen uses symbols to enhance the main social ideas he criticizes in *A Doll's House*. For instance, he uses the Tarantella dance as a symbol to present Nora's attempts to express or to announce herself and her will of emancipation. This dance is often said to be a dance simulating the furious whirling movement of those who have been bitten by the deadly tarantula spider: it is at one and the same time a frenzied activity and a symptom of death. It is characterized by fast movements, foot tapping, and on the women's part, exaggerated ruffling of petticoats. It involves a lot of very fast spinning and jumping until one cannot dance anymore and is so exhausted that they fall to the ground. The tarantella serves as her last chance to be Torvald's doll, to dance and amuse him and to distract him from reading the letter. But at the same time the dance summarizes Nora's tragic life with its delight, joy and happiness on the surface, but it hides underneath a dreadful secret. It is the culmination of Nora's doll life. Her heart, bosom and veins are full of poison. Therefore, she has to dance and dance violently to jump over the barrier of time and space, the wall of fear and deception towards discovering her own salvation, liberation and identity.

Nora: Now play for me! I am going to dance!

Helmer: (as he plays) Slower, slower!

Nora: Can't do it any other way.

Helmer: Not so violently, Nora!

Nora: This is the way (Act II, 47).

The dance is over. Torvald still feels that Nora must respond to his own desires. He is sexually excited by her dance and he asks her to go to bed with him. Torvald is more interested in Nora physically than emotionally. When Nora responds to his demand by saying, "Go away, Torvald! Leave me alone. I don't want all this" (Act III, 55), Torvald asks, "Aren't I your husband?" (Act III, 56). By saying this, he implies that one of Nora's duties, as his wife, is to physically please him at his command. In this way, Ibsen has focused on Nora as a symbolic character. She is all for women and is the representative of universal feminism. Through portraying her character, Ibsen has exposed social reality and women's identity, power and freedom.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, Nora is a victim of the masculine society. Ever since Eve tempted Adam, women have been detested in many ways and for many overt reasons around the world and in various cultures. They are hated and feared for their bodies, which tempt men to give into their base instincts; they are feared and considered unclean because of their monthly cycle of bleeding; they are hated for their unique feminine abilities, which are invariably considered malicious or worse, evil by the misogynist individual or culture. Nora is no exception. She has been treated by her husband according to male criterion. She rebels against this masculine tyranny but she has to sacrifice something very precious so as to get her freedom and identity, to leave her children, her husband and the whole family. She tries to prove that female can be equal to male in everything and autonomous in her own identities.

Thus, this submission deals with Ibsen's attitude towards socio-realistic level of his contemporary age, and symbolic reality as shown in the play, *A Doll's House* through portraying male and female character, especially Nora's character.

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