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Female Characters as Parameters for Social Reform in Ibsen's Works

Case Study of the Two Plays 'A Doll House & Ghosts'

الشخصيات النسائية كمقياس للإصلاح الإجتماعي في أعمال إيبسن
دراسة حالة المسرحيتين "بيت الدمية و الأشباح"

A Thesis Submitted to the Graduate College in Fulfilment
of the Requirements of the Degree of PhD in English Literature

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March 2019

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To Thee

For letting me be

For setting me free

Forever indebted I'll be

Dedication

Credit is to be paid to my beloved, precious father for this achievement. His persistence and encouragement had the higher hand in the instigation and completion of this project.

I am beholden to my dear Mother, SariaMalaz, Marwa and Widda; without their unflagging support and commitment it would have been an impossible deed. Their understanding and generosity is greatly appreciated during the last year of this project. Also my sweet boys; Mohamed and Mustafa for their comfort talks and continuous progress check-up.

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to study the role of Henrik Ibsen as a social reformer through synthesizing the interdisciplinary factors between his drama and society. Henrik Ibsen is a nineteenth century Norwegian playwright. The study will focus on two of his plays *Doll House and Ghosts*. The methodology of the research is divided into two parts; the first part used the survey method to present Ibsen philosophy as a social reformer; in the second part of the research, critical analysis method was used to analyze the two plays under review to see Ibsen philosophy in work. Reviewing the playwright's life and illustrating the happenings and hardship which constituted the wealth of his philosophy; applying this on the two plays the researcher reached some findings. The most important finding was that through the analysis of his works the researcher found that Ibsen's philosophy of social reform was valid and accurate; its result is seen in the advancement of his countrymen. Also, Women were the best canvas for his drawing because the patriarchal society has [purposefully] left them blank. So in his scripture Ibsen stated that '*women are the pillars of the society*' and if society were to advance it should provide for healthier and far wealthier mothers. Finally, an individual is a partial unit of society so it must have its finger-prints in each and every one.

مستخلص البحث

الهدف من هذا البحث هو دراسة دور هنريك إبسن كمصلح اجتماعي من خلال البحث في العوامل المشتركة بين الأعمال التي قدمها والمجتمع. هنريك إبسن هو كاتب مسرحي نرويجي في القرن التاسع عشر. محور هذه الدراسة اثنتين من مسرحياته *Doll House* و *Ghosts*. تنقسم منهجية البحث إلى قسمين ؛ استخدم الجزء الأول طريقة المسح لتقديم فلسفة إبسن كمصلح اجتماعي ؛ في الجزء الثاني من البحث ، تم استخدام طريقة التحليل النقدي لتحليل المسرحيتين لتوضيح الرؤية الفلسفية للكاتب بيانا بالعمل. الفصل الثالث تمت فيه عرض حياة الكاتب المسرحي وتوضيح الأحداث والمصاعب التي شكلت فكره وفلسفته ومن ثم الإجابة على الأسئلة؛ في الفصلين الرابع والخامس تم تطبيق فلسفة إبسن على المسرحيتين للوصول للنتائج. تلخصت أهم النتائج في أنه من خلال التحليل وجد الباحث أن فلسفة إبسن للإصلاح الاجتماعي كانت صحيحة ودقيقة. وهذا نراه جليا في تقدم بلاد هوشعبه. أيضا ، وجدنا أن استخدامه للنساء في عرض أعماله كان متعمدانتيجة لتعصب المجتمع الذكوري وإيماننا منه بعظم دور النساء ذكر إبسن في كتابه أن "النساء هن أعمدة المجتمع" وإذا كان على المجتمع أن يتقدم فإنه يجب أن يعطيا لأمهات مكانتهن. وأوضح جليا مدى تأثير المجتمع على الفرد، وأنه رغم محاولات التفرد من الصعب محو بصماته.

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CHAPTER I

Introduction

1.1 Prologue

Drama is one of the important genres of literature. It is very unique in the fact that it can be both performed and read. Powerful drama leaves its everlasting effect on its audience and readers. The most unforgettable writings derive their chief interests from their novelty or timelessness. Thus, this thesis is on two plays of such merit; [*A DollHouse*(D H) and *Ghosts* (G)]. The plays were written in Danish and published in the Nineteenth century, yet the issues it tackled are still valid today.

The Playwright Henrik Ibsen was a major 19th century Norwegian playwright. Ibsen is often referred to as the ‘father of modern drama’ for his innovative theatrical conventions and his daring writings on taboo subjects. Though the onslaught on him was vehement, Ibsen’s rebellious spirit anchored his courageous stance against the bourgeois society. Today he is considered the greatest Norwegian author and is celebrated as a national hero by the Norwegians.

It’s given that each community tends to follow certain social norms i.e. a set of values and traditions. Therefore, the organization of society exerts a powerful impact on a person’s social interactions. This leads to the conclusion; each individual is the product of their environment, and life in its on-going cycle carries several characteristics from one society to another with some minor discrepancies. As a result, most societies look upon certain attributes as an abomination and stand firmly against it,

while applauding others, and looking sideways at some. Ibsen's feud with the bourgeois society and its unjust and false idealism underlined most of his writings. His plays were meant to unmask the so called 'ideals' for the blindfolded followers [women and working-class men].

The personal values, culture, and beliefs of authors tend to be so integrated into how they see the world. Hence, a large amount of what they write is pure depiction of their surroundings; for they believe that what matters deeply to them will matter to their audience. Ibsen's belief that 'a poet should be the eye of the community' as professed in his 'Task of the Poet':

And what does it mean, then, to be a poet? ... All that I have written these last ten years, I have lived through spiritually. But no poet lives through anything in isolation. What he lives through all of his countrymen live through with him. If that were not so, what would bridge the gap between the producing and the receiving minds? (1874, pp. 49-52)

Ibsen believed that his major responsibility is: *"to make clear to himself, and thereby to others, the temporal and eternal questions which are astir in the age and in the community to which he belongs."* (p.50) The study at hand, takes a deeper look at the dramatic and artistic work of this social dramatist whose work had the effect of a shocking awakening on the society.

1.2 Background of the Study

Ibsen's authorship comprises the sum of 300 poem and 26 plays [some of which are not translated into English]. Ibsen biographers indicated that in his writing Ibsen was trying to work out a certain

sequence of philosophical ideas hence his advice that his work should be reviewed collectively. The ink of his pen had the color of revolution [be that against family, society, the state, or the church]. The spirit of freedom sprinting between the lines encouraging his truthful muse; if the main theme was not around truth, individualism and duty then they are imbedded somehow; seeing that those were the ‘ghosts’ of his composition.

Ibsen’s entire thought process revolves around the relation between the individual and society and this becomes the core center of his writings. In his view society tends to conform its members, and that does not give much room for individuality. Thus, his revolutionary polemics were directed against the governmental state organized at present. Ibsen, champion of individualism that he was, had an inner conflict towards all kind of authority that tends to inhibit the free ‘will’.

During the extensive reading done for the thesis it became apparent that Ibsen’s plays work as a cycle. Some have more relevancy than others. That is to say; the starting point for this thesis was *Ghosts*, only to discover that it has a sequel and has to be tied to it-*A Doll House*. Those are the thesis case study. The two chosen plays are from Ibsen's middle period of writing during which the realistic, social dramas were written. Critics counted eight plays for this period. Although Ibsen’s star was on the rising Nora’s door-slam made it soar as a rocket. His work got the attention it deserved –negative as it was.

The first one of his [8] social plays was *Pillars of Society* written in 1877 dealt with society’s hypocrisies. It served as an announcement to the public that a new Ibsen was about to emerge. In addition to the Poet

or the intensely nationalistic playwright, Ibsen became a social critic concerned not only with contemporary issues but also with the men and women who were confronted with those issues:

...And the secret of modern literature lies precisely in this matter of experiences that are lived through. All that I have written these last ten years, I have lived through spiritually. But no poet lives through anything in isolation. What he lives through all of his countrymen live through with him. (Kildal, 1910, pp.49-52)

The other seven as follows: *A Doll House* (1879); *Ghosts* (1881); *An Enemy of the People* (1882); *The Wild Duck* (1884); *Rosmersholm* (1886); *The Lady from the Sea* (1888); and *Hedda Gabler* (1890).

Through Lona Hessl of *Pillars of Society* Ibsen paved the way for Nora who handed the torch to Helen Alving. *An Enemy of the People* was Ibsen's response to the vicious assault heaped on both *A Doll House* and *Ghosts*.

1.3 The Study

In his plays, Ibsen tries to un-masque the society by putting into bold letters what they are sweeping under the rug. The community was infested with social infections and he believed it was high time they should look into ways to hinder or stop them. In his efforts to reform an infected whole he started at the root and was faced with a storm of rejection. The females of his creation were an abomination at the time though it might have been an eye-opener to some. Ibsen's belief in women's is immaculate and he displays that through his complex female characters.

Though it proved enticing to delve into each and every one of Ibsen's female characters this thesis limits itself to two; Nora Helmer heroine of *A Doll House*, and Helen Alving the lady of *Ghosts*. Those two females who started the tongue wagging of the literary community a hundred and forty years ago and still are. Hence, this study follows the 'playful' journey of the Doll 'Nora', till the curtain's closing on the New Woman 'Mrs Alving'.

1.3.1 Statement of the Problem

Henrik Ibsen is a gigantic figure in modern drama. His work is widely discussed but little research has been carried about him in Sudan; despite the fact his work reflects deeply in our society. The researcher sees that Ibsen was a very important social reformer. In his plays he tackled very important issues at the time which are still valid today such as; Society's degenerate morals, women subjugation, class differentiation, low standard education...etc. Thus, with the limited research carried about Ibsen in this part of the region the researcher wanted to stimulate a revival of his thought stream. Drama plays an important role in the progression of nations and Ibsen work is a present proof of that.

In spite the Norwegian's place in the literary canon and his achievements as a great playwright in the world he seems to lack recognition in Sudan. Which means a noticeable absence of studies about him is detected. Although that acted as encouragement for the researcher it foreshadowed deficiency in resources.

1.3.2 Objective of the Study

In this thesis the researcher's objective is to look at the interdisciplinary factors between drama and society, through an analysis on Ibsen's work as a social reformer. Ibsen revolutionary philosophy of social reform calls for individualism and rejection of worn-out idealism. His plays aimed at presenting a dramatized every day situation to spread awareness.

1.3.3 Questions of the Study

1. What is Ibsen's philosophy about social reform?
2. Why did he display it through female characterization?
3. What is the impact of social fabric on the female characters?
- 4.

1.3.4 Hypotheses of the Study

1. Ibsen philosophy of social reform was derived from his own personal experiences with its main advocacy of self-realization.
2. One of Ibsen's main concerns as a social reformer was the status of women in society and the unjust imposition of the patriarchal dominance.
3. The social fabric inflicted women with certain expectation to which they must conform i.e. obedience, fragility, ignorance, timidity...etc.

1.3.5 Methodology of the Study

This is a qualitative research. Two methods are used in this study. First, the survey method was used to collect data about the Playwright's

personal life for its close connection with his social reform doctrine. To understand the impact of philosophy on his writing the analytical descriptive approach is used to critically analyze the two plays under focus *A Doll House* and *Ghosts*.

The primary resources of the thesis are two selected plays [*A Doll House* and *Ghosts*] written by Henrik Ibsen. As for secondary resources it was mostly books and journal articles concerning the Poets works. Two factors aided in the progress of the study; an opportunity to spent significant amount of time at the International Islamic University Malaysia [IIUM library] and Google Books.

The critical analysis conducted is grounded to several schools of criticism according to their relevance to the texts; Feminism, Sociological feminism, Socialism and Realism and Naturalism. Following the reading of the two plays, the conceptual framework highlights the theories used as background in the analysis. Moreover it also provides synopsis of the previous studies on the author's writings.

Chapter I serves as an introductory background and presents the outline of the study. Chapter II gives a quick historical survey of the 19th century theatre movements and pays a special consideration to the women conditions on the whole. Chapter III elaborates on the Playwright's life and philosophy. In our exhibition of the Poet's social reform doctrine attempting to answer "what is his philosophy?" the answers to the other two questions are outlined. Chapter IV focuses on the theme of women enslavement in *A Doll House* and *Ghosts*. Through

the exploration of this theme we come to conceive how women were deprived human existence. Chapter V examines three fundamental principles of Ibsen's doctrine. Which he advocates should be at the base of every society. Chapter VI sums up the discussion and presents the findings.

In order to measure the difference between the two heroines of the sequel a close-reading of the original texts and other writings about them was completed more than once. That resulted in a thorough reading of two other plays plus the author's comprehensive life and works and an additional four volumes by other authors on his life and work. Following the archival data collection -and giving it a once over- was obtaining the specific theories relating and linking the thesis variables.

Identifying Ibsen's doctrine is the basic angle of the study; it highlights how women fit in the equation. To what extent are society's conventions imprinted into them will lead us back to why he valued their portrayal of his beliefs and what was so shocking about women taking the lead.

1.3.6 Significance of the Study

In a changing world, society is still hindering women especially in the Arab world. Reviving the concepts tackled in those plays seems significant as a reminder of the female struggle. Shedding the light on how domineering and demeaning the patriarchal hold was highlights the achievements made. It also encourages further reading in Ibsen's work.

1.3.7 Limitation of the Study

Research of any kind needs an abundance of resources; here at home there is an acknowledge deficiency in that area. Aside from the hard copy of Ghosts no satisfactory data could be located. The lack of resources issue was overcame by Google books and a scientific trip to Kuala Lampor and the prosperous time spent in the International Islamic University Malaysia [IIUM].

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

The relationship between writers and their texts is often examined through literary theories. They stand for the ideas and methods that are used – by the critique or analyst - in the reading of the text in order to fathom its intended message.

This chapter will have three sections: Part One: A Historical Survey of the 19th century. Part Two: A reading on four relevant concepts, they are going to be discussed according to their order in the title, Feminism, followed by Feminist Sociology, then Socialism, and last but most relevant Realism & Naturalism. Part Three: Previous Studies that were conducted by other scholars presenting similarities, differences, and findings.

2.2 Historical Survey

In this section the researcher presents a concise scan of the 19th century general atmosphere in Europe; then a good exploration of women position and movement; topped by a review on Norway women situation.

2.3 Nineteenth Century European Drama

The 19th century is known as the age of illumination in Europe. It was the times when reason took supremacy over faith, the awakening of individual conscience over outside authority that brought in its train, as

Matthews (1912) puts it, new conceptions of human rights and social justice:

THE dawn of the nineteenth century was illumined by the last flickers of the red torch of the French Revolution; and its earlier years were filled with the reverberating cannonade of the Napoleonic conquests. It was not until after Waterloo that the battle-field of Europe became only a parade-ground; and this is perhaps one reason why there was a dearth of dramatic literature in the first quarter of the century and why no dramatist of prominence flourished,—excepting only the gentle Grillparzer far away in Vienna. In war-time the theatres are filled often enough, but the entertainment they proffer then is rarely worthy of the hour... drama must deal directly with a contest of human souls, it does not flourish while there is actual fighting absorbing the attention of the multitude; but when great captains and their drums depart, then are the stronger spirits again attracted to the stage. (pp. 296-324)

Matthews surmises that at the time despite the geographical and temporal differences, the characters the playwrights drew in their plays struggle in the absence of ‘communal integrity or national solidarity’. They suffer war trauma, disillusioned nationhood, abuses of power and fascist violence. Therefore, throughout Europe during the first score years of the century the acted drama was for the most part unliterary and the so-called literary drama was plainly un-actable, proving itself pitifully ineffective whenever it chanced to be put on the stage.

Sentimental or melodramatic plays were the most popular in Germany while the more serious ones were being adopted and adapted by the British. In France, the comedy and tragedy lost ground for two new species. One was the comédie-vaudeville of Scribe and the other was the melodrama of Pixérécourt and Ducange. This artificiality and emptiness

of the plays lingered for a while until a younger generation arrived and denounced the present conventions and strived for change. They wanted to go back to nature plus reflecting their present time. They sought for an ordinary hero, one you encounter everyday i.e. middle class, not one of noble birth and that resulted in the appearance of Hugo's *Hernani*.

2.3.1 Major Trends in 19th Century Theatre

The Western World has a great appetite for all sorts of performed art and with such diversity change is expected. Wikipedia made a précis of them in a few lines:

Nineteenth-century theatre describes a wide range of movements in the theatrical culture of Europe and the United States in the 19th century. In the West, they include Romanticism, melodrama, the well-made plays of Scribe and Sardou, the farces of Feydeau, Naturalism and Realism problem plays, Wagner's operatic Gesamtkunstwerk, Gilbert and Sullivan's plays and operas, Wilde's drawing-room comedies, Symbolism, and proto-Expressionism in the late works of August Strindberg and Henrik Ibsen. (Wiki)

According to Professor Eric W. Trumbull (2009), "*Melodrama was the primary form of theatre during the 19th century, despite other influences, becoming the most popular by 1840; Melodrama is still with us today.*" "Other Popular Nineteenth Century Theatrical Forms are"

Professor Trumbull moves on to display:

- Specialty acts: jugglers, tumblers, etc.
- Pantomimes – elaborate tricks with scenery and costume.
- Short musical revues ("vaudevilles" in France) – topical.
- Comic operas – sentimental stories, original music.

- Revivals of Shakespeare – usually Bowdlerized (named after Bowdler]. Bowdlerizing a play refers to deleting or changing parts of a script, removing socially ‘unacceptable’ or sexually ‘offensive’ parts of the script. From Thomas Bowdler, who published the ‘Family Shakespeare’, with sexual innuendo and reference left out, and turning sad endings into happy ones.

Melodrama, the well-made play, and the realistic problem plays, those in particular had a marked influence on Ibsen. In fact he is called the ‘father of Modern Drama’ for setting up the realistic theatre. Hence, each of them is going to be further illustrated.

2.3.1.1 Melodrama

Throughout the early part of the century, melodrama was the predominant theatrical style: it involved a plethora of scenic effects, an intensely emotional but codified acting style, and a developing stage technology that advanced the arts of theatre towards grandly spectacular staging. It was also a highly reactive form of theatre which was constantly changing and adapting to new social contexts, new audiences and new cultural influences. This, in part, helps to explain its popularity throughout the 19th century. Although melodrama can be traced back to classical Greece, the term *melodrama* did not appear until 1766 and only became popular after 1800.

2.3.1.2 The well-made play ‘*piece bienfaite*’

Eugène **Scribe** (1791-1861) is of French nationality produced over 300 plays. His plays gave the appearance of having tightly woven plots

unified by causality; when in fact his plays had many lines of action unfolded by coincidence and chance. But his influence on later writers was great—Ibsen in particular. This type of play, constructed according to certain strict technical principles, which dominated the stages of Europe and the United States for most of the 19th century and continued to exert influence into the 20th. (Cardwell, 1983)

The technical formula of the well-made play, developed around 1825 by the French playwright Eugene Scribe, called for complex and highly artificial plotting, a build-up of suspense, a climactic scene in which all problems are resolved, and a happy ending. Conventional romantic conflicts were a staple subject of such plays (the problem of a young girl who must choose between a wealthy, unscrupulous suitor and a poor but honest young man). Suspense was created by misunderstandings between characters, mistaken identities, secret information (the poor young man is really of noble birth), lost or stolen documents, and similar contrivances.

Later critics, such as Emile Zola and G. B. Shaw, denounced Scribe's work and that of his successor, Victorien Sardou, for exalting the mechanics of playmaking at the expense of honest characterizations and serious content. But both playwrights were enormously popular in their day. (Britannica)

2.3.1.3 Problem plays

It's a type of drama developed in the 19th century to deal with controversial social issues in a realistic manner, to expose social ills, and

to stimulate thought and discussion on the part of the audience. The genre had its beginnings in the works of the French dramatists Alexandre Dumas *fils* and Emile Augier. They adapted the then-popular formula of Eugene Scribe's 'well-made play' to serious subjects. They created a somewhat simplistic, didactic thesis plays on subjects such as prostitution, business ethics, illegitimacy, and female emancipation. The problem play reached its maturity in the works of the Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, whose works had artistic merits as well as topic relevance. (N A, 2013, Introduction)

Ibsen's first experiment in the genre was *Love's Comedy* (1862), a critical study of contemporary marriage. He went on to expose hypocrisy, greed, and hidden corruption of his society in a number of masterly plays: *A Doll House* (1879) portrays a woman's rebelling against the subservient role as bourgeois wife; *Ghosts* (1881) is an attack on the convention that even loveless and unhappy marriages are sacred; *An Enemy of the People* (18) reveals the expedient morality of respectable provincial townspeople; and in *The Wild Duck* (18) he shows the consequences of an egotistical idealism.

Ibsen's influence encouraged the writing of problem plays throughout Europe. The effect of the Norwegian playwright resulted in the production of a new genre of serious "problem plays," such as Pinero's *The Second Mrs. Tanqueray* (1893). J.T. Grein founded the Independent Theatre in 1891 to foster such work and staged there the first plays of George Bernard Shaw. Other Scandinavian playwrights, among them August Strindberg, who was more aggressive, discussed sexual

roles and the emancipation of women from both liberal and conservative viewpoints.

2.3.2 Nineteenth Century Women's Position

“... in the first place earning money was impossible for them (women), and in the second, had it been possible, the law denied them the right to possess what money they earned.” (Woolf, 2008, p.46)

The Nineteenth Century is often called the Victorian Age, taking that name from England's Queen Victoria who ruled for over 60 years, (1837-1901). Although it was named after a woman; women right were nil. The most frustrating of all is summed up by Virginia Woolf in the above quote. The law was oblivious to women altogether.

It was an age where the impact of the industrial revolution caused a sharp differentiation in gender roles, more so for the upper and middle classes. Men and women were believed to have completely different natures, owing largely to Darwin's work in biological determinism, and people saw those differences as dictating separate and different functions in society. Men were thought to have natures suited to the public world, women to the private. (Radek-Hall, 2001) Stereotypes of both genders were set believing that those differences existed biologically:

Men; Powerful, Active, Brave, Worldly, Logical, Rational, Individual, Independent, Able to resist temptation, Tainted, Ambitious, Sexual / Sensual, Sphere: Public. Whereas Women; Weak, Passive, Timid, Domestic, Illogical, Emotional, (susceptible to madness, hysteria), Social/Familial, Dependent, Unable to resist temptation,

Pure, Content, Not sexual / Sensual, Sphere: Private.
(Radek-Hall)

It is noticeable though, that the traits are completely opposite. Some are also contradicting i.e. women were thought to be more pure, innocent, and morally superior to men; however, they were also more easily corrupted. Women were deprived of their will they were not to decide or act on any matter even if it were personal.

- **Marriage**

Marriage, for Victorian Women, became the sort of contracts which was extremely difficult if not impossible to get out of. Yet still, the Nineteenth century women main goal in life was to be married to a man of means i.e. Austin girls. She is to bear his children and expect to be sheltered by him from the twists of life:

Ibsen recognized the debilitating relationship of poverty and womanhood. A poor woman in the nineteenth century lacked resources to fashion an agreeable life, and often felt enslaved in a marriage of convenience. Women of the nineteenth century had narrow possibilities and were always looking for a way out (Hardwick, 1974, p.74).

Rights and privileges were extremely limited for females in the Victorian times. Both single and married women had hardships and disadvantages they had to live with. Distinct differences in men and women's rights took place during this era; men were provided with more stability, financial status and power over their homes and [their] women.

The middle-class woman was supposed to avoid work outside the home unless there was extreme economic necessity. She was mainly to

be the lady of the house. Only the lower class woman could be unrefined. The test of any occupation for women was ‘uselessness.’ Women were raised to be decorative ornament. They were taught how to cultivate fragility because their very leisure was a sign of the financial prosperity of the family.

McFarlane (1994) also indicated that Ibsen explores this issue in the play *A Doll House* through Nora’s experience with a counterfeit loan and the ensuing consequences. “*Women held a secondary status in nineteenth-century western culture, similar to other underprivileged groups such as the ethnically different, the physically challenged, and the poor.*” Ibsen recognized the rights of these unheard and powerless people groups, and believed the “underprivileged” should join together to fight for improvement (p.89).

At the times, Women held an inferior social position to Men, as always. Though laws were helping to improve the woman's role in society, she was still confronted with legal, educational, and economical setbacks. By the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century there were some signs of improvements towards giving women more rights.

- **Sexuality**

It was expressed by most doctors of the period that ‘true’ women felt little or no sexual desire, and only abnormal or ‘pathological’ women felt strong sexual desire. Male sexual desire was acknowledged, but it was thought that masturbation or frequent sex could damage a man's

health or distract him from his work, eventually, if not properly controlled, could destroy his life. (Radek-Hall, 2001)

Marriage was seen as the only proper locale for moderate sex. Same sex sexual relationships or frequent sex were seen as unnatural and evil. Proof of these points came from Dr. William Acton who wrote in the 1860s that:

the majority of women (happily for them) are not very much troubled with sexual feelings of any kind. . . . No nervous or feeble young man need, therefore, be deterred from marriage by an exaggerated notion of the duties required from him. . . . The married woman has no wish to be treated on the footing of a mistress. (ivcc.edu.com)

It was proved later on that such raving held no truth in them. None the less, such prophecies were wide spread at the time and the majority believed them and judged women by them.

Women were not supposed to have any real sexual contact before their marriage, especially if they were from the upper and middle-classes. Consequently, most women of these classes learned about sex from their husbands on their wedding nights. Coupled with the absence of appropriate birth control [which would really have to be supplied by the male], sex within marriage usually meant frequent pregnancy, especially as most laws guaranteed a husband's unconditional right to his wife's body. Healthcare conditions were poor, thus, the death rate for a woman delivering a child was 1 in 200 in 1870. So sex for women could be psychologically traumatic.

The sexual double standard still exists; men would have pre-marital sex with servants or prostitutes. Homosexuality, in England, was punishable by death from 1563 until 1885, when a new law made reduced the punishment to a prison sentence of two years.

- **Fashion**

This view of sexuality and control evolved even further via fashion. Women attire became long skirts with layers of petticoats and then crinolines. Which made it both time consuming and almost impossible for women to dress or undress without help. Fainting as a reaction to excitement or an "improper" situation is acceptable and frequent. As it denotes that a woman is truly a lady, though in fact, their breathing was difficult due to the corsets. (Radek-Hall, 2001)

Women dress code was extremely un-practical for any kind of work. So when they entered the job market and changed to a more suitable wardrobe the press made a huge deal of and they ridiculed elaborately.

- **Employment**

Lower-class women could be servants, domestic help, factory workers, prostitutes, etc. Middle- and upper-class women could help, in some cases, with a family business. But as a general rule, the economy and the society dictated that a woman's place is her home. They could be educated and could study but '*a la limit.*' Any serious or passionate study was harmful to the family, unless it dealt with religious issues. Physicians believed that if a woman became too scholarly, her uterus would become dysfunctional, possibly leading to madness.

In a famous example of such limits on a woman, Robert Southey, the poet laureate of England, wrote a response to Charlotte Bronte's request for advice on pursuing a literary career, saying that "literature is not the business of a woman's life, and it cannot be." Upon receiving this letter, Bronte suffered angst and depression, as her journal indicates, but eventually, she did write, and became a successful novelist under an androgynous pen name. Even when women wrote and were popular, they were not well-received by the critical literary establishment. Nathaniel Hawthorne bemoaned the bunch 'of scribbling women' whose works the popular culture preferred to his 'serious' and 'literary' works. (Britannica)

- **The Cult of True Womanhood**

There is a saying "Woman is her own enemy" this would prove to be correct for 'The Cult of True Womanhood,' 1820-1860, a term coined by historian Barbara Welter, for those acculturating women to the stereotype ideal. Welter identifies four main virtues that a 'true' woman must exhibit: *piety*, *purity*, *submissiveness*, and *domesticity*. Today, the voice of the followers of the old ways is still heard and encouraged by the press.

2.3.3 Nineteenth Century Norwegian Aura

Compared with other European countries, industrialism and capitalism came somewhat late to Norway. Although they quickly made-up for the tardiness by a rapid development during the latter half of the nineteenth century. Which as Thomas (1990) stated "*transformed an*

economically backward country, dependent on agriculture, fishing, forestry and shipping, into an economically successful but socially divided industrial nation” (p.61).

Among the Scandinavian region, the country of Norway itself was miserable and dejected. Politically, the country was more or less subject to Sweden. It had been severed from Denmark in 1814 as part of the European settlement after the Napoleonic Wars and had tried to establish itself as a constitutional monarchy. However, the Swedes forced it to accept their king, although a separate constitution and parliament were allowed. *“Throughout the nineteenth century Norwegian nationalism ran high, and Ibsen was one of its foremost advocates.”* (Durbach, 1991) There were uprisings and revolt en masse. The entire country was looking for something better.

2.3.3.1 Norwegian Theatre

Norwegian theatre in the 1850 was bare. The only dramas written in Norwegian for fifty years had been the lyrical plays of Wergeland and the religious plays of Andreas Munch. The pertinent reason for this barrenness was that The Danish stage exercised jurisdiction over Scandinavian drama. At Copenhagen was the outstanding Royal Theater, presided over "by J. L. Heiberg of the Scribe school.

The only prominent playwrights of Scandinavian tradition were Danes. The classics of this tradition were Kolberg and Oehlenschläger. It was considered perfidious to these dramatists for anyone to bring forth a plea for a Norwegian theater. It was treacherous also to the ruling few

that secured all their ideas from Denmark. So dependent was Norway upon Denmark that until the twentieth century Norwegian books, including the Ibsen plays, were published in Copenhagen.

2.3.3.2 The Birth of the Norwegian Theater

In 1849 Ole Bull, the musical virtuoso returned to Norway from a visit to America resolved to set in motion plans for a Norwegian theater. To prove his seriousness in the matter Ole Bull secured money for the newly founded National Theater at Bergen 1851. From Bergen the project was to be developed in Christiania.

It was a happy coincidence that the two young men upon whom Ole Bull first called for assistance in the venture were Henrik Ibsen and Bjornstjerne Bjornson. No two literary geniuses could have been more diametrically different in ideas and in temperament. It was observed that Bjornson was to kindle that fire of exalted nationalism at which the eminent violinist aimed. On the other hand, Ibsen was to transcend the confines of nationalism in producing an international drama of ideas. Hence, the Norwegian theater's first cry came out through the plays of Ibsen and Bjornson.

Nineteenth-century Norway dealt with a large array of dangerous and concerting social problems, often glossed over in polite conversation. Ibsen's realistic writing style and contemporary subject matter echoed to the heart of many pressing issues. Author Einar Haugen (1979), in the book *Ibsen's Drama: Author to Audience*, explains the importance of Ibsen's work in nineteenth-century western culture as a way of enlarging social understanding on the topics of, "*divorce, incest, paresis, political*

corruption, suicide...arson, murder, seduction, child neglect, and financial swindles” (p.50).

Ibsen’s handling of those controversial subject matters served as a tool for education and enlightenment. At the time, authors began to recognize the importance of educating and informing the reader (Haugen, p.47). Through the inclusion of informative and revealing subject matter says Durbach 1992; Ibsen rejected the literary tradition of idealism and laid emphasis on the realistic nature of the issues, “*George Bernard Shaw, a contemporary of Ibsen, defines the thought process of rejecting idealism for reality as ‘Ibsenism’*” (p.37). Ibsen’s realistic ideology changes the course of dramatic literature and performance.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

Literary theory is the philosophical discussion of literature's goals and methods. It influences literary criticism (or literary studies) which are the study, evaluation, and interpretation of literature. This paper is survey three of them, which have bearing on the texts under discussion; Feminist movement, Socialist theory, and Realistic approach.

2.4.1. Feminism

Feminism: *n, adj. The theory of the political, economic, and social equality of the sexes, an organized activity on behalf of women’s rights and interests.*—Merriam Webster Dictionary

Feminism: [Political ideology] is a range of political movements, ideologies, and social movements that share a common goal: to define,

establish. And achieve political, economic, personal, and social equality of the sexes. This includes seeking to establish educational and professional opportunities for women that are equal to those for men. – Wikipedia

“Like Marxism, feminism is rooted in the political discourses of modernity, inheriting but also challenging its ideas of sovereignty, equality, liberty, rights, and rationality.” (Rice & Waugh, p.143)

As with every social movement, feminism encompasses a variety of political tendencies. There are three main types of feminism: socialist, reformist, and radical/separatist.

2.4.1.1 Feminist literary theory

Feminist anthologies and literary theory contain both applied and conceptual as indicated by Code (2000):

Feminist literary theory, as a term, gained currency during the mid-1980s; the term feminist literary criticism had previously been applied. Conventionally, criticism was used to refer to a practical approach to literary study, i.e. the close reading of texts; while theory referred to the interpretation, evaluation and examination of the philosophical and political underpinnings of the texts. Today, criticism and theory appear simultaneously in feminist anthologies and the feminist literary theory includes both, practical and theoretical, approaches to literature (p. 261).

The function of the feminist literary theory is to analyze the role played by the literary forms and practices together with the discourses of literary criticism and theory, “*in perpetuating or challenging hierarchies of gender, class, race and sexuality*” (ibid.). Furthermore Wallace (2009)

states that feminist literary theory, “*engages with the political and social goals of feminism, and it concentrates on literary culture and theory as a possible site of struggle and as a means of eventual change*” (vii).

Meanwhile, Cuddon (1998) defines feminist criticism as: A development and movement in critical theory and in the evaluation of literature which was well under way by the late 1960s and which has expanded steadily since. It is an attempt to describe and interpret (and reinterpret) women's experience as depicted in various kinds of literature especially the novel; and, to a lesser extent, poetry and drama (p.351).

Feminist criticism challenges the patriarchal attitudes in literature; the traditional male ideas about women and their nature. Thus, it questions prejudices and assumptions made by the dominant male writers and their tendency to put women in stock character roles (Cuddon, p.351). According to Wallace, it was necessary for the would-be woman writer to kill “the an-gel in the house” (from Patmore's poem) which represents the embodiment of the late 19th century expectation of femininity; that is, the expectation that women “should be nice and sympathetic rather than forceful, outspoken, or intellectually vigorous” (Wallace 2009: 612). The aim of the feminist literary theory (and feminism in general) must be, explain Rice and Waugh (2001) “to break down the public/private split and the binaries of masculinity/ femininity, mind/body, reason/ feeling” (p.144). (Cited in Balaky& Suleiman, 2016, p.33)

2.4.1.2 Nineteenth Century European Feminism

It was the age of enlightenment and the edification roused females into advancement. This awakening was mostly unwelcomed by their counterpart; still Feminist ideas were abound across Europe in the nineteenth century. Activists like Mary Wollstonecraft and Anna Wheeler fought for women's rights in all aspects of society whether political, social, cultural, or economic. Major leaders were from bigger, more industrialized countries like England and France, perhaps because they did not have such oppressive governments as other lesser countries. (Encyclopædia Britannica)

The promotion of equality in marriage, parenting, as well as attaining property rights were of particular concern to those feminist advocates in the beginning of the century. By the end, however, focus shifted to two different sectors. Some focused on gaining political power through women's suffrage, while others actively campaigned for women's sexual and reproductive rights. Although feminism had been around before the nineteenth century, its true progress caught on during this time period.

Thus, modern feminism seems to have two waves. The first being the period of the 1860's to the 1920's, and the second being in the late 1960's to the present. What both have in common is the production of feminist knowledge. Since access to colleges and universities was limited in the first wave, more feminist theory resulted from the second. Women were participating in the re-organization of knowledge production in

greater numbers. ‘Women Studies’ departments and other similar programs are now present in almost all colleges and universities.

The 1960’s and 1970’s produced a wide variety of texts which constitute the canon of classical feminist theory. These studies focused on definitions of women’s emancipation, women’s liberation, and women’s oppression. It is of interest that family constituted the primary object of analysis in the studies. Descriptions of the structures of everyday life revealed that family as an institution had great influence. It helped in the gendered division of labor, as it normatively relegates most women to the private sphere and most men to the public sphere. As long as women’s natural social role consisted in the private sphere, their access to the public sphere of work, decision making, law making, knowledge production, cultural production, and politics remained minimal. Women nominally attained the ideal of a “good life” described in most constitutions.

Feminism is often misunderstood as coming from a group of angry women who are trying to dominate men. It is not so, feminism is a perspective that views society as traditionally unequal between men and women and strives for equality between the sexes. An example is the fact that men and women, on average, are not paid equally in the United States, even though as studies show they have the same education and job demands.

Women are less represented in the government, women are less likely to be business owners, and women are less likely to be college professors. Today, career structures are modeled on men and not women

but women usually are still considered the child bearers. For example, if women take off working to care for children, when they return, they are often considered too old to establish a high profile career when most men are at the peak of theirs:

This patriarchal establishment relegates women to secondary labor sectors of lower wages, fewer fringe benefits, and fewer skill development programs. Modern women are looking at all areas of life, all areas of study, and analyzing them. They are looking for ways to equalize the woman's position, and to give the woman's point of view. There are now so many areas of feminist theory and so many issues being researched that they are often overlapping and interdisciplinary, but they all are working to empower women. (Holub, 2006)

2.4.1.3 The Role of Literature on Feminism

In 1871, Georg Brandes initiated the movement of The Modern Breakthrough: he asked that literature serve progress and not reactionary views. It was then that Norway had the writers who became known as the "Big Four", namely Henrik Ibsen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Alexander Kielland and Jonas Lie. All four spoke for the cause of women. Camilla Collett and Aasta Hansteen wrote to defend the cause of feminist theories that were an integral parity of a larger program for the authors of the Modern Breakthrough.

Collett and Hansteen stood to defend the oppressed people against the social expectations of the time. Mainly the wife who; received a primary education, whose sole purpose was marriage, women who were unable to continue and fully enjoy an intellectual life and who could not freely dispose of their own life and body.

Ibsen took up the cause of modern humanism and individualism, *A Doll House* in particular had a significant influence on the feminist movement even outside Norway, as it was translated into several languages and performed widely across Europe and beyond. Bjørnson wrote a play in 1879 called, *Leonarda*, in which he defends the woman who "has a past." But above all, his play *A Glove* (1883) had a great impact on the public in Norway.

2.4.1.4 Norway Feminism

In 1840, women status was considered as *incapable*, that is to say, that it was impossible to enter into any agreement, debts, or even control their own money. They were not entitled to any training, or able to be considered for any government job. As for single women, there were many during the era, they could request to be placed into employment under the authority of a guardian. On their wedding day, married women transitioned from living under the authority of their fathers to under that of their husbands.

Norwegians law changed during the reign of Christian V (1670-1699). His regime issued the Law in Norway (1687) which, following the Danish rules of that time, defined unmarried women as minor. However, in 1845, a first step towards women's emancipation was taken with the "Law on the vast majority for single women", for which the age majority was granted at age 25, without a requirement for submitting to a guardian after that age.

In this first part of the century, women worked in the early textile mills and in the tobacco factories which were reserved for their employment. They also worked in the food industries and jobs requiring "little hands", but they did not work in heavy industry.

The years 1854 to 1879 were marked as the awakening consciousness for Norway feminism. During this period, new laws were passed. It was not an immediate victory, yet, barriers were being crossed regularly and rapidly. Formal equality of women with men became almost complete in the space of just two generations. The rule of, who wanted women to be entitled to nothing beyond joint-ruler status, lapsed and equal inheritance for both sexes became the rule. But this did not happen without heated debate and resistance.

In 1863, a new law is passed on the age of majority that succeeds that of 1845: women attained the age of majority at 25 years, as well as men. As for widows, divorced and separated, they become major 'regardless of age'. In 1869, the age of majority was reduced to 21, although not without some wondering whether it was defensible for women. The committee of law, believing that women matured more rapidly than men, stated that this age is very suitable for her. In 1866, a law was passed establishing free enterprise (except for married women) so that anyone could obtain a license in their city.

The literature promoted to women of the time was a reflection of society's code of behavior. Consequently, only the quest for a husband was to be found in these novels because landing a good man was a woman's only purpose in life. Among the women writers published in

Norway during the era were Hanna Winsnes (1789-1872), Marie Wexelsen (1832-1911) and Anna Magdalene Thoresen (1819-1903).

Camilla Collett is the first writer who went outside the bounds which had been established for women's literature up until that time. Born January 23, 1813, Kristiansand, Norway—died March 6, 1895, Kristiania; Collett was a novelist and passionate advocate of women's rights. She wrote the first Norwegian novel dealing critically with the position of women. The central theme of this novel is the conflict between the standard conventions of society and the feelings and needs of the individual. (britannica.com)

In her novel '*Amtmandens Døtre*' (1854–55) '*The District Governor's Daughters*', Collett explores the upbringing of middle class young women, whose lot in life was to be married. Its immense influence is reflected in the late 19th century, when women's emancipation became a burning topic of the day. Her main point is that the prejudices which inform both women's and men's opinions on womanliness and marriage, pervert women's character, undermine the relationship between women and men and are socially destructive. True love between women and men, therefore, is unattainable within society as it is. (nordicwomensliterature)

Her writing left a clear mark on later writers—Henrik Ibsen, Jonas Lie, and Alexander Kielland—to name a few. Those writers who took up the case for women would claim Camilla Collett as their inspiration, and thus she—single handedly—created the first wave of feminism in Norway.

- **The Debate on Double Standards**

During the nineteenth century, Norway was a very poor country, which led to a rural exodus and high levels of emigration. In 1882, Norway had 30,000 departures from a population of 1.9 million inhabitants. The number of male emigrants was higher than the females. In 1900, there were 165 men to every 100 women. The consequence was the disintegration of the family unit, resulting in the increase in births outside marriage and an overwhelming increase in prostitution.

The theme of the debate on double standards (1879–1884), was that marriage should be regarded as the basic unit of society, but one that should be reformed. But there were those who stated that marriage was not a foundation of society, and the debate should focus on a more political solution to women's inequality. Some considered marriage as a necessary evil while others believed that it should be replaced with free love.

Not sharing the same views, writer Amalie Skram became the most radical character during the period. If, like other writers, she denounced the difference in treatment between adulterous men and women, she then considered that the Don Juan was the male equivalent of a prostitute. The conventional view was that the Don Juan does not sell himself, he accumulates his conquests. Skram, disowning the validity of the argument proposed that a woman has accumulated conquests too. Her conduct is presumed prostitution even when she is not selling.

2.4.2. Feminist Sociology

Feminist sociology is a conflict theory and theoretical perspective which observes gender in its relation to power, both at the level of face-to-face interaction, and reflexivity within a social structure at large. Focuses include sexual orientation, race, economic status, and nationality. At the core of feminist sociology is the idea of the systemic oppression of women and the historical dominance of men within most societies 'patriarchy'.

Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860-1935) was one who defied society norms. She took her education step further focusing on reading and learning new concepts other than those permitted women of her time. The inequality befalling both genders was her domain. Gilman empathized how differential socialization leads to gender inequality.

In her book '*Women and Economics*' (1898) Gilman states her belief that women pretend to live a certain life to avoid achieving their full potential; hence this is an example of falling under false consciousness instead of 'true' consciousness. She also said that the traditional division of labor was not biologically driven, but pushed upon a based structure of how society was established since before the nineteenth century.

In the end Gilman describes it as a sociological tragedy because women are disregarded as being part of the ideology of 'survival of the fittest'. Females are thought to be soft and weak individuals only good for productive reasons. They are depicted as emotional and frail who are

born to serve their husband, children and family without living for herself. Gilman sociological research paved the way for feminist theory.

2.4.3 Sociology

Sociology is the study of society, human social interaction, and the rules and processes that bind and separate people, not only as individuals, but as members of associations, groups, and institutions. It's a branch of the social sciences that uses systematic methods of empirical investigation and critical analysis to develop and refine a body of knowledge about human social structure and activity. (lumenlearning.com)

The sociological approach goes beyond everyday common sense, it identify ways in which sociology is applied in the real world. Sociology grew out of the social, political, economical and technological revolutions of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The Industrial Revolution, in particular, eroded old traditions and necessitated new ways of perceiving and examining the social world. With the success of the natural sciences serving as a model for the social sciences, sociology emerged in Western Europe as a distinct discipline in the mid-1800s.

Sociology attempts to understand the social world by situating social events in their corresponding environment (i.e., social structure, culture, history) and trying to understand social phenomena by collecting and analyzing empirical data. Auguste Comte, Herbert Spencer, Karl Marks, Emile Durkheim and Max Weber were early thinkers in development of sociology.

2.4.3.1 Sociological Theory

The sociological approach to literature is believed to have originated from the word sociology which is the scientific study of the nature and development of the society and social behaviors. As cultural and literary critics began to investigate the human society in the works of arts, it became of paramount importance to assess the society using social parameters.

This school of art professes strong and unwavering creed for the didactic nature of literature, the relationship between arts and the society and the inevitability of social mobilization of the masses. This literary theory has also been argued to have taken after the Aristotelian school of mimesis and equally being an umbrella that accommodates all other literary approaches because all literary criticisms must be within the confines of a given social context. (Vazquez, 1973: 113-114) [Cited by JideBalogun (2004: 117)]

2.4.3.2 Sociological criticism

Sociological Criticism examines literature in the cultural, economic, and political context in which it is written. British Literary Critic Wilber Scott (1914- 2005) observed, “it is the work not simply of a person, but of an author fixed in time and space, answering a community of which he is an important because articulate part.” Sociological criticism explores the relationships between the artist and society.

Sometimes it looks at the sociological status of the author to evaluate how the profession of the writer in a particular milieu affects

what was written. Sociological criticism also analyzes the social context of literary works that is, what cultural, economic, or political values a particular text implicitly promotes. Finally, Sociological Criticism examines the role the audience has in shaping literary works.

An influential type of sociological criticism has been Marxist criticism, which focuses on the economic and political elements of art. Karl Marx (1818-1883) and Friedrich Engels (1820-1895) were the dominant sociological critics.

Sociological criticism is literary criticism directed to understanding (or placing) literature in its larger social context. It codifies the literary strategies that are employed to represent social constructs through a sociological methodology.

The approach "examines literature in the cultural, economic and political context in which it is written or received," exploring the relationships between the artist and society. Sometimes it examines the artist's society to better understand the author's literary works. Other times, it may examine the representation of such societal elements within the literature itself:

One influential type of sociological criticism is Marxist criticism, which focuses on the economic and political elements of art, often emphasizing the ideological content of literature; because Marxist criticism often argues that all art is political, either challenging or endorsing (by silence) the status quo. It is frequently evaluative and judgmental, a tendency that "can lead to reductive judgment, as when Soviet critics rated Jack London better than William Faulkner, Ernest Hemingway, Edith Wharton, and Henry

James, because he illustrated the principles of class struggle more clearly." Nonetheless, Marxist criticism "can illuminate political and economic dimensions of literature other approaches overlook." (Kennedy & Gioia, 1793)

Social commentary is the act of using rhetorical means to provide commentary on issues in a society. This is often done with the idea of implementing or promoting change by informing the general populace about a given problem and appealing to people's sense of justice.

2.4.3.3 Reform

Etymologically, 'reform' means 'forming again', 'reconstruct', which can be done only when a system is first demolished. But social reform envisages 'amendment', 'improvement' etc. Thus, it entails peaceful crusading, use of non-violent means for change, and change in slow speed.

The reforms by definition entail change or replacement of the institutions, which have become functionally irrelevant (totally or partly) to the contemporary social order and are responsible for low quality of life, deprivations, unrest and misery to the sizeable sections of the society. Etymologically, 'reform' means 'forming again', 'reconstruct', which can be done only when a system is first demolished; but social reform envisages 'amendment', 'improvement' etc. Thus, it entails a peaceful crusading, use of non-violent means for change and change in slow speed.

A reform movement is a kind of social movement that aims at making gradual change, or changes in certain aspects of society, rather than rapid or fundamental changes. A reform movement is distinguished from more radical social movements such as revolutionary movements.

It meant the infusion into the existing social structure of the new ways of life and thought; the society would be preserved, while its members would be transformed.

Reform is also a revolt against the tyranny of dogma and traditional authorities, beliefs, customs and age-old practices. Sometimes it's a spirit of rational enquiry into the basis of their religion and society. There was the replacement of blind faith in current traditions, beliefs, and conventions characteristics of Medieval Age- by a spirit of rationalism, which is the distinctive feature of the Modern Age. In short, there is a transition from the Medieval Age to the Modern Age.

2.4.3.4 Social Change

One of the most concise definitions of social change is characterized as the “*significant alteration of social structure and cultural patterns through time*” (Harper, 1993). This social structure is made up of “*a persistent network of social relationships*” (ibid). In which interaction between people or groups has become repetitive. The resultant changes can affect everything from population to the economy, as industrialization and shifting cultural norms and values, are also established agents of social change (Popenoe, 1995). In other words,

social change is the transformation of culture, value, tradition, and social structure over time.

There are various causes of social change. One of these causes is culture which is a system that constantly loses and gains components. Also values, beliefs, and ideologies have certainly shaped directions of social change in the modern world, such as Nationalism, Capitalism and others.

Change can occur for all sorts of reasons: through the impact of environmental factors such as famine or from social movement where people join together for a common cause. International shifts in economic or political advantage, as the 'Globalization' which is one of the key factors in our modern society affecting the global economy, political structures, culture, etc.

Mass media is considered a vital factor in speeding social change. It permits rapid diffusion of ideas, making this manifest in the private and relaxing environs of the home, where audiences are at their most susceptible. Social change happens for all of the above and more. That means there is always a demand for change, whether by individuals or through larger forces which leads the community in some cases to a comprehensive change.

- **Theatre and Societies**

Discussing drama as if it were simply dramatic literature is about as sensible as trying to drive a car with only one cylinder in working order. Drama comes with the theatre in which it is presented. The theatre

embraces actors and actresses, painters and painting, architects and craftsmen, costumers and engineers; it also extends to the spectators:

Community-based theatre goes a step further; when a play is directly relevant to audience members' lives and concerns, a process begins which can lead to deeper understanding and change. (ukessays.com)

If one is to observe the grandeur given to theatrical performances in the west and the passion by which it is received, one cannot but agree with the above statement. Even though drama as performance historically started in Africa (Egypt) it flourished with the Greek and Roman cultures and proceeded to be held high by the Western population.

Theatre is considered as reflection and witness to the progress of Nations. It helps their leaders to reflect, reminisce and push forward with a deeper insight. It is used as a tool to understand the real problems of society and contribute in finding solution for them as continues attempt for change. Some critics took the length of associating the progress of the First World with the great care they gave to theatre performances, because of it their communities thrived.

- **Religion**

The association between theatre and Christianity was marked with ups and downs through-out the early history. Theatre as an art has been eliminated temporarily during Medieval Era (middle Ages). As theatre artists were persecuted and considered to be heretics and enemies of religion. However as time cycled around, theatre was revived again by the church itself. Using it as a new way to spread and promote their

religious message. So, by the end of the middle Ages the Church had to take a reconciled position with the theatrical arts. Recognition dawned on the clergymen of the role that could be played by theatre in their holy mission. Then again, dominance of the church over the theatre gradually weakened and new artists emerged.

- **Renaissance**

The Renaissance Period, this was an era in which theatre carried out to revive the Greek and Roman heritage. Although church traditions were not entirely abolished the Renaissance theatre began to take prominence. The theatre continued with the adopted a functionality of the guiding and educating people on moral values as well as changing society through the promotion of virtue to prevent vice. With the emergence of William Shakespeare and his keen interest on issues of Man's self-imagining and his pain and suffering; Theatres played a new role in the social life by becoming the center of the desired change in that period.

- **Theatre as a Tool**

Reading through the history of the European theatre progress one concludes that theatre and social change have always been two sides of the same coin. Theatre recreates life either by condensing, auditing, selecting or rearranging the elements to be performed in front of viewers, who- at that moment- are merely onlookers. Others- Innovative playwrights- put an image in front of the viewer's inviting them to have a look and think about how it could be. Here it is evident that describing theatre as a direct cause for social change would be unjust, but it certainly

paves the path. It creates a model that community is required to reach, adopting it or rejecting it is left to them. Thus theatres change their shape and form according to the needs and issues of its society:

The Norwegian writer Henrik Ibsen had realized the need for social change in his era, his works became one of the most visible models and a boot process for social change, as not only his attempts to deal with real issues and address the prevailing values by criticism and queries which leads to a demand for social change, but also he himself changed and shocked the theatre audiences when he used prose rather than poetry in writing the play in order to approach the level of daily language, and if he did not just announce the need for change but also uses new tools of his time (Barton and McGregor, 2008).

Theatre through history had a great role on affecting people's lives, by helping them to see their lives and problems more clearly. It became a tool to understand the real problems of society and tries to find an effective solution for them. Through dialogue by elevating the level of awareness as well as it contributes to the empowerment of all involved. It may also mobilize people to take action and support them in processes of social and political change. (u.k.essays)

2.4.4 Realism & Naturalism

It can be quite difficult to work out the difference between naturalism and realism. There is great deal of similarity in their convention and thought; they almost overlap regarding the time frame. In trying to distinguish them apart in his book *Modern drama in theory and practice 1: Realism and Naturalism* J. L. Styan starts:

As it is with acting, so it is with playwriting: the old gives way to the new, which in turn grows old. It is axiomatic that each generation feels that its theatre is in some way more 'real' than the last – Euripides over Sophocles, Moliere over the *commedia dell'arte*, Goldsmith over Steele, Ibsen over Schiller, Brecht over Ibsen. (Styan, 1981, p.1)

- **Realism**

Realism: Refers generally to any artistic or literary portrayal of life in a faithful, accurate manner, unclouded by false ideals, literary conventions, or misplaced aesthetic glorification and beautification of the world. It is a theory or tendency in writing to depict events in human life in a matter-of-fact, straightforward manner. It is an attempt to reflect life "as it actually is" (-Carson- Newman College)

Realism as a Movement began in mid-late 1800's as an experiment to make drama more appetizing to society. Revolutions and wars in Europe portrayed the need for social, economic and political reform which led different thoughts. Technological advances and pragmatism resulted in the sudden rejection of Romantic idealism. The common man became aware and demanded recognition and the working class asked for more rights.

Realism in the theatre was a general movement that began in the nineteenth century theatre, around the 1870s, and remained present through much of the 20th century. It developed a set of dramatic and theatrical conventions with the aim of bringing a greater fidelity of real life to texts and performances.

In terms of style, the words realism and naturalism are frustratingly used interchangeably to mean the same, yet they are not. They are similar, yes, but have many differences. Ibsen was influenced Emile Zola's Naturalism which viewed a person as a creature whose acts are determined by heredity and environment. Zola urged writers to study their characters behavior with the detachment of zoologists studying animals. (Kannedy&Gioia, 1411)

2.4.4.1 Beginnings of Realism

Many plays were written in verse, or heightened language, and performed in a larger-than-life, exaggerated style. However, with the scientific and technological advances of the 19th century, intellectual thought turned to social reform and everyday human concerns. These scientific advances led to the Realism movement in literature and the arts, started in the mid-1800s, in which authors addressed contemporary social issues, providing a forum for debate in their art. Realism, in theatre, sought to represent characters and situations from real life, without idealization or embellishment.

Beliefs of Comte, Darwin and Marx lead to an overall change in social and independent thought. Now, Society began to question religious, political and economic beliefs. Science and deep observations were paramount in European societies. Scientific methodology can apply to human problem solving. Writers like Alexandre Dumas *films*, and Emile Augier started to describe the contemporary condition. Anton Checkov appeared as well with his authorship of the psychological reality and lack of plot illusion.

As any other approach the writing of realism has its own convention: Character's lives within the story are they relatable or not, with detailed baggage (of individuals' problems and challenges). That it's an accurate reflection of the human condition and contemporary life with no stereotyping. Also reflections are made on culture and social class.

2.4.4.2 Contributors to Realism

The changing world governed the thinker's minds, each on a different path. One of the major contributors to Realism is Charles Darwin. With his "Origin of Species" theory made many people believe that science could provide the answers to life. Auguste Comte was the one who Developed Positivism theory, encouraged one to inspect nature through precise observation. Karl Marx: Argued against urbanization and in favor of the equal distribution of wealth, founder of Communism.

Henrik Ibsen's contributions in the area of realistic drama also include the betterment of women. The themes of his plays are born from actual situations of nineteenth-century women. The literary theme of captivity in his work is based on the social captivity of nineteenth-century women. Ibsen recognized many problems facing the women of his day, starting early from home then the whole community including a masculine biased judicial system:

A woman cannot be herself in the society of the present day, which is an exclusively masculine society, with laws framed by men and with a judicial system that judges feminine conduct from a masculine point of view. (Ibsen, From Ibsen's Workshop)

Ibsen had completely rewritten the rules of drama with a realism which was to be adopted by Chekhov and others and which we see in the theatre to this day. Since Ibsen, challenging assumptions and directly speaking about issues has been considered one of the factors that make a play art rather than entertainment.

2.4.4.3 Theatrical Realism

Performance of realistic plays began in late 19th century in Europe (Norway). Playwright, Henrik Ibsen, is credited for introducing realism in drama and known as the “Father of Realism”. He attacked society's values and dealt with unconventional subjects. His aim was bringing a greater fidelity of real life to the stage, in order to raise awareness.

In the theatre of Realism, a room was represented by a set box – three walls that joined in two corners and a ceiling that tilted as if seen in perspective. Painted backdrop and wings-flats were placed parallel to mask offstage space. Some furniture and freestanding objects were added on stage. Some interior designs for plays featured a room with three walls, a ceiling, and decor.

Instead of posing at stage center to deliver key speeches, actors were instructed to speak realistic conversation from wherever the dramatic situation placed them, and now and then turn their back to the audience. They were instructed to behave as if they lived in a room with the fourth wall sliced away – as if unaware that they had an audience.

Today, Realism is everywhere. It is the main style of most of media, books, film, and TV. People preferred realistic stories because of the relatable aspects of the lives of the characters and the reader/viewer.

2.4.4.4 Ibsen's Realistic Stage

Realism for Ibsen meant creating a theatre of emotional and moral truth, where audience could understand both the subjective experience and the objective conditions of modern life. (ibid 851) He believed in the theatre's potential in contributing to the development of a more stable, literate and civil society.

Henrik Ibsen was at the forefront of this movement. He began to write plays in prose, the way that people spoke to each other in real life, and to focus on realistic social issues. His plays *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll House*, *Ghosts* and *An Enemy of the People* are considered classic works of Realism that changed the way the western world viewed drama. In each of these plays, Ibsen addressed a contemporary social problem and wrote his play as a forum for debate or criticism of the issue. Ibsen avoided the idealized heroes or stock characters from the other plays of his day. Instead, he created fully-developed, realistic characters with deep psychological motives.

The environment that they inhabited was not the traditional, two-dimensional backdrop, but a fully furnished living room—as life-like as the living rooms in the homes of the audience members. At this time, the tradition developed in staging realistic dramas in which directors would call the barrier between the stage and the audience the 'fourth wall,' as if

the stage were an actual living room with one of the walls removed to allow the audience to observe the happenings inside. Around this time, the house lights also began to be dimmed for the performance—taking the focus of the audience’s attention away from the social event of “being seen” at the theatre, and on to the work of art itself.

In his quest for realism, Ibsen also wanted his dialogue to be as natural as possible, mirroring the way people spoke to each other in everyday life. In a letter to a Swedish director in 1883, he wrote:

The language must sound natural and the form of expression must be characteristic of each individual person in the play; one person certainly does not express himself like another. In this respect a great deal can be put right during the rehearsals; that is when one easily hears what does not strike one as natural and unforced, and what must therefore be changed and changed again until the lines achieve full credibility and realistic form. The effect of the play depends in large measure on the audience’s feeling that they are sitting listening to something that is going on in actual real life. (Kildal, 1910)

Instead of speaking in verse and heightened language, characters spoke in natural rhythms and broken trains of thought, interrupting each other and themselves as people do naturally. To portray these characters realistically, a new style of acting had to be created, which is the basis for most acting training today.

Actors who approached Ibsen’s realistic characters began to analyze their subtext—emotions and thoughts that motivate characters without being explicitly written in the text. That the actor would have to look beyond the text to create a three-dimensional character was an

enormous departure from the verse dramas before Ibsen's time, in which everything an actor needed to know was explicitly written in the text.

The characters on Ibsen's stage, then, were not heroes and villains who were very distant from the audience's experience, but deeply human individuals who were motivated by the joy and grief of everyday conflict. Realism in the arts was as revolutionary as any other social movement of Ibsen's day.

The theatre of Ibsen and Stanislavski quickly became the standard against which all other drama was measured. These realistic dramas revealed and criticized the ills of their own society, making them dangerous to established Victorian traditions. Realism became so widespread by the beginning of the 20th century that actors, writers and directors began to rebel against the tradition, breaking the "fourth wall" to engage the audience more directly in the quest for social reform. Some of the movements rebelling against Realism include Dadaism, Futurism, Expressionism, Surrealism, Epic Theatre and Theatre of the Absurd. Despite these movements, Stanislavski's style of acting has become the accepted method used by actors today on both stage and screen, and Ibsen's plays continue to influence theatre-makers around the world. Modern audiences continue to expect actors to hold the mirror up to life.

- **Naturalism**

Naturalism is often used to refer to a nineteenth century theatrical movement, but it can also mean the belief that a human character is formed by what they've inherited from their family and environment.

The literary naturalism movement is probably most associated with the work of the French novelist, Emile Zola. (BBC.Com)

It would seem more helpful - as well as being truer to the historical facts - to understand both 'Naturalism' and 'Realism' as applying to the movement as a whole. At the same time, taking advantage of the subtle distinction between the two words for greater critical precision, it would be logical to use 'Naturalism' to refer to the theoretical basis shared by all the dramatists who formed the movement, and their approach to representing the world. 'Realism' could then apply to the intended effect, and the stage techniques associated with it. Thus the same play might be both naturalistic and realistic, with each term describing a different aspect of the work. (Styan, p.6)

The primary influences on the naturalistic movement were Darwin's evolutionary theories of biology (*On the Origin of Species*, 1859), Claude Bernard's scientific observation of human physiology (*Introduction a l'etude de la medecine experiment le*, 1865) and Karl Marx's economic analysis of society (*Das Kapital*, 1867) - plus, somewhat after, Sigmund Freud's work on psychology (*On the Psychological Mechanism Hysterical Phenomena with Charcot*, 1893; *The Interpretation of Dreams*, 1900). It also reflected the emergence of materialistic capitalism and the rise of middle-class democracy.

There is general agreement that the crucial factors inspiring Naturalism were the perceptions that all life, human as well as animal, is in a process of continual evolution, and that human behavior is explained through scientific analysis. These new ideas led to the assumption that

peoples' character and personality are formed by a combination of heredity and their social environment, plus the value placed on the individual. This meant that ordinary citizens, including workers and the poor (who had traditionally played at best supporting or comic roles) became the protagonists, and attention focused on the family. More significant though less noted naturalistic drama - which established itself in the 1880s and 1890s - coincided with the early women's movement, the struggle for legal equality and voting rights. It also coincided with a new sense of national identity in Scandinavia, and with the liberation of the serfs in Russia. All this was directly reflected in naturalistic plays. (Styan p.7)

The drama of ideas is what gave naturalistic plays their historical status and ironically, it is on this level that they are most contemporary. The challenge to social orthodoxies, which naturalistic playwrights introduced into the theatre, is a characteristic feature of much twentieth-century art and thought. The avoidance of stereotype characters and moral categories- as Shaw put it, "The conflict is not between clear right and wrong; in fact the question which makes [modern drama] interesting is which is the villain and which the hero" - corresponds with the relativistic morality of today. (Shaw, 1913, p.145)

The primacy of character is one of the defining aspects of Naturalism; particularly the treatment of women in their plays strikes a modern chord.

Indeed, on one level Naturalism was as much an aesthetic revolt as a moral or social revolution. Generally critics attempt to distinguish

between Naturalism and Realism, using each as a label for various qualities. For instance:

Although naturalism in the arts shares the mimetic mode with realism, it takes more explicit cognizance of environment, not merely as a setting but as an element of the action of drama. On this factor Raymond Williams summarizes: "In high naturalism the lives of the characters have soaked into their environment ... Moreover, the environment has soaked into the lives' ... If the key play of realism is Ibsen's *Ghosts*, that of naturalism is Tolstoi's peasant *Power of Darkness*, forbidden in Russia but played in Paris in 1886." (The Cambridge Guide to Theatre, 1992, p. 72)

2.5 Previous Studies

In drama, Ibsen is legendary. He comes in second only to Shakespeare. Hence, previous studies regarding his life and work are abundant. This kind of makes the job confusing, tricky, and difficult. The confusion occurs at the beginning from the multitude of reading. Next, choosing which track is problematic, it gets slippery as one delves into each; thesis, book, paper or even a review. The difficulty arises with the thought of addition. Hopefully, this study will be fitting for a block in this great wall.

The studies are divided into two sections; starting by books in one. In the second we have the Journal articles, thesis, reviews and papers.

- **Books**

- *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism Art, Theater, Philosophy* (2006)

In her book, Toril Moi, presents a radical new account of Ibsen that places him rightfully alongside Baudelaire, Flaubert, and Manet as a founder of European modernism. The book rewrites nineteenth-century literary history; positioning Ibsen between visual art and philosophy. It offers a critique of traditional theories of the opposition between realism and modernism. *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism* is the first major critical study in English of Henrik Ibsen for almost forty years.

Casting off the Shackles of Family – Ibsen’s Nora Figure in Modern Chinese Literature 1918-1942 (2004) by Shuei-may Chang

Shuei-may Chang’s book is a new and important contribution to the existing scholarship of Ibsen’s reception in China. Her theoretical approach of the ‘heroic pattern’ is relevant to Nora and her Chinese counterparts, her analysis of the Nora theme in modern Chinese literature both sensitive and sensible, her discussion of the social and political context of Ibsen’s reception in China illuminating.

➤ *‘The New Woman: Fiction and feminism at the fin de siècle’* (1997) by Sally Ledger

In her book ledger discusses the new woman phenomenon at the end of the nineteenth century. She lays special importance to women writers in late Victorian Britain. Ledger talks about the textual representations of the New Woman -particularly unsympathetic representations and there was a multitude of those. Such depiction did not always coincide with contemporary feminist beliefs and activities. ... The New Woman was very much a fin-de-siècle phenomenon.

- *'Woman's Role in Cultural Life in Norway'* (1985) By Norwegian National Commission

This formal UN handbook provided a more comprehensive understanding of the women status in Norway. It is a compilation of different views.

Today's debates are in many ways similar to the situation in the 1880's. In the same way as during the cultural fermentation at the end of the last century, women will today claim their right to influence society on a par with men. A society in change is a mobile society. During such periods of transformation there are openings for profound social changes.

From women's point of view the breaking up of traditional bonds has almost always been advantageous. The greatest possible diversity is a condition for liberation.

- *Quintessence of Ibsenism* By Bernard Shaw Now Completed to the Death of Ibsen (1913)

Critics are at odds regarding Shaw's *Quintessence*; some in favor, others say Shaw was off-point and there are those who believed [peculiarly] the *Quintessence* was for self-promotion. He advocates that Ibsen liked to raise ideas in his characters that would polarize the public in their opinions and encourage dialogue. Shaw was a close personal friend of Ibsen and gives many examples of Ibsen promoting total equality for all people, especially women. The book was issued in 1891 Ibsen was still alive. "*it is not a critical essay on the poetic beauties of Ibsen , but simply an exposition of Ibsenism*" (June 1891). *The*

Quintessence relays Shaw's positive stance and support of Ibsen contrary to the reception received in England.

The English people were into two; those who were revolted by Ibsen's work and others who hailed him the 'greatest living dramatic poet, and moral teacher'. To those who were anti-Ibsen Shaw retorts: "There is nothing new, then, in the defiance of duty by the reformer: every step of progress means a duty repudiated, and a scripture torn up. And every reformer is denounced accordingly: ... Mary Wollstonecraft as an unwomanly virago ... and Ibsen as all the things enumerated in The daily Telegraph. (p. 9)

Journal Articles / Theses

- 'A Feminist Analysis of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*' (June 2016) Saman S. Hassan Balaky & Nafser A. Mosawir Sulaiman

This article came up compelling views on the play, touching on Nora's transformation. It displayed the stock role of the supernatural as human being with virtue as well as faults. The researchers disclosed Mrs. Linde in a new light linking her to the idea of the separate spheres in a beautiful way. Their view was that earning her own money and being independent has not harmed Mrs. Linde. She enjoys her work but also longs for the role of a loving mother and wife. She is supposed to show that a woman who enjoys her financial independence does not have to give up family life. They also made a point of how Ibsen's used two different couples in his play to show how the fate of a marriage based on the equality of both spouses differentiates from one based on the dominance of the husband and the suppression of the wife.

- ‘Ibsen’s Treatment of Women’ (Feb 25, 2016) Md Amir Hossain*

The article focuses on Ibsen’s plays in the light of his attitude towards female marginalization, subordination, psychological trauma, dilemma, rights, and the suffrage of women, and oppression of the 19th century Scandinavian bourgeois society. It makes a thorough study of Ibsen’s treatment of women in different phases of his literary career. It also examines Ibsen’s skills in exploring powerful women, both in their individual spheres and in relation to the people around them. Ibsen has presented his women as bold, revolutionary, powerful, unconventional, and unfeminine figures. On the other hand, some of them are weak, tame, obedient, the so-called darling, conventional and mild categories. They are devoted to achieving their identity, freedom, self-existence, empowerment, right, and suffragettes.

- ‘Ibsen in Georgia: Milestones in the Reception’ (2015) LoriaKakhaber

The article is about Ibsen’s influence of Henrik Ibsen and how he played an important part on the Georgian stage, as well as in Georgian literary thought. Since the publication of Ibsen’s biography in the newspaper *Kvaliin* 1897, the dramatist has been continuously discussed, translated, written about and performed in Georgia. Ibsen has been received under different circumstances and by different generations. Therefore to pursue the reception of Ibsen in Georgia is, in a way, to pursue the development of Georgian intellectual and cultural history in the period. Ibsen was and is constantly referred to in Georgian literary

studies, not least in connection with Georgian writers. In post-Soviet Georgia, Ibsen is very much on the agenda, and his plays are produced and discussed as they always have been.

- ‘The Socio-Political Aspect in Ibsen’s Plays’ (October 2013) Dr. RregjinaGokaj& Dr. OlimbiVelaj

This article analyzes the aspects that Ibsen’s plays more often offered to the reader and to the audience: the socio-political ones. The plays taken into consideration are the most notable of the playwright, *A Doll’s House*, *Ghosts*, *Pillars of Society*. The socio-political aspect in these plays is clear and marks the starting point of a new epoch in which the writers began bringing to light real problems of everyday on the stage. The reader or the audience becomes a witness of the moral intrigue as it develops; be it farce or tragedy till the construction of lies slowly begins to fall apart like a card-house. The researchers brings to comparison the main characters of these plays, the Ladies, respectively Mrs. Helmer, Mrs. Alving and Mrs. Bernick, because their roles are crucial in the events of the play and in the analysis of the social and political aspect theme.

- ‘The Pillar of Ibsenian Drama: Henrik Ibsen and *Pillars of Society*, Reconsidered’ (2011) Robert J. Cardullo

Pillars of Society was the work that got William Archer excited about Ibsen, and it was the first Ibsen play to be translated into English—by Archer. Cardullo then writes it was passed over and forgotten by critics. This play actually comes directly before *A Doll House*, LonaHessel is Nora’s forerunner. The play is still approached as a

“problem play” in the narrowest definition of that term. Shaw was correct in pointing out that actually, all good plays are “problem” plays. Ibsen is implying that if we want to change society, we must bring new “timber” and rebuild from the inside out, not just continue to repair the faulty exterior.

- ‘A Comparative Feminist Reading of LesiaUkrainka’s and Henrik Ibsen’s Dramas’ (December 2007)SvitlanaKrys

This article attempted to compare and contrast Ukrainka’s and Ibsen’s feminisms, as articulated in their dramas. The analysis demonstrates that Ukrainka’s female characters obtain much stronger characteristics, than Ibsen’s. The researcher drew from this the conclusion that Ukrainka’s dramas depict a more advanced vision of women. She moves in a new direction, starting thematically and conceptually where Ibsen ends. While the male writer, only recognizes the woman’s right to protest against the patriarchal society and hints at the possibility of female power, independence, and ability to earn money. Ukrainka, a female, straight forwardly argues that men are not alone in desiring power; in her view, the “new woman” is an equal to the man.

- ‘The Doll House Backlash: Criticism, Feminism, and Ibsen’ (January 1989) Joan Templeton

In this article Templeton abolishes Meyer and other critics claim that Ibsen was not a feminist. His rescuers she contemplates cite Ibsen’s statement at Norwegian Women's Rights League on the May 26 1898 at a seventieth-birthday banquet given in his honor. They flaunt his disclaim of the honor as a winning card. She retaliates that: *A Doll House* is a

natural development of the play Ibsen had just written, the unabashedly feminist *Pillars of Society*; both plays reflect Ibsen's extremely privileged feminist education, which he shared with few other nineteenth-century male authors and which he owed to a trio of extraordinary women: SuzannahThoresen Ibsen, his wife; MagdalenThoresen, his colleague at the Norwegian National Theatre in Bergen, who was Suzannah's stepmother and former governess; and Camilla WergelandCollett, Ibsen's literary colleague, valued friend, and the founder of Norwegian feminism.

- 'The Sun Always Rises: Ibsen's Ghosts as Tragedy?' Robert W. Corrigan (October 1959)

The article is about how *Ghosts* –the still controversial play– created the biggest stir in Europe of all of Ibsen's. Theatres in London produced this play as a symbol and a harbinger of their freedom. This thesis is deep analysis of Mrs. Alving character and how that although her sun did rise she was not enlightened by it. This sunrise of traditional tragedy, which celebrates the "joy and meaning of life," is not the sunrise of futility. It is not the sunrise which sheds its rays as an ironic and bitter joke on a demented boy asking his equally helpless mother: "Mother, give me the sun, The sun-the sun!" Perhaps Mrs. Alving is more tragic than Oedipus, Hamlet, or Lear; but if she is, her tragedy must be evaluated by new canons of judgment; for she differs from her predecessors in kind and not degree.

- 'Ibsen's Political and Social Ideas' (Feb 1925) PhilipGeorge Nesperius

This paper expands on Ibsen's life doctrine. Nesrius picked his way through the poet's life and work analyzing what made him tick. He states that Ibsen "political issue was to advance the country and elevate the people and he consistently strove to attain it." The Poet's main focus was the individual. Man, "to be himself," is "to realize himself." He dared to be himself; he spoke the truth when he saw it, and fought for his convictions. The author toured Ibsen's important moments of them was his famous speech to the ladies of the women league and how on mothers lies the 'advancement of the country'.

- 'The Woman Who Did: Janet Achurch, Ibsen, and the New Woman, Australia 1889–1891' By Christine Judith Angel PhD (September 2014)

The thesis opens with the Australian theatre in the late nineteenth century was in transition and how it was like the country, seeking its own identity in a period of social change. Then moves on to clarify how the contributions made to its development by men are well documented; and those made by women have received much less recognition. Angel then declares: "This thesis addresses that hiatus, by examining the life, celebrity, and influence of, English actress Achurch. It focuses on her 1889–91 Australian tour and the ambivalent responses to her portrayal of Nora in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*."

- 'Women in Reality: A Rhetorical Analysis of Three of Henrik Ibsen's Plays in Order to Determine the Most Prevalent Feminist Themes' (2007) Lesa M. Bradford

This researcher is taking an in-depth look at *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, and *Hedda Gabler*. These plays were among the first to challenge women's roles in society. The thesis is a try disavow the idea that he was creating women who were crazy or out of touch with reality. He was in fact being more true to life and was able to discern the women's dilemma and day to day conflicts. Attention should be drawn to the significance of the women characters. These women that Ibsen created did things and acted in ways that were shocking to the society in which they lived in.

- 'Ibsen and Tragedy: A Study in Lykke' (31 March 2003) Anne-Marie Victoria Stanton-Ife

This thesis traces Ibsen's development as a writer of tragedy through lykke; contingency and happiness. Aristotle's arguments in the *Poetics* for the secularization of tragedy are examined, along with basic ethical and tragic categories of eudemonia (happiness) and *tuche* (luck). The case is then made for seeing Norwegian lykke as a concept straddling both these notions. This lengthy study covers the concept of tragedy in eight plays of the Ibsen canon. It has interpreted its conclusions about Ibsen's development as a tragedian as falling into three phases: high tragedy; naturalist-realist tragedy and finally, a significant variation on high tragedy. The researcher follows Ibsen closely in the plays detecting the small change in notions.

- 'Self-Realization in the Works of Henrik Ibsen' (1948) R. A. McCormick

This thesis is an exercise in dramatic criticism, in the examination and clarification of the concept of self-realization in Ibsen's thought. First it examined the concept itself and showed its presence in the plays.

Secondly it indicated that this concept is the origin of tragedy in Ibsen's dramas. At the end we reach Ibsen realization that in self-assertion there is no particular truth or virtue unless that assertion is held in conformity with objective truth.

- 'Finding the Poem Inside the Play: Robert Brustein's Theory and Practice of Ibsen's Drama' Jonathan Oppenheim

This thesis goal is to create a dialogue between Ibsen scholarship and performance by investigating the work of Robert Brustein. He is one contemporary example of a scholar practitioner who bridges the gap between Ibsen theory and performance. The thesis therefore investigates American theater scholar, drama critic, producer, director and educator Robert Brustein's contribution to Ibsen Studies. Arthur Miller's prose-realist interpretation of Ibsen countered that of Brustein's; thus the latter developed his own alternate poetic and non-causal interpretation which he presented in his writings, on his stages, and to his students.

CHAPTER III

IBSEN: THE SOCIAL REFORMER

3.1 Introduction

The researcher does not support the approach of ‘examining the text on its own’ [Formalist criticism]. Not with Ibsen. Moreover, not in this particular study. In order to maintain a thorough understanding of the plays, one needs to decipher the ‘individual’ behind such works. It is as stated by the Norwegian himself:

And what does it mean, then, to be a poet? It was a long time before I realized that to be a poet means essentially to see, but mark well, to see in such a way that whatever is seen is perceived by the audience just as the poet saw it. But only what has been lived through can be seen in that way and accepted in that way. And the secret of modern literature lies precisely in this matter of experiences that are lived through. All that I have written these last ten years, I have lived through spiritually. But no poet lives through anything in isolation. What he lives through all of his countrymen live through with him. If that were not so, what would bridge the gap between the producing and the receiving minds? (Ibsen, 1910, p.49)

This section of the backbone of the thesis it holds within the essence on which the analysis of the two plays will fall.

Hence, in this chapter we survey Ibsen’s whole life and works in the first part. In the second part, we look at the doctrine with which was his life conducted. Some observations belong to the researcher but most of the text is taken from Ibsen biographers as declared in the Preface.

3.2 HENRIK IBSEN (1828-1906)

Punctually on the stroke of one, there, entering the doorway, was the dour and bristling presence known to all the world in caricature ••• the great ruff of white whisker, ferociously standing out all around his sallow, bilious face, as if dangerously charged with electricity ••• the immaculate silk hat, the white tie, the frock-coated martinet’s figure

dressed from top to toe in old-fashioned black broad cloth, at once funereal and professional, the trousers concertinaed apparently, with dandiacal design, at the ankles, over his highly polished boots, the carefully folded umbrella--all was there apparitionally before me; a forbidding, disgruntled, tight-lipped presence, starchily dignified, straight as a ramrod; there he was, as I hinted, with a touch of grim dandyism about him, but with no touch of human kindness about his parchment skin or fierce badger eyes. He might have been a Scotch elder entering before the kirk. (Le Gallienne, 1961, p. xxxvii) (cited in Duncan, 1968, p.1)

Henrik Johan Ibsen born March 20, 1828, Skien, Norway—died May 23, 1906, Christiania [now Oslo]. He is a major Norwegian playwright of the late nineteenth century. After Shakespeare, he is considered as the second most influential and insightful dramatist and poet of the 19th century. Ibsen introduced to the European stage a new order of moral analysis that was placed against a severely realistic middle-class background and developed with economy of action, penetrating dialogue, and rigorous thought. Hermann J. Weigand writes:

To have any vital meaning, an artist's greatness, comparative or absolute, must be intuitively experienced. Now the touchstone for measuring the degree of Ibsen's greatness is the intensity of the original imaginative response evoked in each individual reader by Ibsen's work. And that is the test from which there is no appeal. (1953, p.410)

Ibsen was a poet, 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 modern drama. Ibsen was a leader in the campaign for a modern radical and realistic literature in the cultural life of Scandinavia. He challenged the values of middle-class society and formulated the basic rights and liberties of the individual.

3.2.1 Early Life

Ibsen was born at Skien, a small lumbering town of southern Norway. His father was a respected general merchant in the community. In 1836, he suffered the permanent disgrace of going bankrupt. As a result, he sank into a querulous penury, which his wife's withdrawn and somber religiosity did nothing to mitigate. There was no redeeming the family misfortunes.

After his father's unfortunate bankruptcy Ibsen's marked individuality began to be perceived. He did not play with the other children. While they played in the yard he retired into a little room opening upon a passage which led to the kitchen. His sister writes in one of her letters, "For us he was not a comfortable boy to get along with, and we used to bother him regularly by throwing stones and snowballs at the walls and door to get him to come out to play with us". In his room he kept company of some old books. The Bible held a peculiar fascination for the youth.

The house in which he was born is a large edifice known as the Stockmann House, in the centre of the town of Skien. The house stood on one side of a large, open square; the town pillory was at the right of and the mad-house, the lock-up and other amiable urban institutions to the left; in front was Latin school and the grammar school, while the church occupied the middle of the square. Over this stern prospect the tourist can no longer sentimentalize, for the whole of this part of Skien was burned down in 1886, to the poet's unbridled satisfaction. "The inhabitants of Skien," he said with grim humor, "were quite unworthy to possess my birthplace." (Gosse, 2005, Ch.1)

The harsh elements of landscape, mentioned above, were those which earliest captivated the Playwright's infant attention and he added that the square space, with the church in the midst of it, was filled all day long with the dull and droning sound of many waterfalls, while from dawn to dusk this drone of waters was constantly cut through by a sound that was like the sharp screaming and moaning of women. This was caused by hundreds of saws at work beside the waterfalls, taking advantage of that force.

In 1888, just before his sixtieth birthday, Ibsen wrote out for Henrik Jaeger certain autobiographical recollections of his childhood. It is from these that the striking phrase about the scream of the saws is taken, and that is perhaps the most telling of these infant memories, many of which are slight and naive. It is interesting, however, to find that his earliest impressions of life at home were of an optimistic character.

Very soon he began to go to school, after the move, but to neither of the public institutions in the town. He attended what is described as a 'small middle-class school,' kept by a man called Johan Hansen, who was the only person connected with his childhood, except his sister, for whom the poet retained in after life any agreeable sentiment. "*Johan Hansen*," he says, "*had a mild, amiable temper, like that of a child*," and when he died, in 1865, Ibsen mourned him. The sexton at Skien, who helped in the lessons, described the poet afterwards as "a quiet boy with a pair of wonderful eyes, but with no sort of cleverness except an unusual gift for drawing." Hansen taught Ibsen Latin and theology, gently, perseveringly, without any striking results. So little was talent expected from him that when, at the age of about fifteen, he composed a rather

melodramatic description of a dream, the schoolmaster looked at him gloomily, and said he must have copied it out of some book!

As soon as he could age [15/16], Henrik moved to Grimstad which is the hamlet of some 800 persons down the coast. There he supported himself meagerly as an apothecary's apprentice while studying nights for admission to the university. During this period he used his few leisure moments to write a play. He worked at the pharmacy for six years and in the rarely given spare time he continued writing plays and painting.

3.2.2 Early Career

Ibsen moved to Christiania (Oslo) in 1850 to prepare for university examinations to study at the University of Christiania. Living in the capital, he made friends with other writers and artistic types. One of these friends, Ole Schulerud, paid for the publication of Ibsen's first play *Catiline*, (1850) which failed to get much notice. *Catiline* grew out of the Latin texts Ibsen had to study for his university examinations. Though not a very good play, it showed a natural bent for the theatre and embodied themes that would preoccupy Ibsen as long as he lived -the rebellious hero, his destructive mistress.

Roman Lucius Catiline, the noble, is the main character in this historical drama. He is torn between two women, his wife Aurelia and the Vestal virgin Furia. As characteristic of Ibsen's early work, the play is in blank verse. Although *Catiline* may not be among Ibsen's best plays, it foreshadows many of the themes found in his later works. Catiline, full of doubts and torn between love and duty, is similar to protagonists in *John Gabriel Borkman* and *The Master Builder*. Furia is also the prototype of some of the later female characters, such as Hedda Gabler.

- **Managing the Dream**

The following year, Ibsen had a fateful encounter with violinist and theater manager Ole Bull. Bull liked Ibsen and offered him a job as a writer and manager for the Norwegian Theatre in Bergen. The position proved to be an intense tutorial in all things theatrical and even included traveling abroad to learn more about his craft. In 1857, Ibsen returned to Christiania to run another theater there. This proved to be a frustrating venture for him, with others claiming that he mismanaged the theater and calling for his ouster. Two of the last plays that Ibsen wrote for the Norwegian stage showed signs of new spiritual energy:

Love's Comedy (*Kjaerlighedenskomedie* 1862), a satire on romantic illusions, was violently unpopular, but it expressed an authentic theme of anti-idealism that Ibsen would soon make his own.

The Pretenders (*Kongsemnerne* 1863) he dramatized the mysterious inner authority that makes a man a man, a king, or a great playwright. This one play was in fact the national drama after which Ibsen had been groping so long, and before long it would be recognized as such.

But it came too late; though the play was good, the theatre in Christiania was bankrupt, and Ibsen's career as a stage writer was apparently at an end. But the death of his theatre was the liberation of Ibsen as a playwright. Without regard for a public he thought petty and illiberal, without care for traditions he found hollow and pretentious, he could now write for himself. He decided to go abroad and applied for a small state grant. He was awarded part of it, and in April 1864 he left Norway for Italy. For the next 27 years he lived abroad, mainly in Rome, Dresden, and Munich, returning to Norway only for short visits in 1874 and 1885.

For reasons that he sometimes summarized as “small-mindedness,” his homeland had left a very bitter taste in his mouth.

- **Ibsen & Modern Drama**

Honing his dramatic technique over half a century, Ibsen almost single handedly brought a new seriousness to the theatre, and he has been regarded as the originator of Modern Drama ever since. (N A 2013, p 850) Ibsen was a leader in the campaign for a modern radical and realistic literature in the cultural life of Scandinavia of this age, and challenged the values of middle-class society and formulated the basic rights and liberties of the individual.

Whatever particular meanings “modernism takes on when it is used to categorize different writers or genres, scholars of the diverse movement agree that its chief characteristic was a thoroughgoing revolt against the prevailing order: it was one of the “cataclysmic upheavals of culture”; it was “committed to everything human experience that militates against custom” (Ellmann, Feidelson, 1965). From the 1870’s to the end of the century, “Ibsenism” was synonymous with modernism because Ibsen was the most fearless debunker of the idols of Western culture during a time when “ideas, ideals, relationships unchanged since time out of mind were vulnerable to attack and open to amendment (Gay, 1984).

- **The Father of Realism**

Henrik Ibsen was a well-known Norwegian playwright. The works of Ibsen along with those of Emile Zola (1840-1902) introduced the spirit of realism and naturalism in drama. Ibsen placed the themes and situations

of contemporary life on stage and made serious drama a mirror as well as a stern monitor of his age.

Ibsen is often ranked as one of the most distinguished playwrights in the European tradition. He is widely regarded as the most important playwright since Shakespeare. He influenced other playwrights and novelists such as George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, Arthur Miller, James Joyce, Eugene O'Neill, and Miroslav Krleža. Ibsen was nominated for the Nobel Prize in Literature in 1902, 1903, and 1904.

- **Closer Look from Afar**

In his 'Task of a Poet' speech to the student Ibsen mentioned that his vision of Norway got sharper and he sees his home country even more clearly than when he was living there. He was in a self-imposed exile but he seemed to have left his heart behind. All his writings were addressing his fellow countrymen. Ibsen wrote his plays in Danish (the common written language of Denmark and Norway) and they were published by the Danish publisher Gyldendal. Although most of his plays are set in Norway—often in places reminiscent of Skien, the port town where he grew up.

3.2.3 Middle Career

Brand (1866) was his first play abroad. Its central figure is a dynamic rural pastor who takes his religious calling with a blazing sincerity that transcends not only all forms of compromise but all traces of human sympathy and warmth as well. "*All or nothing*" is the demand that his god makes of Brand and that Brand in turn makes of others. In Norway *Brand* was a tremendous popular success, even though (and in part because) its central meaning was so troubling. (Adams, 2018)

Peer Gynt (1867) hard on the heels of *Brand* came another drama in rhymed couplets presenting an utterly antithetical view of human nature. *Peer Gynt* is a satirical fantasy which resembles an epic poem and is aimed at the weaknesses of society and human nature. The character Peer symbolizes mankind in general: 'As Thomas H. Dickinson said, He is an adventurer, a charlatan, a good-natured fellow, a man of imagination, a snob, and a pathetic figure'. (Cited in Hubbs, 1970, p.3) These two figures are interdependent and antithetical types who under different guises run through most of Ibsen's classic work. Both *Brand* and *Peer Gynt* are universal archetypes as well as unforgettable individuals.

Emperor and Galilean (1873 *Kejser og Galilaeer*) came after these two poetic dramas. He finished this philosophical historical drama on the Roman emperor Julian the Apostate. But it was in a 10-act form too diffuse and wordy for the stage.

The League of Youth (1869 *De ungesforbund*) this one was a modern satire. This play was the warming of the pan, Ibsen writings direction was changing at the time.

▪ **Social Plays**

A sense of patriotism was behind the inspiration of Ibsen's social dramas. Going through his work one notices the changes. The family's misfortune, youth hardship, and the alienation from his home country for 27 long years, also contributed. Ibsen dramas were non-traditional and out of time. His social plays were theatre for a purpose. Non-traditional drama like his was an abomination. In today's world this is a science in

its own, with its own diversity such as; educational drama, theoretical drama, and cultural drama:

These practices can be grouped generally under the terms *applied drama* and *applied theater*. *Applied drama* is defined by Nicholson as “drama which is specifically intended to have a social, educational or communitarian purpose” (as cited in Grady, 2003, p. 68), while O’Toole (2004) describes *applied theater* as “the use of theatre for non-traditional purposes and applied in non-conventional contexts” (§ 3). Both Nicholson and O’Toole refer to drama and theater activities outside of traditional educational settings. (Cited in McCammon, p.946)

Pillars of Society(1877 *Samfundets støtter*) a prose satire on small-town politics, produced after many preliminary drafts. Here the heat is up a notch. The play is a realistic social drama, exposing the hypocrisy and degradation of community leaders.

3.2.3.1 A Doll House (Etdukkehem 1879)

Now he opened fire and the combat was ferocious. *A Doll* portrayed a woman’s assertion of her independence and individuality by breaking off her family bonds. The play presents a very ordinary family—a bank manager named Torvald Helmer, his wife, Nora, and their three little children. Torvald supposes himself the ethical member of the family, while his wife assumes the role of a pretty irresponsible in order to flatter him. Into this snug, not to say stifling, arrangement intrude several hard-minded outsiders, one of whom threatens to expose a fraud that Nora had once committed (without her husband’s knowledge) in order to obtain a loan needed to save his life. When Nora’s husband finally learns about this dangerous secret, he reacts with outrage and repudiates her out of concern for his own social reputation. Utterly disillusioned about her husband, whom she now sees as a hollow fraud,

Nora declares her independence of him and their children and leaves them, slamming the door of the house behind her in the final scene.

The slam reverberated throughout Europe and audiences were scandalized at Ibsen's refusal to scrape together (as any other contemporary playwright would have done) a "happy ending," however shoddy or contrived. But that was not Ibsen's way; his play was about knowing oneself and being true to that self. Torvald, who had thought all along that he was a sturdy ethical agent, proves to be a hypocrite and a weak compromiser; his wife is not only an ethical idealist but a destructive one, as severe as Brand.

The setting of *A Doll House* is ordinary to the point of transparency. Ibsen's plot exploits with cold precision the process known as "analytic exposition." A secret plan (Nora's forgery) is about to be concluded (she can now finish repaying the loan), but, before the last step can be taken, a bit of the truth must be told, and the whole deception unravels. It is a pattern of stage action at once simple and powerful.

Ibsen followed the production of *A Doll House* closely, writing multiple letters to stage directors all over. He regretted the modification he did for one German director, for fear that the adaptation be done by someone else. He urged other theatres to use the original script and follow the stage direction. He attended many productions himself.

Plot Overview

It is the story of Mrs. Nora Helmer who is her husband's 'squirrel', his 'dove', and plays the role exceedingly well. She is a doll, a mere chattel. Her whole life has been in her husband's keeping. She acts like a

child, and is correspondingly treated like a child. She is naively convinced of her husband's completely self-sacrificing life for her.

Nora's husband, Helmer, once fell critically ill. A change to warm European climate was advised but Helmer declined the trip since he had not the money and refused to borrow it. Nora, however, borrowed it from a certain moneylender, Krogstad, but could not obtain her father's endorsement for the loan because he was dying. Nora forged the note and as the drama opens is working *off* the payment by clandestine scrivener's work. Krogstad, now unemployed and in bad repute because of a forgery, reappears and reveals to Nora the fearsome position in which he has her. This he presses as motivation to solicit Nora's support in reinstating himself. To her first suggestions that he reinstate Krogstad, Helmer replies with a scorching lecture on the malice of forgery. In the face of this, rather than reveal her position to Helmer, Nora decides to borrow the necessary money from Dr. Rank, a Platonic third in the Helmer household. She employs coquetry on Rank and, to her consternation, he responds with an avowal of passion for her. Now she begins to realize the source of her power. She feels the disclosure of the forgery has become inevitable--as she could not possibly take money from Rank now and begins to contemplate suicide rather than allow her husband to assume the blame of the forgery as she is certain he will. Helmer reads of the forgery through a delayed letter from Krogstad and is indignant; he begins to declare Nora unworthy to bring up her children, calls her a criminal, and heaps abuse on her. Nora, ignorant of her crime and conscious only of the sacrifice she has made of her life for Helmer, defends her action. A letter comes from Krogstad inclosing the bond and

freei~ Nora from all obligations --for Krogstad has found new happiness in the possession of Mrs. Linde whom he had formerly loved but lost. Helmer now becomes very happy and forgives Nora. She, however, realizes the expediency of her husband's devotion.

Nora realizes that her life has been that of a doll and decides to leave home, convinced that leave she must if she intends to found her life on truth and not on the illusion of her husband's devotion.

3.2.3.2 Ghosts(Gengangere1881),

Ibsen's next play created even more dismay than its predecessor by showing worse consequences of covering up even more ugly truths. In *Ghosts* he stirred up even more controversy by tackling such topics as incest and venereal disease. The outcry was so strong that the play wasn't performed widely until two years later. Outwardly, the play's theme is congenital venereal disease. On another level, it deals with the power of ingrained moral contamination to undermine the most determined idealism.

Plot Overview:

Mrs. Alving, at the instigation of her mother and two aunts, had married an attractive and genial but recklessly and shamelessly dissolute Captain Alving Even after their marriage Captain Alving persevered in his orgies and loose habits. The great sufferer was Mrs. Alving who could stand the lie no longer and fled to Pastor Manders whom she really loved. Manders severely rebuked Mrs. Alving and persuaded her that it was her duty to return to her husband. She did so but Alving's libertine ways continued and Mrs. Alving set in to devote her entire life to

preserve her husband's name from execration and to veil his real life from the world.

One day she overheard a scuffle in an adjoining room between her husband and her maid, Joanna. Captain Alving had his way with the woman, and the child of this intrigue, Regina, Mrs. Alving took into her service in her mother's place. She herself then bore Alving a boy, but, determined to protect him from the morally polluted atmosphere, sent him abroad at an early age. Alving's debauches continued until his death and Mrs. Alving, ever concerned to screen his way of life, from public knowledge, has erected an orphanage in his honor. As the play opens, Oswald Alving has just returned home from abroad. In Oswald Mrs. Alving sees the ghost of his father. He attempts seduction of Regina and when his mother asks for an explanation of this action, Oswald reveals the true state of his condition.

He is suffering from a diseased brain consequent on his father's immorality. He is doomed to sudden imbecility and a living death. Once disillusioned in his love for Regina--for Mrs. Alving has revealed to him that Regina is his half-sister--Oswald asks and obtains his mother's promise that she will administer morphia tablets when the dread disease strikes. Suddenly Oswald repeats "Mother, give me the sun," and Mrs. Alving, in a state of indecision, recognizes the horrible state of her boy. The play ends as she is pondering the use of the morphia tablets.

Even after lecherous Captain Alving is in his grave, his ghost will not be laid to rest. In the play, the lying memorial that his conventionally minded widow has erected to his memory burns down; his son goes insane from inherited syphilis and his illegitimate daughter advances

irrevocably toward her destiny in a brothel. The play is a grim study of contamination spreading through a family. Down the drain goes all the covering up of the widowed Mrs. Alving's in her trials to maintain society's respectable views.

An Enemy of the People (*En folkefiende* 1882) Ibsen's response arrived in the form of a direct dramatic counterattack; Doctor Stockmann, the hero of the play was Ibsen's mouthpiece. In earlier plays, controversial elements were important and even pivotal components of the action, but they were on the small scale of individual households. In *An Enemy*, controversy became the primary focus, and the antagonist was the entire community. One primary message of the play is that the individual, who stands alone, is more often 'right' than the mass of people, who are portrayed as ignorant and sheep like. *An Enemy of the People* was written as a response to the people who had rejected his previous work, *Ghosts*.

- **Symbolism**

Again Ibsen writing took a turn, though, an inwardly one. There was severe change of direction but he tended to be more self-analytic and symbolic.

The Wild Duck (1884 *Vildanden*) marked a complete reversed point of view from Ibsen by presenting onstage an unjustified, destructive truth-teller whose compulsion visits catastrophic misery on a family of helpless innocents. The havoc wrought on the Ekdal family is pathetic rather than tragic. But the working-out of the action achieves a kind of mournful poetry that is quite new in Ibsen's repertoire.

In *Rosmersholm* (1886), we find variants of the destructive saint [Brand] and the all-too-human rogue [Peer] once more strive to define their identities.

The Lady from the Sea (1888) *Fruenfrahavet*, This symbolic play is centered on a lady called Ellida. She is the daughter of a lighthouse-keeper, and grew up where the fjord met the open sea; she loves the sea. It circles around the strong power of freedom and how it leads to satisfaction and happiness.

Hedda Gabler (1890) is vitalized by the presence of a demonically idealistic and totally destructive female with resemblance of Catiline. With Hedda Ibsen created one of theater's most notorious characters. Hedda, a general's daughter, is a newlywed who has come to loathe her scholarly husband. Yet, she destroys a former love who stands in her husband's way academically. The character has sometimes been called the female Hamlet, after Shakespeare's famous tragic figure.

3.2.4 Later Years

Ibsen later works seem to have a more self-reflective quality with mature lead characters looking back and living with the consequences of their earlier life choices, and each drama seems to end on a dark note.

The Master Builder (1892 *Bygmester Solness*), tells of an aging artist who is bitterly aware of his failing powers. He encounters a woman from his past who encourages him to make good on a promise.

Little Eyolf (1894 *Lille Eyolf*) is a play in three acts produced the following year of its publishing. This complex psychological drama is acclaimed for its subtle intricacies and profound ironies. Alfred Allmers returns from his mountain retreat to discover that his physically

disabled son, Eyolf, has drowned mysteriously. His relationship with his energetic wife, Rita, begins to deteriorate, and he decides to leave. They eventually reunite to piece together the family that was broken by Eyolf's sudden death.

John Gabriel Borkman (1896) The Borkman family fortunes have been brought low by the imprisonment of John Gabriel who used his position as a bank manager to speculate with his investors' money. The action of the play takes place eight years after Borkman's release when John Gabriel Borkman, Mrs. Borkman, and her twin sister Ella Rentheim fight over young Erhart Borkman's future.

When We Dead Awaken (1899 *Naar vidødevaagner*) is about an old sculptor runs into one of his former models and tries to recapture his lost creative spark. It proved to be his final play. Personal and confessional feelings infuse many of these last dramas; perhaps these resulted from Ibsen's decision in 1891 to return to Norway, or perhaps from the series of fascinated, fearful dalliances he had with young women in his later years.

- **Home Sweet Home**

In 1891, Ibsen returned to Norway as a literary hero. He may have left as a frustrated artist, but he came back as internationally known playwright. For much of his life, Ibsen had lived an almost reclusive existence. But he seemed to thrive in the spotlight in his later years, becoming a tourist attraction of sorts in Christiania. He also enjoyed the events held in his honor in 1898 to mark his seventieth birthday.

- **Last Years & Legacy**

In 1900, Ibsen had a series of strokes that left him unable to write. He managed to live for several more years, but he was not fully present during much of this time. Ibsen died on May 23, 1906. His last words were “*To the contrary!*” in Norwegian. Considered a literary titan at the time of his passing, he received a state funeral from the Norwegian government.

Ibsen’s authorship comprises the sum of 300 poem and 26/28 plays [some of which are not translated into English]. Ibsen biographers indicated that in his writing Ibsen was trying to work out a certain sequence of philosophical ideas hence his advice that his work should be reviewed collectively. True to his vision that he had a ‘calling’ and he will sustain it he did; and he wanted people to understand it. Arthur Miller fluently summed up the source of Ibsen's success in the following quote:

There is one quality in Ibsen that no serious writer can afford to overlook. It lies at the very center of his force, and I found in it - as I hope others will – a profound source of strength. It is his insistence, his utter conviction, that he is going to say what he has to say, and that the audience, by God, is going to listen. It is the very same quality that makes a star actor, a great public speaker and a lunatic. Every Ibsen play begins with the unwritten words: ‘Now listen here!’ (Cited in Hubbs, 1970, p.1)

While Ibsen may be gone, his work continues to be performed around the world. *Peer Gynt*, *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler* are the most widely produced plays today. Actresses, such as Gillian Anderson and Cate Blanchette, have taken on Ibsen's Nora and

Hedda Gabler characters, which are considered to be two of the most demanding theatrical roles ever. Ibsen's works have held up over the years because he tapped into universal themes and explored the human condition in a way unlike any of those before him. Author James Joyce once wrote that Ibsen 'has provoked more discussion and criticism than of any other living man.' To this day, his plays continue to challenge his audiences.

3.3 Ibsen's Philosophy

Henrik Ibsen is a legendary figure in the history of modern drama. His tenacious will appointed him a well-deserved seat amongst the great. Of his greatness Jacobs (1993) asserts: "An artist and philosopher very much of his time and age, a thinker whose doctrines could be placed in a neat juxtaposition to the belief of his contemporaries." (pp. 416-430) Through his writing critics picked at his thought stream and tried to pin down his philosophy in life:

Ibsen calls himself a humanist and rejects any dependence to special group or class or gender. His ultimate desire was truth and freedom, he believed they will lead to individuality. He stressed on new beginning and self-realization. He kept drumming on "Be wholly what you are," since Brand. Ibsen is called a socialist for his problem plays. Through them he was seeking to change and reform the degenerate morals of the society. Ibsen targeted the bourgeois society and class differentiations. He fought for the improvement of women's position and of their education. Ibsen opened fire on the untrue system of marriage, heredity, oppressive position of women within the family and hence society. Those themes were like a mantra in Ibsen's plays. (Moi, 2008)

Ibsen has opened channels for discussion through his penetrating verbose touching all the fundamental phases of human life. His adamant

attitude towards the relation of the individual to society, towards democracy in general, the bourgeois and exploitation of the working class, his view on the emancipation of women. Above all, the persistence on the ‘self-realized individual’ with himself –before other outside forces- are phases of his works which captivate and hold the interest of students.

There is an abundance of writings concerning Ibsen’s life and work. The researcher have read most of what could be obtained [but reliable] on the web. The archived texts formed a sound base for the thesis. On this part about the Poet’s doctrine those readings were of great importance; for in them lies Ibsen’s true convictions documented by him or detected by those closer to him.

Some of those who pursued Ibsen were mere critics of the man and his plays, others were acquaintance and few could be called friends or have formed a personal bondage of some sorts; of the latter the Danish critic Georg Brand and Ibsen’s biographer Archer. We have also many historians documenting him in the Norwegian history. A description of Ibsen looks by a journalist who interviewed him is included previously. As we will see there are those who were trying to penetrate even further:

The North breeds mystics. ... The brief, white nights, the chilly climate, the rugged, awful scenery, react on sensitive natures like Ibsen's. And then the various strains in his blood should not be forgotten,—Danish, German, Norwegian, and Scotch. Thus we get a gamut of moods,—philosophic, poetic, mystic, and analytic. And if he too frequently depicts pathologic states, is it not the fault of his epoch? Few dramatists have been more responsive to their century. (Huneker, 1910, I)

Ibsen was described by many critics as being ‘polemic’ “*He was more fearless than any author of his time in writing what he had felt, careless of criticism, heedless of insults, ignoring false interpreters*” (Roberts, 1912) After *A Doll House* he had quickened his pace following it with *Ghosts* bearing his chest for the expected public ferocious scorn.

According to Gosse (2005) “*Ibsen genius began to flare in 1848*”. He began to form his beliefs and purpose in life. He found his calling in life and he was persistent in pursuing it against all odds. Ibsen’s doctrine stood its ground true to Montrose Moses’ (1908) statement regarding Ibsen's efforts to shame his generation for living the lie:

At least he made his generation conscious of the lie. When he began, he was eager to place torpedoes beneath the tragic dead centers of our spiritual existence, beneath the stagnant social conventions. (p. 346)

3.3.1 Self-Realization:

Man, ‘to be himself,’ is ‘to realize himself.’ This fundamental thought is like a beacon of light throughout Ibsen’s writings. He stipulates that a man should be true to himself, master of that inexorable ‘will’ which generates and defines personal fortune; ready to sacrifice anything to the realization of this alternate good, is a principle which we find in his writing from the very beginning. (Jacobs, 418) In order to better understand Ibsen’s concepts, a few indicative excerpts from his correspondence are forthcoming:

“So to conduct one's life as to realize one's self--this seems to me the highest attainment possible to a human being. It is the task of one and all of us, but most of us bungle it,” (Letters, Laurvik, 1908, p.359)

The theme of self- realization forms constant presence in Ibsen authorship. The idea of self-realization haunted Ibsen and became the core of his drama and his intellectual revolt. (Downs, 1946, p.93) it is always there. Before looking into his other concepts a clear understanding of this major one should be made. So, precisely what is this ‘self’ that Ibsen is obsessive about?

In his *Four Lectures on Henrik Ibsen* (1892) Wicksteed says:

What is it to be one's self? God meant something when he made each one of us. For a man to embody that meaning of God in his words and deeds and so become in a degree 'a word of God made flesh', is to be himself. That is, he must kill the craving to make himself the center round which others revolve, and must strive to find his true orbit and swing self-poised round the great central light. (p.54 Archive.org)

More explanation by Ibsen himself is articulated in a letter he wrote to his friend, Georg Brandes. It shows clearly that Ibsen wishes for a complete independence from every external norm that might sway the will. Consequently, the self of which he speaks is the will choosing for itself with complete liberty and minus any outside interference:

What I chiefly desire for you is a genuine, fullblooded [sic] egoism, which shall force you for a time to regard what concerns yourself as the only thing of any consequence, and everything else as non-existent. (Letters, p.194)

‘It is the will alone that matters.’ (Gosse, 1907, p.99) Again Ibsen further clarifying his thought *“the great thing is to hedge about what is one's own--to keep it free and clear from everything outside that has no connection with it.”* (p.190) According to Gosse he *“felt the constraining*

effects of custom, convention, and law ... upon the action of the will". (p.233)

The reason 'self-realization' has this powerful dominance over his stream of thought he says is because it's; the highest attainment possible to a human being. In a letter to Laura Kieler (June 11, 1870) Ibsen remarks that: *... to become honest and truthful in dealing with one's self - not to determine to do this or determine to do that, but to do what one must do because one is one's self*". (Laurvik, p.194)

Looking into his advice to Kieler shows how the realized self handles truth. Such truth that consists of an honest act one way or the other because one must do what one must. This moral "must" is not forced on the individual because he should abide by an existing 'law and order' but rather an urge springing from 'one's- self. Hence the obligatory deed is dictated from the fact that 'one is one's self' and not on account for another.

Thus, Ibsen's notion of truth and honesty comes from one's compliance to one self. *"All the rest leads to falsehood"*. (p.194) So to conduct one's life as to realize one's self seems to be the brightest attainment possible to a human being; *"It is the task of one and all of us, but most of us bungle it."* (Laurvik, p. 359)

3.3.2 Political and Social Ideas

Ibsen was known for his animosity to all sorts of authority for their discouraging effect on the individual's liberty. His whole life has been one long fight as his verse; *"To live is to war with trolls."* (*Peer Gynt*) Derision was the long-lasting perspective of the Poet regarding politics:

The state must be abolished! In that revolution I will take part. Undermine the idea of the state; make willingness and spiritual kinship the only essentials in the case of a union -- and you have the beginning of a liberty that is of some value. The changing forms of government is mere toying with degrees -- a little more or a little less -- folly, the whole of it. (Ibsen, L, 1871)

Ibsen did not mind the fight and it was not for 'a care-free existence' but for "the possibility of devoting myself to the task which I believe and know has been laid upon me by God". Which was according to his letter to King Charles; to achieve what seemed important and needful in Norway than any other, that of arousing the nation and leading it to think great thoughts. The Norwegian was dismayed by the rotten state of his country-men. He believed that their elevation should be the foremost task; as Neserius (1925) puts it; "*To advance the country and elevate the people was Ibsen's cardinal aim, which he consistently strove to attain.*" (pp. 25-37)

Ibsen worldly fame came from his social plays. He employed his genius to refute what he deemed unjust. In his beginning, succeeding his university entrance exam, he was acquainted with an enlightened group of young men. They wrote to magazines and printed some anti-pamphlets, spreading the spirit of revolution. One day there was a police raid, his colleagues got captured and imprisoned and he barely escaped. Since then nothing so radically significant was recorded. Never the less, Ibsen's disdain of the government was no secret his scathing verbose needed no assurance. In a correspondence with Bjornson (1879), Ibsen was very clear about his stand:

Politics is not, so far as I can see, the most important business of our people; and perhaps it already holds a greater sway with us than is desirable in view of the necessity for personal emancipation. Norway is both sufficiently free and independent, but much is lacking to enable us to say the same with regard to the Norwegian man and the Norwegian woman. (Kildal, 1910, p.83)

Although, Ibsen chose to exile himself for 27 years, he was never distant. As he stated in his 'Task of a Poet' (1873) speech to the students of Christiania, far as he was, Norway never left him. "Never have I seen the Home and its life so fully, so clearly, so near by [sic], precisely from a distance and in absence." He shares in its troubles, agonizes with its people and hopes for its betterment.

According to Heller (1912) the idea of reforming organized institutions and above all of bringing about political reforms was repugnant to Ibsen. It was a wrong aim, for nothing can set society right, except society itself by living in unrestrained freedom. (p.67) Ibsen insisted that true liberty will only be attained when society is made aware of its weak points and misconduct and for the prevalence of such thing its long cherished idols must be shattered.

The long standing 'idols' and wrong beliefs can only be fought through a good education system, there lies the base for freedom, and that is where the utmost need:

We have with us not more than a single matter for which I think it worth while [sic] to fight; and that is the introduction of a modernized popular education. This matter includes all other matters; and if it is not carried through, then we may easily let all the others rest. It is quite

unessential for our politicians to give society more liberties so long as they do not provide individuals with liberty. (Kildal, 1910, p.82)

There is a distinction between freedoms and freedom, a variation which Ibsen often drew:

It is said that Norway is a free and independent state, but I do not value much this liberty and independence so long as I know that the individuals are neither free nor independent. And they are surely not so with us. There do not exist in the whole country of Norway twenty-five free and independent personalities. (Kildal, p.84)

This distinction has its roots in Norwegian history; in 1814 Norway had ceased to be a dependency of Denmark. The subjugation ended after four hundred and seventeen years. But the new constitution implemented in 1814 left the country in the tight grip of bureaucratic government and outmoded legislative procedures.(Downs, p.8) When the revolutionary spirit of 1848 communicated itself to Norway. It brought down the crushing arm of government sanction. Ibsen saw in his friends the “phenomenon of apostasy”. (Downs, p.13) It was brought home to him how easily an ordinary man will abandon an isolated position and with what ease he will deny old convictions and recant promises.

This incident hit him hard, and he made us see it in *An Enemy of the People*; with the two journalists and how easily their positions were swayed. It was in this year under such conditions that Ibsen conceived a contempt for the “respectable, estimable narrow-mindedness and worldliness of social conditions in Norway” (Gosse, p.144) which developed into a disgust with politics and politicians in general. (Downs, p.14)

Moreover, Norway had been unkind to Ibsen's youth. He lived in a home where affection chilled under paternal irresponsibility and stiff church dogma. He has left the refuge of home at the age of fifteen to become an apothecary in Grimstead where he was excruciatingly poor, quite unpopular, and considered bold. (Gosse, 2005, p.14)) Sheer unhappiness had dogged his earlier years. In such a background we see the germ of a philosophy scornful of social and political convention and legal conduct, an attitude which would naturally insist on doing what 'one must do because one is oneself.'

In devoting himself to the cause of the individual he preconceived a state of society that might be termed a higher form of aristocracy. As Heller surmised, that he looked forward to a time when human minds and emotions shall be beyond the necessity of external supervision and control, to a development of the individual, so wonderful in its efficacy that under enlightened anarchy mankind would attain an almost ideal state. (p.66)

Ibsen felt that society preserving its self as a state, is not promoting the growth of the willful free man. On the contrary, it is bending all its energies to keep men from being free and powerful, in order to make the state a comfortable place for the weaker wills. That is why he insists that 'majority is never right':

On the contrary-the state is the curse of the individual. The state must be abolished! In that revolution I will take part. Undermine the idea of the state; make willingness and spiritual kinship the only essentials in the case of a union and you have the beginning of a liberty that is of some value. (Heller, p.18)

Such development as aspires cannot be sustained unless the matter of self-realization becomes a fact that will entail a 'solid truthful will' and that would instigate a free individual.

In his early historical works he was fascinated by the virtue of self-reliance, militantly advancing against the authority be that of state, church or family. The conflict between the individual and the political state and the strife between the individual and the church as a religious institution, is seen in '*Catiline*' and in '*Brand*'.

Concerning Liberty Ibsen expressed himself publicly to that effect in a brief address at a workingmen's meeting at Trondjeim (1855) when he said:

There remains much to be done before we can be said to have attained real liberty. But I fear that our present democracy will not be equal to the task. An element of nobility must be introduced into our national life, into our parliament, and into our press. Of course it is not nobility of birth that I am thinking of, nor of money, nor yet of knowledge, not even of ability and talent. I am thinking of nobility of character, of will, of soul. Before this transformation within mankind shall take place, the ideal state cannot come to pass. (Kildal, p.53)

Over and again, Ibsen emphasizes the necessity of a revolution of humanity from within, and scorns the political attempts to establish democratic forms of government, because says Ibsen, democracy itself stands in the way of such autonomous revolution:

It gives the individual no opportunity to develop, to rise above his surroundings, to push his head above the common level. Democracy insists on having the individual conform to its levels. It tends to a dead level and opens a way for the commonplace; it equalizes,

generalizes and standardizes men, making them alike in ideal, thought and emotion. (Archer, p. xiv)

3.3.3 Women Emancipation

Whether he liked it or not, there is no doubt that Ibsen is the poet/dramatist of the Modern Woman. (Roberts, 1912) Ibsen explores women's soul with unusual skill, broadening the dramatic world, and adding woman to what had seemed until then 'a world of bachelor-souls.' (*Pillars of Society*, Act IV) Through women, he displayed unforgettable characters projecting his outstanding themes, vehemently protesting against the absence of 'truth' in his restricted society. Ibsen depicts woman's position as a deprived and dependent creature whose individuality and self-worth is denied. He sets the mood going by placing his heroine in the most natural of relations; a home, family, and society, and then starts the ball rolling.

The 'ghosts' accompanying Ibsen since his '*Catiline*' were not gender biased. To be an individual with a good realization of your 'self' is -according to Ibsen- a human right. He believed that women have their fair share in pulling society from the gutter and they should be allowed to do so:

The reshaping of social conditions which is now under way out there in Europe is concerned chiefly with the future position of the workingman and of woman. (Kildal, June 14th, 1885)

Ibsen divides women into two distinct classes, those controlled by their wills and those led by their hearts. He keeps the two classes well apart, to show the tragedy that arises when heart and will conflict. His

sympathies are decidedly with the strong-minded and self-asserting type of woman:

This nobility which I hope will be granted to our nation will come to us from two sources. It will come to us from two groups which have not as yet been irreparably harmed by party pressure. It will come to us from our women and from our workingmen. (Kildal, June 14th, 1885)

The choice of Ibsen's material and his female character presentation show that the author understood the unjustified Women position. Definitely there lies great weight on women shoulders to aid with the salvation of the coming generations. A fundamental contribution is required from women to retain a healthy society. The salvation of the nation he believes starts from birth:

The task always before my mind has been to advance our country and give the people a higher standard. To obtain this, two factors are of importance: it is for the mothers by strenuous and sustained labor to awaken a conscious feeling of culture and discipline. This must be created in men before it will be possible to lift the people to a higher plane. It is the women who are to solve the social problem. As mothers they are to do it.

And only as such can they do it. Here lies a great task for woman. My thanks! and success to the Women's Rights League! (Kildal, p.53)

Hence she must not be restrained from exercising her individuality, for the foundation of the social structure rests on the intelligent relations of the sexes. In '*A Doll House*' Ibsen champions the right of woman, defends her claim to a life of her own aside from that of wife and mother. Is she to be regarded as an individual, or should her liberty be limited by the interest of the community? Similarly in '*Ghosts*', "*Just because she is a woman, she will, when once started go to the utmost extreme,*"

(Archer, Intro) shows how far Ibsen's respect for women exceeds his respect for men.

In his later works Ibsen, though with continued faith in the powers and glory of woman, modifies and restricts her sphere of action. With '*Hedda Gabler*' he had reached the conclusion that it was not the woman of masculine intellect and ability who propped the beam of society, but the ideal woman, the wife and mother with noble instincts, who reigns supreme over humanity by power of her virtues. As stated by him at the Norwegian Women association Banquet (1885); "*As mothers they are to do it. And only as such can they do it. Here lies a great task for woman.*"

In '*When We Dead Awaken*' Ibsen repeats his original contention that woman is to be regarded as a personality and not as a piece of property. He continues to give his modified view by allowing Irene to say: "I should have borne children into the world-many children-real children-not such children as are hidden away in grave vaults. That was my vocation," meaning that there Irene would have realized herself, would have lived her individuality.

Ibsen represents a vortex reacting against the collective tendencies of his time. He opposes to both the democratic idea of a society reduced to a common plane, the individualistic idea of a society raised to the level of the outstanding personage. A society with the doctrine of unselfish Love before Duty that Ibsen proclaims is the greatest need of Society. In his final play he recognizes Love as the true end and meaning of life.

Through his thick-rimmed spectacle Ibsen observed the contrast between true and false morality, between the individual's motive and society's view of the deed, between the individual's aspiration to develop his fullest powers and society's demands for acknowledgement. He made sure we stand witness. We were not to miss his insistent plea that only through the individual himself may stagnation, hypocrisy, torpidity, weakness, and tyranny be sloughed off.

What we have gleaned sifting through half a century of the genius Norse -from the publication of '*Catiline*' 1849 to the production of '*When we Dead Awaken*' 1900- is a determined fight for freedom and initiative. Ibsen appears before us as a veritable knight of the individual thrusting against the dead dogmas of the past and emancipating the imprisoned energies of the human soul.

We get a clear idea of the impulse behind his work when we read what could perhaps be the most important single statement of his career:

Everything that I have written has the closest possible connection with what I have lived through, even if it has not been my own personal experience; in every new poem or play, I have aimed at my own spiritual emancipation and purification. (Gosse, 1907, p.147)

Summary

This chapter identifies the reader with the Philosopher and his philosophy. Reading through the first part one recognizes the Poet's utter disdain of the society in general. As he moves through life his contempt is further crystallized into a set of concrete beliefs. He was sure to conduct his life through them and saw them as society's salvation. He was

resolved to redeem his countrymen self-esteem and pushed towards that in his plays.

CHAPTER IV

Women Enslavement in Ibsen's

A Doll House & Ghosts

4.1 Introduction

The complex feminine entity is constant in all of Ibsen's authorship. He realized, early on, that women's support is indispensable to the prosperity of a community. Ibsen observed and understood the unjust social view of HER. He drew a fine portrait of his female characters illustrating the living conditions for the women of the time. Thus, through the characterization of the females in his plays he painted a shockingly clear picture of society's failings.

In this Chapter before we divulge into the theme of Enslavement in part two; part one foreshadows it with a quick glimpse of the scene concerning women issues at the time. What was called 'the woman question', Jean-Jacques Rousseau's argument and the Biblical based phenomenon of 'the separate spheres'; leading to the 'true woman' perfect profile then the persona of 'the new woman' came sweeping on the stage.

4.2 The Woman Question

In a world of male dominance, men are endowed with power for political and socio-economic reasons, and they manipulate their power to control their opposites in order to satisfy their chauvinism. This assumption being the traditional standard of ideology for centuries was

planted in the mind early on. Men and Women were nurtured by it with the breast feeding and sleep lullabies. Hence, both women and men knew nothing but to conform to the cultural ideas established for them by society. So much so that when women started to question the status-quo, men found it hard to accept what they preserved as a tendency of attack or sabotage to their absolute power.

According to feminist criticism, the roots of prejudice against women have long been embedded in Western culture and ideology. Gender discrimination advocates such myths that the male is by nature superior, and the female inferior; the former one rules and the latter is ruled. These myths of gender and race distort the relations between women and men.

Querelle des Femmes

‘The woman question’, which is translated from the French term ‘*querelle des femmes*’ [literally, ‘dispute of women’] refers both to an intellectual debate from the 1400s to the 1700s on the nature of women and feminist campaigns for social change after the 1700s. The broad debate circled around the nature of women, their capabilities, and whether they should be permitted to study, write, or govern in the same manner as men. The Woman Question as defined by Dovale (2010):

a cluster of contemporaneous debates regarding women’s higher education, professional employment, equality within marriage, the right to property ownership and voting rights. (p.1)

Aristotelian classics held that women are incapable of reason, so this debate a constant one through the ages. Many argued that women's nature prevented them from higher learning. As the debate developed, some agreed that men were not naturally more intelligent than women. Nonetheless, stipulating that the female nature prevented them from taking higher learning seriously.

'The woman question' phrase is usually used in connection with the social change of the second half of the 19th century. A change which questioned the fundamental roles of women in Western industrialized countries. Issues of women's suffrage, marriage and reproductive rights, bodily autonomy, property rights, legal and medical rights dominated cultural discussions in newspapers and intellectual circles. While many women were supportive of these changing roles it was not unanimous; issues of marriage and sexual freedom were most divisive.

4.2.1 Separate Spheres

The term Separate Spheres is a social phenomenon based primarily on notions of biologically determined gender roles and/or patriarchal religious doctrine. It claims that women should avoid the public sphere – the domain of politics, paid work, commerce and law. The fundamental thought underlining the separate sphere phenomena was a patriarchal ideology seeking to strengthen their hold on women. Such separation between spheres will ensure the confinement of women to the domestic/private sphere. Women's "proper sphere", according to the

ideology, is the realm of domestic life, focused on childcare, housekeeping, and religion. (Britannica.com)

The modern ideology of separate spheres emerged in the wake of the Industrial Revolution. Prior to the industrialization of the Western world, family members worked side by side and the workplace was located mostly in and around the home. With the shift from home-based to factory production, men left the home to sell their labor for wages while women stayed home to perform unpaid domestic work. The separate spheres ideology reflected and fueled these changes.

At the same time, the Enlightenment and the French Revolution helped spread the ideas of liberty, equality, and political rights, but in practice such rights were denied to women, who were seen as belonging to a different social sphere. Feminist women writers started to demand political equality for women as well as men providing searing criticisms of the "separate sphere" ideals that confined women exclusively to the domestic sphere.

In addition, there was great controversy over Classical notions of women as inherently defective, which defenders of women like Christine de Pizan (1364-1430) and Mary Wollstonecraft (1759-1797) attempted to refute.

The idea of separate spheres is explained by Barbara Harris as “*the sharp separation of the woman’s sphere in the home from the man’s outside. The scene outside the home, the man’s sphere, was the scene of the economic struggles and intellectual endeavors.*” [Cited in White, 2009) Matthews further explains the assumption that during this time it

was believed that “*men and women are designed by God and nature to operate in different arenas –men in the public world of exploit, war, work, intellect, and politics; women in the world of nurturance and the affections centered on the home.*” (White, p.20)

The biological determinism notion maintains that women and men are naturally suitable for different social roles due to their biological and genetic makeup. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1762) argued that women were inherently different from men and should devote themselves to reproduction and domesticity. Women were considered passive, dependent on men, and, due to their reproductive capacity, ill-suited for life outside the domestic realm. Rousseau described women's primary duties in *Emile*, or On Education, stating that:

“women's entire education should be planned in relation to men. To please men, to be useful to them, to win their love and respect, to raise them as children, to care for them as adults, correct and console them, make their lives sweet and pleasant; these are women's duties in all ages and these are what they should be taught from childhood.” (Mastin, 2009)

4.2.2 The True Woman

As the Victorian age was named after her, Queen Victoria's influence on society can be seen in fashion, etiquette, and the personification of the *True Woman*. Completely dedicated to her husband and family she remained in mourning after the death of her husband, Prince Albert from 1861 until her own death in 1901. Victorian women referred to themselves as True Women.

The notion of the True Woman developed from a long standing western ideology rooted in medieval religious culture which declared women inferior and wicked. Social prejudices allowed the idea of the True Woman to flourish in the nineteenth century and included the beliefs that women were inferior to men in intellect, and not capable of operating on an equal level. Due to this fundamental inequality, it seemed natural and proper for women to be kept in a constant subordinate position. (Wikipedia)

Furthermore, the belief that women and men reasoned and thought in completely different ways helped to support the separation of responsibilities and interests: “*Woman was defined as a creature of the heart, who acted largely from her affections; man, as a creature of the mind, who was moved primarily by his reason.*” (White 2009, p.19)

Contributing to the notion of intellectual weakness, women were thought to be physically handicapped by their reproductive organs, making them nervous and weak. It was thought that if over-stimulated, a woman’s extremely fragile nervous system could send her into sickness or hysteria. Therefore strenuous work outside of the home or basic exercise was considered dangerous for women, further lending to the notion that it was proper and safer for women to remain primarily inside of the home.

The True Woman terminology was used occasionally in the print media in the 1870s. However, the term was used most often as women gained increased opportunities in the work force and in education in the 1890s. In essence, as the New Woman slowly developed it became essential to define and discuss the old. The True Woman became an

emblem and symbol for domesticity and separate spheres, whereas the New Woman became a symbol of strength, vibrancy, and participation in the outside world. (White, 2009, p.23)

4.2.3 The New Woman

Woman challenging societal norms was decidedly unnatural in the eyes of many conventional Victorians, and seen as an ideological threat. In many ways, according to Sharon Crozier (1998): “*the New Woman represented the tension between the old and the new*” (3). There were many contradictions in the way the New Woman was perceived at the time. She was, according to various critics, simultaneously non-female, unfeminine, and ultra-feminine (Pykett 140). She was considered unsexed, but also so over-sexed as to cause fear of emasculation (Willis 63). Thus, the epithet of ‘wild woman’ because she sought equality with men, the “wild woman” was considered to want to be a man, and was seen as unfeminine and unwomanly. (Pykett, 139)

Many (including Sigmund Freud) suggested that biology determined gender; and that women were hardwired to be wives and mothers; any attempts otherwise were “abnormal,” “psychotic,” or “monstrous” (Solomon, p.47). It was also considered by some that development of the female brain caused the womb to atrophy (Pykett, p.140). Laurel Young (2005) suggests that the New Woman was associated negatively with the Victorian spinster, “denied” work and love stamped the stereotyped pathetic old maid (p.41).

Woman is always depicted as secondary to man. She does not exist as an entity by herself but as the ‘Other’-an object whose existence

is defined and interpreted by the male, the dominant being in society. Such depiction of the weak and docile woman brings to mind the 18th century writer Mary Wollstonecraft who argues in her essay *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, that women are taught since their infancy to have the “softness of temper, outward obedience, scrupulous attention”. Once accompanied by the gift of beauty, these attributes will ensure them the protection of man.

The term ‘New Woman’ came into use by the mid 1880s. It is even harder to define the concept. The New Woman was not a discrete social movement, and women of the period were not all of one mind. Wilhelmina Wimble, writing for the ‘Lady’s Realm’ (November 1896, p.104), suggested that many were not aligned with the creed of the New Woman, but were merely “actuated by the modern spirit of independence” (Cited in Angel, p.14).

In an era of challenges to the status quo, the New Woman became the focal point for the rights of women (Cunningham, 1978 p.1–2). Earlier writings, such as Mary Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792) and John Stuart Mills’s *The Subjection of Women* (1869) had made major contributions to discourses around women’s rights and roles. By the late 1800s, society had changed sufficiently to permit the New Woman to represent “everything that was daring and revolutionary, everything that was challenging to the norms of female behaviour” (Cunningham 10).

In the closing years of the nineteenth century and the early years of the twentieth, opinions about many things were changing rapidly in

Britain, and the word 'New' was often applied to denote a change of attitude and ideas. The '*New Woman*' meant the women who wanted to vote at parliamentary elections and to earn their own living in business, or as doctors or lawyers or university teachers, instead of staying at home in idleness or as family servants:

The New Woman of the *fin de siècle* had a multiple identity. She was, variously, a feminist activist, a social reformer, a popular novelist, a suffragette playwright, a woman poet; she was also often a fictional construct, a discursive response to the activities of the late nineteenth-century women's movement. (Ledger, 1997, p.1)

The New Woman was one of the terms applied in the late nineteenth century to women who were breaking the conventional boundaries between the private, female sphere, and the public, male sphere. Opinions about the New Woman were myriad, and often polarized. Some thought of her as part of the woman question, while others looked at her as one answer to that question. Ironically though, it was the '*New Woman*' herself who was questioning her place in traditional social hierarchies.

The New Woman of the nineteenth century pushed against the limits which society imposed on women. Today she might be called a liberated woman or a feminist.

Throughout the main part of the nineteenth century the great majority of women were content with subordinate place in the home and in society, though a few writers had protested against this state of inequality. Towards the end of the 19th century numerous women were expressing in various ways their discontent with an inferior status and

were agitating for the equality with men. This unrest became known as ‘the Woman Question’ and anyone who declared her right to be given an independent place in the community was called a New Woman.

The New Woman as both social phenomenon and literary genre emerged towards the end of the nineteenth century and disappeared early in the twentieth. The concept has defied ultimate definition. Even with the benefit of hindsight and recent renewed academic examination, the many attempts to define this “new” woman, to enumerate her specific traits and philosophies, have not resulted in consensus. Additionally, not all women of the period can be classed as New Women, or were sympathetic to those who were.

The woman question encompassed the many arguments around women’s nature and role, particularly in marriage and motherhood, sexuality, careers, and politics. Debates centered on the demands (and the subversion of, or resistance to, those demands) for the extension of the sphere of women’s activities beyond the traditional home and family (Pykett, 2002, p.12).

The period was one of huge social shifts. This was especially so for women, many of whom were attempting to enter tertiary education and professions traditionally the domain of men, or who were active in the suffrage movement. Others were seeking personal identity, both within, and outside, conventional marriage. The status of women was widely discussed in newspapers and other periodicals. (Law, 2001, pp.18–22)

The New Woman emerged as the embodiment of this complexity of social tendencies and therefore was, according to Lyn Pykett, a “*harbinger of social change*” (139–40). Contemporary reactions were polarized. To her supporters, the New Woman was the one who had worked out what was wrong with “*Home-is-the-Woman’s-Sphere*” and was doing something about it. To her critics, she was a “*cultural demon*” who was undermining proper female behavior (139).

The group of women who led the movement fought viscosly to sustain their birth right. They were harassed, beaten, jailed and hissed at from their own while shunned by the whole of society. The patriarchal media did its best to paint an ugly picture of them, as Sally Ledger wrote in her book *The New Woman: Fiction and Feminism at the ‘fin de siècle’*:

The New Woman had manifested herself in multifarious guises in fiction and in the periodical press throughout the 1880s and 1890s. The 'wild woman', the 'glorified spinster', the 'advanced woman', the 'odd woman'; the 'modern woman', 'Novissima', the 'shrieking sisterhood', the 'revolting daughters' - all these discursive constructs variously approximated to the nascent 'New Woman'. (p.5)

What we know as Feminism today was known as the Woman Question then. It was a slam against the male dominance, the patriarchal society, chauvinism and female drudgery. Such adverse attitude towards women and her position in the society had a fatal effect on the individuality of women and in the process questioned her very existence. With Nora slamming the door hard behind her, she opened it wide for many, women who never saw the light at the end of the dark tunnel of

misery. Nora is thus, the unconventional woman who questions each and every thing that questions her existence as a woman:

A writer for the *Bookman* in 1913 reflected that 'the New Woman has been in poetry and drama and fiction for close to sixty years', and acclaimed Ibsen's Nora (the heroine of *A Doll's House*, 1879) [sic] as an early model: 'a woman 'new' (Ledger, 1997, p.2).

Ibsen supported greater freedom for women and expressed his belief in his plays. In his workshop notes for *A Doll House*, he asserted, "*A woman cannot be herself in contemporary society, it is an exclusively male society with laws drafted by men, and with counsel and judges who judge feminine conduct from the male point of view.*" Ibsen's contemporaries associated him with the New Woman and women's rights. In 1898, the Norwegian Women's Rights League gave a banquet to honor him for his support of women's rights. How identified he was with this issue is suggested by Max Beerbohm's exaggerated, if witty statement, "*The New Woman sprang fully armed from Ibsen's brain.*"

4.3 Women Enslavement

Enslavement: to enslave someone is to force that person to work for no pay, to obey commands and to lose his/her freedom. *Enslave* comes from the 'make into' prefix, *en-*, and *slave*, "the person who is the property of another". (vocabulary.com)

Thus, slavery refers to a condition in which individuals are owned by others; who control their lives. Slavery had previously existed throughout history, in many times and most places. It is a less common deed nowadays, but unfortunately it still happens.

The word *enslave* is often used instead to avoid the use of dehumanized language.

Figuratively, *enslave* is applied to describe something that takes over a person's freedom to make choices in some way; i.e. women in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. Ibsen's employment of women to indicate his disdain of society did not come out of nothing. Nineteenth century females were subjugated by the all superior male. Different types of women enslavement are displayed in his plays.

Ibsen has raised a question in his notes for *Ghosts* as quoted by Michael Meyer in his 'Introduction' to *Ghosts*:

These modern women, misused as daughters, as sisters, as wives, not educated according to their talents, barred from their vocation, robbed of their inheritance, their minds embittered - these are the women who are to provide the mothers for the new generation. What will be the consequence? (G, Intro.)

4.3.1 Enslavement to Society

Before delving into the female situation one major point has to be identified; Ibsen's social plays were created to reform an ailing society, a family is a small unit of it, and thus it is infected. What Ibsen is revolting against is the idealism of the bourgeois society taken as a solemn token of the perfect life.

The play '*Et dukkehjem*' literal translation is 'A Play House', for whom? Certainly not the Helmers. So who is the Puppeteer? Society is the one holding the ropes. Everyone in that

house is playing a role drawn to him by society. Each is aware of the role he/she must conform to fulfill what is expected of them.

Torvald's self-righteous indignation at Krogstad comes from the latter's insistence on 'familiarity' when addressing him, such thing with the reputation Krogstad has poses a compromise he can do without. Socially he is at the top of the ladder and climbing he does not need the 'rash friendship' from his past to hinder him.

Even Nora with her: "*It's perfectly glorious to think that we have--that Torvald has so much power over so many people.*" (D H, Act I) she likes the idea of subjugating others.

Krogstad is pushed into the act of blackmailing Nora for fear of getting back to being shunned by society. Also the need to spare his children what has befallen him.

Mrs. Linde hopes to be taken in and not be disregarded living on the skirts of society, to care and be cared for.

Dr. Rank is the only one who does not care what others [society] think of him. He is at ease with himself and his surroundings.

Bourgeois society, says Ibsen is holding its members prisoners to ensure its own prosperity.

4.3.2 Monetary Enslavement

Nora was chiefly enthralled to money and self-indulgence. The theme of money appears within the first lines uttered by the protagonist: "*How much?*" (D H, Act I). The importance of

money is portrayed stark clear upon the curtain opening foreshadowing its influential impact on the whole play. The theme of money soon develops into the theme of monetary enslavement.

The theme of money directly affects the actions and reactions of Nora's character; as Hardwick (1974) puts it "*Nora is enthralled by the power and freedom of money available only to men.*" (p.38) This point is further ascertained by Nora when confiding in her friend: "*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.*" (D H, Act I)

Moreover, Nora generously tips the delivery boy with the extra change, enhancing the image of plenty. This moment completely contrasts as it replays itself in the spectator/reader's mind upon its introduction to the character Torvald, Nora's husband, as he questions Nora's use of money:

Nora: ... [Puts the bag of macaroons into her pocket and wipes her mouth.] Come in here, Torvald, and see what I have bought.

Helmer: Don't disturb me. [A little later, he opens the door and looks into the room, pen in hand.] Bought, did you say? All these things? Has my little spendthrift been wasting money again? (D H, Act I)

The joyous atmosphere she was producing is somehow shattered. It is shown that the couple is immediately at odds in regards to

financial matters. Nora feels a great freedom to spend money due to Torvald's anticipated salary raise:

Nora: Yes but, Torvald, this year we really can let ourselves go a little. This is the first Christmas that we have not needed to economize.

Helmer: Still, you know, we can't spend money recklessly.

Nora: Yes, Torvald, we may be a wee bit more reckless now, mayn't we? Just a tiny wee bit! You are going to have a big salary and earn lots and lots of money.

Helmer: Yes, after the New Year; but then it will be a whole quarter before the salary is due. (D H, Act I)

Nora's mainstream of thought is not shared. Torvald is weary of spending money that is yet to come and made it clear through stating the three months (a whole quarter) duration ahead. Nora offhandedly mentions that they could borrow if need be. The discussion takes a turn towards monetary loans which is against Torvald's nature:

Nora: Pooh! we can borrow until then.

Helmer: Nora! [Goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear.] The same little featherhead! Suppose, now, that I borrowed fifty pounds today, and you spent it all in the Christmas week, and then on New Year's Eve a slate fell on my head and killed me, and— (ibid)

The theme of Nora's bondage to money or monetary enslavement is further enhanced by her reaction to Torvald's heated objections to debt and frivolous spending. He was addressing her as if reprimanding a child. Thus, Nora follows the lead and

sulks. He changes the tone and generously supplies Nora with forty extra dollars for household expenses to restore the mood:

Helmer [following her]: Come, come, my little skylark must not droop her wings. What is this! Is my little squirrel out of temper? [Taking out his purse.] Nora, what do you think I have got here?

Nora [turning round quickly]: Money!

Helmer: There you are. [Gives her some money.] Do you think I don't know what a lot is wanted for housekeeping at Christmas-time?

Nora [counting]: Ten shillings--a pound--two pounds! Thank you, thank you, Torvald; that will keep me going for a long time.

Helmer: Indeed it must. (D H, Act I)

Ibsen gives further depth to Nora's monetary enslavement with the arrival of Nora's friend, Kristine Linde. Kristine is –a school mate- acquainted with Nora's extravagance use of money from their school days (as hinted in the dialogue) Nora is caught up in discussing her family's fortunate break despite an absence of ten years. Nora exclaims:

Nora: Yes, tremendous! A barrister's profession is such an uncertain thing, especially if he won't undertake unsavory cases; and naturally Torvald has never been willing to do that, and I quite agree with him. You may imagine how pleased we are! For the future we can live quite differently--we can do just as we like. I feel so relieved and so happy, Christine! It will be splendid to have heaps of money and not need to have any anxiety, won't it?

Mrs. Linde: Yes, anyhow I think it would be delightful to have what one needs.

Nora: No, not only what one needs, but heaps and heaps of money. (D H, Act I)

Now, Nora had no lack of resources growing up. As she was ‘her father’s doll’ she was well provided. Thus when met by money issues for the first time, she strove for a solution. She had no knowledge of the legal ramifications; she was acting out of love. When she revealed the source of her monetary salvation Nora felt as if on a pedestal, that is how thrilled she was of her achievement. She has taken a secret loan to provide for a trip to Italy to save Torvald’s life:

Nora: ... I too have something to be proud and glad of. **Nora:** Come here. [Pulls her down on the sofa beside her] Now I will show you that I too have something to be proud and glad of. It was I who saved Torvald's life.

Mrs. Linde: "Saved"? How? ‘...’

Nora: I told you about our trip to Italy. Torvald would never have recovered if he had not gone there-
- **Nora:** Papa didn't give us a shilling. It was I who procured the money.

Mrs. Linde: You? All that large sum?

Nora: Two hundred and fifty pounds. What do you think of that? (D H, Act I)

So, Nora is not merely a ‘spendthrift’ after all. She was able and can sustain on her own, that is why she felt proud of her successful effort in saving Torvald’s life. Her secret satisfied her self-indulgent nature:

Nora: 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. (D H, Act I)

Due to her sheltered upbringing Nora's deed was mindless of the legal repercussions, hence, the devastating outcome. Hardwick comments: "*[Nora] has got herself into a mess on behalf of those she loves and she is proud of her steady, if unconventional efforts to extricate herself*" (p.40). Nora is profoundly satisfied, but it is nevertheless an illegal action:

Nora [after a short pause, throws her head up and looks defiantly at him]: No, it was not. It was I that wrote papa's name. ...

Krogstad: Mrs. Helmer, you evidently do not realise clearly what it is that you have been guilty of. (D H, Act I)

Women in Ibsen's day were not permitted to borrow money without a man's approval (be that father, husband, brother) and the consequences of such actions were dire. Ibsen was aware of their unjust living conditions, he was quoted:

A woman cannot be herself in the society of the present day, which is an exclusively masculine society, with laws framed by men and with a judicial system that judges feminine conduct from a masculine point of view. (Ibsen, 1911, From Ibsen's Workshop)

Nora does not initially understand the ramifications of her deed according to the law and the eyes of society. It is as Ibsen himself wrote in his workshop of the play:

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 the woman is judged by man's law, as though she were not a woman but a man. (ibid)

Nora's obstinate conviction of her stance did not waver. She is still unable to fathom a law that condemns a wife for saving her 'lawful' husband or –for that matter- a daughter for sparing her dying father:

Krogstad: The law cares nothing about motives.

Nora: Then it must be a very foolish law. (D H, Act I)

Beneath all this confusion, a light pulp started to twinkle, and she needed to find out how to empower it. Nora had already known that she can provide for herself but thought that it was the way of the world that he gives and she solemnly takes. He acts as the dominant and she pleasantly plays the subordinate and they live happily ever after. Only to discover it was not so. Her whole being collapsed seemingly a mere fancy same as the 'wonderful thing'. So, she declined Torvald's belated helping hand, released from all sorts of subjugation stepped out to start afresh.

4.3.3 Self-indulgence

From the monetary enslavement branches another theme which is 'self-indulgence'. Since she was an only child to a wealthy man plus losing her mother she had a free hand to

indulge in whatever her heart desires. This means she is accustomed to get what she wants whenever she wants it at whatever cost. On a second thought this second nature of Nora's could have worked as an incentive for her taking the loan without second thoughts.

Nora's self-indulgent nature presented itself when her free spirits were high; her gay mood [after shopping] in the first scene secretly nibbling the macaroons and wiping her mouth:

Nora: ... She is laughing to herself, as she takes off her hat and coat. She takes a packet of macaroons from her pocket and eats one or two; then goes cautiously to her husband's door and listens.] Yes, he is in. [Still humming, she goes to the table on the right.] ...

[Puts the bag of macaroons into her pocket and wipes her mouth.] Come in here, Torvald (D H, Act I)

Once again when she was pleased at the extent of authority they have on the bank employees so she couldn't stop having macaroons. Only this time she had company and she implicated her friend to hide the fact they were her own: "*Yes, but these are some Christine gave me.*" (ibid).

Torvald forbade eating macaroons and as a wife Nora was to abide by her husband's ruling, as she said: "*I should not think of going against your wishes.*" (D H, Act I)

Another self-indulgent issue for Nora –if even subconsciously- is her looks. Perhaps it goes back the milieu where she was brought up, which encouraged her to watch her

figure and enabled her to dress smartly. Also she is aware that Torvald loves her beauty and looks; it's ingrained in her to know what he likes follow it:

Nora: ... Whenever Torvald has given me money for new dresses and such things, I have never spent more than half of it; I have always bought the simplest and cheapest things. Thank Heaven, any clothes look well on me, and so Torvald has never noticed it. But it was often very hard on me, Christine--because it is delightful to be really well dressed, isn't it? (D H, Act I)

Their neighbors are having a fancy-dress ball and –according to Torvald- Nora is to go as the Neapolitan fisher-girl. She was looking for something that would show off her good looks and please her husband.

This fixation of looking her best at all times made her an easy prey for Krogstad. When he got her hint that she might take her own life in order to end this gruesome business with him; he painted an ugly picture. So both her husband reputation and beautiful image are to be distorted:

Krogstad: Under the ice, perhaps? Down into the cold, coal-black water? And then, in the spring, to float up to the surface, all horrible and unrecognizable, with your hair fallen out—(D H, Act II)

The one conscious reason for her appearance care taking is Torvald's admiring eye. As she responded to her friend when she asked her if she will ever tell her husband about the loan. She

said maybe when they are old and her looks have faded and he no longer looks at her the he does now:

Helmer: And when we are leaving, and I am putting the shawl over your beautiful young shoulders--on your lovely neck- ... When I watched the seductive figures of the Tarantella, my blood was on fire; ... (D H, Act III)

She was aware of his pride over her perfect looks [no sweets, extra cash for nice dresses]. Eight years later she was still as gorgeous as the first time; true to her Victorian teaching.

One might conclude that good looks require an abundance of money or at least a modest income, thus it will boil down to the unbreakable chain of providence binding. But for our heroine it was a carrot dangling in front of her. Nora was crossed with that ‘self’ so she refused to indulge it no more and went in search for her ‘new-self’ in its true form.

Christine Linde is Nora school mate who is also enslaved to money although in a different way. Mrs. Linde’s monetary enslavement sprang from dire need, for as she said “*one has to live*” (D H, Act II). Christine and Nora come from different social classes. But for Ibsen the theme stands despite any differences in class, it actually further enforces his dispute against the bourgeois. Economic laws were discriminatory against women and because of that money was a big issue for Ibsen’s female characters. They suffered a lot and some took extreme measures to provide for themselves.

Christine's deprivation pressed her into changing the course of her life. She was forced to put her feeling aside if she was to provide for her family:

Nora: ... Tell me, is it really true that you did not love your husband? Why did you marry him?

Mrs. Linde: My mother was alive then, and was bedridden and helpless, and I had to provide for my two younger brothers; so I did not think I was justified in refusing his offer. (D H, Act I)

Christine's sense of obligation caused her ordeal of marrying an elderly. But he died leaving her nothing, so even the marital pledge did not secure her economic status. Her struggle continues:

Nora: ... And he left you nothing?

Mrs. Linde: No.

Nora: And no children?

Mrs. Linde: No.

Nora: Nothing at all, then.

Mrs. Linde: Not even any sorrow or grief to live upon. (D H, Act I)

As they converse catching up on life's happenings in the last decade, Christine's character is further highlighted. Her remark on Nora's indulgence illuminates the hardship she suffered, and how she was living on 'ends meet'.

Economic hardship takes its toll on any living human and it will be double on those rejected by society. Christine saw life's

ugly face and it made her bitter and selfish to the point of being crass:

Nora: ... You better go away to some watering-place.

Mrs. Linde [walking to the window]: I have no father to give me money for a journey, Nora.

Nora [rising]: Oh, don't be angry with me!

Mrs. Linde [going up to her]: It is you that must not be angry with me, dear. The worst of a position like mine is that it makes one so bitter. I was delighted not so much on your account as on my own. (D H, Act I)

Though independent, Christine was still captive for cash and companionship; as she concedes “*to have someone to live for*” or upon her admittance earlier on to Dr. Rank; “*one has to live*”. Thus, one is pressed for any means of living, yet life is not worth living minus a partner.

Nurse Anne is our last example for monetary enslavement in D H. She was pressed for mere survival as she had no means of providence for herself. She became an outcast of the society because she had a daughter out of wedlock. She had no other alternative but to give away her flesh and blood in order to secure a living. So she took the job as Nora’s nurse and continued to do so with her off-springs. Even though the position’s requirement deprived her (of her daughter) she felt compensated:

Nora: ... how could you have the heart to put your own child out among strangers?

Nurse: I was obliged to, if I wanted to be little Nora's nurse.

Nora: Yes, but how could you be willing to do it?

Nurse: What, when I was going to get such a good place by it? A poor girl who has got into trouble should be glad to. Besides, that wicked man didn't do a single thing for me. (D H, Act II)

Being from the lower class Anne never thought twice over the position she was offered. Perhaps she is not fit for this enslavement theme altogether, but her case further culminates the needy position of the women.

4.3.4 Duty Enslavement in *Ghosts*

In *Ghosts* we have three female Characters. Mrs. Alving, Regina and her deceased mother (Joana), who although she is not among the living her presence is felt through the whole play. Ibsen portrays the theme of duty enslavement through Helen Alving character.

“*After Nora,*” Ibsen wrote, “*Mrs. Alving had to come*” (L & S, 1910. p. 208). Nora’s door slamming created uproar worldwide. Before disturbance of the daring ‘Doll’ diminishes the public was in for another jolt. A challenging and enlightened female came bombing their doors Helen Alving of the *Ghost*. She is the woman who stayed contrary to that who slammed the door, yet the censure she received was far worse.

Helen Alving had a rebellious nature which lead to her enlightenment and further provoked her emancipation. She was internally bound to society’s conventions. The way she was raised and

how women were looked upon played a major role in Mrs. Alving's actions and reactions. She was exactly as Ibsen described:

They say, that the book preaches Nihilism. Not at all. It is not concerned to preach anything whatsoever. It merely points to the ferment of Nihilism going on under the surface, at home as elsewhere. A Pastor Manders will always goad one or other Mrs. Alving to revolt. And just because she is a woman, she will, when once she has begun, go to the utmost extremes. (Ibsen, 1882, Ghosts, Intro)

Even though she rebelled her revolution did not erupt for she was in shackles. Chained and gaged by her rigid conformity to the socially accepted standards. The most binding of all was her sense of Duty; her duties as a wife, her duties as a mother, and above her duties to her family (not scandalize them).

Upon stage entrance she is met by her first duty; to act as the Lady and provide for the guest. This same guest [the Pastor] had turned her away in her hour of need:

Mrs. Alving: ... But where is your portmanteau?

Manders: [Quickly.] I left it down at the inn. I shall sleep there to-night.

Mrs. Alving: [Suppressing a smile.] Are you really not to be persuaded, even now, to pass the night under my roof? (G, Act First)

It is to be noticed that during the whole conversation their points of views are clearly contradicted but Mrs. Alving concedes. Her retreatment does not imply an agreeable stance. No! She recoils remembering he is a Male and a Pastor and her duty is follow his

lead not the contrary. Another assumption is valid. That she is following the Pastor's own preaching:

Manders: [Lowering his voice.] But one should not talk about it, Mrs. Alving. One is certainly not bound to account to everybody for what one reads and thinks within one's own four walls.

Mrs. Alving: Of course not; I quite agree with you. (ibid)

'Duty' dominates every breath Mrs. Alving takes let alone every movement. But that pressure is elevated around Oswald. He is as open minded as her and is under no obligation to hold back his opinions:

Manders: Yes, that is just what I say.

Oswald: But they may have a home for all that. And several of them have, as a matter of fact; and very pleasant, well-ordered homes they are, too.

[Mrs. Alving follows with breathless interest; nods, but says nothing.] (G, Act First)

A wife's duty is endure her husband's follies for without him she is nothing; that was the doctrine. Taking her mother's and aunts advice –as would any dutiful daughter- she married the Chamberlain. Only to discover too late that they were not 'a match made in heaven' and she has to suffer the consequences because she has pledged 'for better or for worse till death do us part' as the 'good pastor' reminded her:

Manders: It almost makes me dizzy. ... the union of all these years, was nothing more than a hidden abyss!

Mrs. Alving: Neither more nor less. Now you know it.

Manders: This is—this is inconceivable to me. ... How could such a state of things be kept secret?

Mrs. Alving: That has been my ceaseless struggle, day after day. After Oswald's birth, I thought Alving seemed to be a little better. But it did not last long... And you know what power Alving had of winning people's hearts. Nobody seemed able to believe anything but good of him. He was one of those people whose life does not bite upon their reputation. (G, Act First)

Mrs. Alving's streak of rebellion was still alive though her revolutionary act was snuffed at its first bloom. That mutiny, which sprang from a youthful heart inflamed by love, got curbed by the strong hand of duty and blind compliance. When she forced into submission and because conformity was bred into her bones; she tried to fulfill her end of the bargain the best way she could. But there is only so much one could take:

Mrs. Alving: ... for you must know the whole story—the most repulsive thing of all happened.

Manders: More repulsive than what you have told me?

Mrs. Alving: ... But when he brought the scandal within our own walls—

Manders: Impossible! Here! ...

Mrs. Alving: Soon after, I heard Alving come in too. I heard him say something softly to her. And then I heard—[With a short laugh]—oh! it still sounds in my ears, so hateful and yet so ludicrous—I heard my own servant-maid whisper, "Let me go, Mr. Alving! Let me be!"

Manders: What unseemly levity on his part!

Mrs. Alving: ... Mr. Alving had his way with the girl; that connection had consequences, Mr. Manders...

To keep him at home in the evenings, and at night, I had to make myself his boon companion in his secret orgies up in his room. There I have had to sit alone with him, to clink glasses and drink with him, and to listen to his ribald, silly talk. I have had to fight with him to get him dragged to bed— (G, Act First)

If a wife's duty is to appease and serve her at all times then a mother's role have no boundaries. Motherly acts sometime border on sacrificial deeds. What Mrs. Alving did fall closer to that line indeed:

Manders: [Moved.] And you were able to bear all this!

Mrs. Alving: I had to bear it for my little boy's sake. ... And so I took the reins into my own hand—the whole control—over him and everything else. ... It was then I sent Oswald away from home. He was nearly seven years old, and was beginning to observe and ask questions, as children do. That I could not bear. It seemed to me the child must be poisoned by merely breathing the air of this polluted home. That was why I sent him away... No one knows what that cost me. (G, Act First)

After all the suffering she endured -to save face- for the sake of community ideals, regret is dawning on Mrs. Alving. She is loathing the incompetence that held her back. The ties of duty that obscured her enlightened mind and dominated her emancipated will:

Mrs. Alving: Yes; in my superstitious awe for duty and the proprieties, I lied to my boy, year after year. Oh, what a coward—what a coward I have been! (G, Act Second)

She knew better. She had learned the truth on her own. When she searched the root of defiant spirit she came to acknowledge the superficiality of ideals, and how it acted as society's cosmetic kit:

Mrs. Alving: Yes—when you forced me under the yoke of what you called duty and obligation; when you lauded as right and proper what my whole soul rebelled against as something loathsome. It was then that I began to look into the seams of your doctrines. (G, Act First)

As daybreak neared so did Mrs. Alving prison break, with the emergence of truth at last she was liberated, belatedly though. Due to her teaching she was robbed of her 'joy of life' and caused the ruins of her husband by strangling his. Now she perceives it. Though it is too late:

Mrs. Alving: They had taught me a great deal about duties and so forth, which I went on obstinately believing in. Everything was marked out into duties—into my duties, and his duties, and—I am afraid I made his home intolerable for your poor father, Oswald. (G, Act Third)

If *Ghosts* is taken as a response to those who were vehemently opposing *A Doll House*, a comparison between the two heroines shall arise. To set the discrepancy straight one should look at the environment in which they were brought up:

Nora was an orphan child who was raised by a wealthy man of the state. She was his 'play doll' and he brought a nurse to help him. He was a member of the bourgeois society who did not abide by the rules but set their own to be pursued. Hence, the ambience surrounding her was of secured freedom.

Helen Alving, on the other hand, was raised by three ladies –her mother and two aunts. At the times, being a woman with no male guardian was not welcomed; so they had to be extra careful about everything. In order to preserve their status in society they had to show some piety, with its rigidity in conduct follows. Growing up in such safeguarded habitat is guaranteed to produce the kind of restraint and blind accord one sees in Helen.

Ibsen's doctrine stood its ground, prevailed and triumphed over all opposing factors. His thought stream and sentiment was followed worldwide by his successors as well as his peers. The 'Poet of the Nile' Hafez Ibrahim famous poem 'Knowledge' carries the sentiment to the dot:

'Mothers' are the land; (which if) well cultivated (with her birth-right intelligence and education) will prosper and produce an excellent crop (a wealth of good 'Generation'). So he presented dynamic and innovative portrayals of human beings who have transcended tradition and reshaped literary trends.

Summary

In the two plays Ibsen gave us four categories of women insinuating that; high or low the social class, is of no matter, they are all subjugated one way or the other. Nora's was raised having her heart desires at her bidding; but the heart itself was disciplined not to wish for the 'forbidden fruit' i.e. her individual 'self'. Once she discovered what she lacked she went after it wholeheartedly because it is the only way she knew how.

Christine and Anne were less fortunate. Overlooked by society, they fought to stay afloat. Having their share of hardship, they feared the outer-circle of society; preferring to live in the inner margin and push their way in if possible [Mrs. Linde].

Now we have Mrs. Alving, in her we have the four of them. She started like Nora; ignorant, rebellious with a little bit of self-indulgence, this resulted in her run-away act. She came back like Anne trying to salvage what is possible. Then wised up into her own-self emancipating her spirit, only to have Mrs. Linde intersect with her absolute adherence to society's expectations, or as the Pastor calls it 'law and order'.

Ibsen succeeded in portraying the female secondary status and complete lack of integrity; displaying in vivid colors the strong hold society has upon every breath they take,

CHAPTER V

Ibsen's Recipe for Social Reform: Self-Realization, Truth & Freedom

5.1 Introduction

In the previous chapter we have identified women as the weaker half in society and that is why Ibsen saw in them the perfect presentation for his philosophy and chose them as such.

In this chapter we will look into Ibsen's route to attain the aspired reformed society. Truth, first and utmost, and self-realization are – Ibsen's insists- the base for a healthy, free and fully reformed society.

The analysis of the themes will touch upon other plays of Ibsen because his work is connected –as mentioned earlier.

5.2 Self-Realization

Cooped-up in his little room and later in his seclusion in Grimstad Ibsen must have had plenty of time for self-discovery. So he was able to perceive his needs and ambitions and how to proceed towards them. The strong resolve that aided him into achieving his goal must have sprung from a vigorous will. He discerned the importance of self-realization and made sure to explain that it is difficult to attain it unless one is truthful to himself. Ascertaining one-self is by far the highest accomplishment:

So to conduct one's life as to realize one's self--this seems to me the highest attainment possible to a human being. It is the task of one and all of us, but most of us bungle it. (Laurvik (ed) 1908, p.359)

The projection of the personality is the representation of its realized self- will. How an individual acts and reacts to different

situations portrays whether it is a subdued 'self' or the individual has control of it.

The 'self' –to the majority- is understood as the inner thoughts and desires of the individual. Ibsen was so explicit about it; in his correspondence to his Danish friend, Georg Brandes:

What I chiefly desire for you is a genuine, fullblooded [sic] egoism, which shall force you for a time to regard what concerns yourself as the only thing of any consequence, and everything else as non-existent. (Laurvik (ed), p.194)

According to Merriam-Webster's definition egoism is the doctrine that individual self-interest is the actual motive of all conscious action and the valid end of all action; meaning no outside influences what so ever.

It is clear that Ibsen wishes a complete independence from all external value that might sway the will. Consequently, the self of which Ibsen speaks is the will choosing with complete liberty and self-command. '*It is the will alone that matters.*' (Gosse, p.99) Again Ibsen remarks that '*the great thing is to hedge about what is one's own--to keep it free and clear from everything outside that has no connection with it.*' (Laurvik, p.190)

When a character acts consciously regarding the social pressures of custom and conventions in mind; they are of no willful grounds i.e. baseless; exactly like the Helmers. Moreover, if the person is behaving subconsciously, systematically out of a conformed nature, then it is a fake illusionary will; picture perfect Mrs. Alving. Ibsen is advocating for neither nor.

In a letter to Laura Kieler (June 11, 1870) Ibsen remarks that:

the great thing is to become honest and truthful in dealing with one's self, not to determine to do this or determine to do that, but to do what one must do because one is one's self. (Laurvik ed. p.194)

An analysis of this statement shows us that Ibsen is dealing with truth as honest and truthful to oneself. This truth consists in acting in this way or that because one must 'do what one must'. The obligation derives from the fact that 'one is one's self.' As Ibsen himself testified the concept of truth 'and hence goodness in one's life' prevails when it becomes apparent that there is an accordance of the individual conduct with the compulsion known as 'self'; anything but that is untrue he insists: '*All the rest leads to falsehood*'. (Laurvik, p.194)

From the above we see his thought clearly. He recognizes and rejects the constraining effects of custom, convention, and law upon the action of the will.

In most of Ibsen's dramas a woman is the tragic heroine. He has not chosen women haphazardly. Reasonably, that his assertion of freedom and individuality in general are best verified in women. For, pitifully, it is in women they are most obstinately denied. Women should not be forestalled in their struggle for emancipation, or withheld their rightful self-realization Ibsen declares:

there are two types of conscience, one in man and another altogether different in women. They do not understand each other; but in practical life the woman is judged by man's law as though she were not a woman but a man. (Ibsen workshop)

Ibsen is aware of the patriarchal hold over society and how women are being hindered by their male counterparts from attaining their rightful

independent selves. Ibsen's preoccupation with marriage institutions and family life is now better understood. It is the deeper problem of personality in which Ibsen is interested. But this problem is best pointed in marriage where the interplay of social customs and conventions with the inner urge for self-realization is magnified.

Ibsen self-realization discipline which has been echoing loudly since Brand is now propelling Nora into a tough awakening. The playwright in a few short pages declared that the Helmers are meeting a problem; small it is true, but none the less a problem. They attempt at settling it with baby-talk, pouts, and languorous looks but to no avail:

Helmer: Nora! [*Goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear.*] The same little featherhead! ...

Nora [*moving towards the stove*]: As you please, Torvald.

Helmer [*following her*]: Come, come, my little skylark must not droop her wings. What is this! Is my little squirrel out of temper?

Nora [*playing with his coat buttons, and without raising her eyes to his*] (D H, Act I)

Their chirping happy neglect of truth and make-play marital life is mistaken as domestic harmony and accepted as such.

Nora [the protagonist] is not herself. She is what she is expected to be; a doll something to amuse and be amused. Profiling her to the words of Ibsen she is willing to do this or that, determining to do this or that not because she must, but because that is what is expected of her. Nora's "*I should not think of going against your wishes.*" (ibid, Act I) Is a sound proof of that.

The 'self-realization' notion Ibsen keeps hammering it in painstakingly, is portrayed in *A Doll House* through Nora. At its

opening, she portrays the typical image of the nineteenth century ‘womanly’ wife with her conventional standards. Nora does not even show the inclination to demand an individual existence. Her husband is the custodian of her very will and conscience. Nora’s thought stream is directed through one channel; attaining Torvald’s appeasement gaining – in its course- self-gratification.

Nora’s development from a mere ‘selfless, child-like vassal’ to a ‘determined willful self-seeker’ happens in front of all to see and witness. That maturation, however, proposes a new angle to the assumed ‘featherbrain’ Nora. The source of her self-gratification was not mere role play on her part. It was the ‘wonderful’ fantasy she was living and believed her husband shared with her:

Helmer: And can you tell me what I have done to forfeit your love?

Nora: Yes, indeed I can. It was tonight, when the wonderful thing did not happen; then I saw you were not the man I had thought you were.

Helmer: Yes, what then?--when I had exposed my wife to shame and disgrace?

Nora: When that was done, I was so absolutely certain, you would come forward and take everything upon yourself, and say: I am the guilty one. (D H, Act III)

Once that illusion was vanquished by Torvald’s pompous egotistical self, Nora could longer locate her own. She was suddenly left hanging, what was holding them together would fasten no longer and she was there no more. She abandoned all that was familiar at one time to discover if it was truly so.

Nora’s short encounter with the male sphere of self-sufficiency teaches her the ‘joy of being’ rather than the ‘having’. Part of Nora

accepts the secondary position and -even- basks in the treatment she gets. That is the influence of society and the result of how she was brought up. [Where she brags to Christine about their new fortune] Another part of Nora yearns for equality [subconsciously]. That part grew stronger after her secret working hours:

Nora: 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. (D H, Act I)

Reading *A Doll House* one is witness to the heroine's journey from childhood to maturity. We have Nora who –defying all- left in a quest for her individuality. At the times Nora's life was exemplary; but Nora, following Brand was going for the '*all or nothing*'. So, as scandalous as her 'door slamming' it was scary, or it should have been for her at least:

Helmer: This is unheard of in a girl of your age! But if religion cannot lead you aright, let me try and awaken your conscience. I suppose you have some moral sense? Or-- answer me--am I to think you have none?

Nora: I assure you, Torvald, that is not an easy question to answer. I really don't know. The thing perplexes me altogether. I only know that you and I look at it in quite a different light. I am learning, too, that the law is quite another thing from what I supposed; but I find it impossible to convince myself that the law is right. According to it a woman has no right to spare her old dying father, or to save her husband's life. I can't believe that. (D H, Act III)

It took eight long years for the Domino pieces to fall into place for Nora. Filled with disappointment to discover her pride and joy of a ‘secret’; her heroic act of being a saviour was considered a scandalous act. That realization punctured her bubble with a bang and she retaliated with a bigger bang in slamming the door on her way out.

Stepping into the unknown, gullible as she was, is certainly a huge risk. Nonetheless, her quest was even greater, for she was trying ‘to be true to herself’:

Nora: I have other duties just as sacred.

Helmer: That you have not. What duties could those be?

Nora: Duties to myself.

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

Nora: I don't believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you 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. (D H, Act III)

We have identified that Ibsen is always over-riding himself creating contradictory characters pertaining different situations. He gave us the one who left, then followed her with another who stayed.

Helen Alving carried the torch succeeding Nora in the poet's attack on the decaying social norms. Mrs Alving, contrary to Nora, carried her cross till the end, still, she did not escape the public outrage. Templeton in her book *Ibsen's Women* wrote; “*And in the critical commentary on the woman who slammed the door, I found the same ghostly censure as in the woman who stayed*”. (2001, Preface)

In the first lines of *Ghosts* the stage direction draws our attention to the “*books, periodicals and newspapers*” (*Ghosts*, 1881, Act First) scattered on the table. Then again with the Pastor’s ‘start’ and his disagreeable: “*Ha-indeed!*” (*ibid*, Act First) while looking through them. Adding to that the tone he assumed questioning Mrs Alving about them. Mrs Alving’s response did not ease the Pastor’s concerns, for how can she ‘find explanation and confirmation of all sorts of things’ in such books. Hence those books do not fall in line with his preaching i.e. radical.

If Mrs Alving is the other face of Nora’s coin, and we are in the next stage of the humanized female saga; she is the emancipated. But as the play moves on her tragedy is revealed and shows that Mrs Alving ‘cowardice’ as she calls it is her tragic flaw; same cowardice Pastor Manders names ‘law and order’.

Abiding to her role in society, her resistance could not hold. Unable to be ‘true to herself’; Mrs Alving surrendered to her family’s teachings and society’s expectation omitting –in her state of cowardice– her autonomous learning. She yielded to ‘duty’ and forego on truth and freedom.

Ibsen gives a fine picture of Mrs. Alving. She is a woman serenely free from the shackles of conventional thinking. Her ‘repressed smile’ as a reaction to Manders at his refusal to lodge at the Alving household says a lot. “*Mrs. Alving [Suppressing a smile.]: Are you really not to be persuaded, even now, to pass the night under my roof?*” (*G*, Act First) A second touch which builds up this supreme image of Mrs. Alving is her defense of her reading:

Mrs. Alving: I feel, so to speak, more secure.

Manders: That is strange. How do you mean?

Mrs. Alving: Well, I seem to find explanation and confirmation of all sorts of things I myself have been thinking. For that is the wonderful part of it, Pastor Manders—there is really nothing new in these books, nothing but what most people think and believe. Only most people either don't formulate it to themselves, or else keep quiet about it.

Manders: Great heavens! Do you really believe that most people—?

Mrs. Alving: I do, indeed. (G, Act First)

Also, later on her “I could kiss you” to Manders on his gullible acceptance of Engstrand’s fabrications. All lead to the belief that Mrs. Alving is truly one who has realized herself to the premium.

The playwright then shocks us with an introduction to a completely version of the same Mrs. Alving. As the heroine and Manders are talking over business, Pastor Manders proposes that insuring the orphanage might look as a lack of faith in divine Providence.

Manders: To say nothing of the attacks that would assuredly be made upon me in certain papers and periodicals, which—

Mrs. Alving: Enough, my dear Pastor Manders. That consideration is quite decisive.

Manders: Then you do not wish the Orphanage to be insured?

Mrs. Alving: No. We will let it alone. (G, Act First)

Should it be insured Manders convinces her that it would provoke public criticism. Now we are introduced to a different Mrs. Alving. One who is still a slave to criticism, convention, mistaken duty and outmoded ideals. Mrs. Alving was still held back, although her inner self urges her

to free herself from the 'ghosts'. She has let her motivation slip away and has been acting on conventional principles she loathed.

Her actions, unfortunately, had tragic outcomes. A delayed recognition dawned on Mrs. Alving; that she has been untrue to herself. She sorrowfully reveals how her suffering was due to the manifestation of her unworthy bondage to duty:

Mrs. Alving: Yes, I was swayed by duty and consideration for others; that was why I lied to my son, year in and year out. Oh, what a coward--what a coward I have been. (G, Act Second)

Nora Helmer left in search for her individuality, Helen Alving stayed to assert her individuality. Helen did that but in the dark for fear of society's disapproval. What she was doing was not among the duties foretold to her hence her tragic circumstances.

Both Nora and Mrs. Alving allowed a chance would have reflected a positive self-realized individual. On the other hand, Rosmersholm presents us with the other face of the coin; a destructive kind of self-realization. Ibsen conducts a negative examination of his most valued principle. This time the protagonist is a good self-realized individual. A will chained to old traditional conscience brought on his suffering and ruin. Ibsen maintains that even if you are self-willed other outside forces might weaken your resolve:

Conscience, according to Ibsen, is not that faculty of the soul whereby we are conscious of our own acts as our own but it is a moral consciousness, a moral groove in which the ego moves and has its being and which stems not from the individual but from the forces of his past and tradition. Hence to Ibsen it is a force which tends to prevent the soul

from acting 'because it must because it is itself'.
(McCormick, 1948, p.29)

Individualism in the church and the state must be aided by individualism in the family. This is the import of those two conspicuous dramas, '*A Doll House*' and '*Ghosts*'. The recipe for such individual development, according to Ibsen, is the candidly free expression of self through the will. Ibsen argued that since society was consisted of individuals, the more individuals were saved, the more elements there were to prepare for a reformed society. (Chang, 2004, p.34) For Ibsen, the self-fulfillment of the individual was an end in itself. Social reform would come along naturally after that.

5.3 Truth

We have established that Ibsen became detached and a bit of a loner subsequent to the family's social disparage. Even as an adult he found it difficult to associate with a specific group of his peers; those traditional bureaucrats or even the prevailing political and social leaders. His rebellious spirit was not content and that resulted in an on-going quest. He became an avid truth seeker; to be truthful to one self before all other must be the foremost perspective in Man. Achieving this all else can be attained.

Prior to *Brand* (1866) Ibsen's job prescription at the theatre limited him to the revival of the Norwegian myth. Once freed, Ibsen began his exploration of the nature of truth. In *Brand* Ibsen revealed his rebellious nature for the first time. *Brand* is a thorough-going revelation of Ibsen's battle within himself to understand the complexities of truth. He freed

himself from all restrictions, allowing his inhibitions to be transformed into a dramatic work of art.

The most prominent truth-seekers in Ibsen's work are Brand in (*Brand* 1866), Dr. Stockmann in (*An Enemy of the People* 1882) and Gregor Werle in (*The Wild Duck* 1884). These three characters represent the playwright's struggling attempt to comprehend the concept of truth and the human capacity in dealing with it. Human capacity for accepting and acknowledging the truth are themes that Ibsen explored from different perspectives in his plays.

In his self-realization quest Ibsen met and struggled with a disquieting paradox: why does truth, when it is supposed to set man free, destroy him? Like Brand, Nora's leaving in the midst of night what awaits her nobody can tell. Mrs. Alving's cowardice from the truth was her tragic flaw. Dr. Stockmann is liberated by his truth but it can also destroy others, as seen in Gregor Werle. In *The Wild Duck*, Ibsen feels that truth can be very dangerous to others, especially the weak. Some men need to have an illusion of truth, their 'life-lie,' in order to survive. Therefore, truths should not be imposed on individuals, for what is one man's truth is another man's venom.

Thus, Ibsen frequent inconsistency in his treatment of the truth is a sign of how much he came to understand the intricacy of human nature. In all his plays we are introduced to on face of Truth or another: with Brand, he seems both to approve and disapprove of man's allegiance to truth. Comes Dr. Stockmann and he glorifies the truth, applauding the

hero for exposing the ‘lies’ of modern society. On the other hand, with Gregers Werle, he denounces the hero for attaining the same goal.

Then, a truth is only relative and not absolute; no truth is flawless. Ibsen never advocated a discipline as certifiable. He gave us Brand the optimum of truthful egoism only to be pursued by Peer the self-less, lying, lost, fanciful and mischievous character. Ibsen rocked the world with Nora’s door-slam then escorted her with the ‘womanly woman’ Mrs. Alving. He vexed his peers, friends and enemies with Dr. Stokmann then made amends with Gregers Werle. So, what is he doing disavowing himself over and over! He is simply showing us that every action has its own reaction and effect depending on different variables. Each case has its consequences.

A Doll House or *A Doll’s House* are both correct translation for the original Norwegian title *Et Dukkehejme*. Either title connotes pretentiousness. So from the start; the ‘a’ is indefinite [lacks identity], ‘doll’ a make-believe play thing or a degrading nick name for women, and ‘house’ intimates a shelter not a [home].

In *A Doll House*; both Helmers are deceiving themselves trying to live up to society’s expectations. Their family, based on falsehood becoming dismantled was foreseen. Nora’s dishonesty goes deeper than Torvald’s, due to the differentiation in variables [separate spheres]:

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. (D H, Act I)

Nora truly loved her husband and due to the play's account so did he. They loved each other the only way they knew how. What Ibsen is driving at is that created a lie and lived it and such living in a make-believe fantasy world cannot withhold. The Helmer's so called 'beautiful happy *home*' never was in the first place.

Nora acted the only she thought possible the money she took was for a good and valid cause, she was paying her dues and nobody was harmed:

Nora [sits up straight]. Is it imprudent to save your husband's life?

Mrs. Linde. It seems to me imprudent, without his knowledge, to--

Nora. But it was absolutely necessary that he should not know! My goodness, can't you understand that? It was necessary he should have no idea what a dangerous condition he was in. It was to me that the doctors came and said that his life was in danger, and that the only thing to save him was to live in the south. Do you suppose I didn't try, first of all, to get what I wanted as if it were for myself? I told him how much I should love to travel abroad like other young wives; I tried tears and entreaties with him; I told him that he ought to remember the condition I was in, and that he ought to be kind and indulgent to me; I even hinted that he might raise a loan. That nearly made him angry, Christine. He said I was thoughtless, and that it was his duty as my husband not to indulge me in my whims and

caprices--as I believe he called them. Very well, I thought, you must be saved--and that was how I came to devise a way out of the difficulty-- (D H, Act I)

A new wife pregnant with her first child and the beloved husband falls sick. Doctor's orders were clear that he is in dire need of a warm and dry place. Nora knows that they were hard for money. Actually the reason for Helmer's health deterioration is the extra hours he puts at work. Thus pressed for quick action she 'devised' a solution. She was proud of herself and held the 'precious' secret to be revealed when needed [in her old age]:

Mrs. Linde. Do you mean never to tell him about it?

Nora [meditatively, and with a half smile]: Yes--someday, perhaps, after many years, when I am no longer as nice-looking as I am now. Don't laugh at me! I mean, of course, when Torvald is no longer as devoted to me as he is now; when my dancing and dressing-up and reciting have palled on him; then it may be a good thing to have something in reserve--[Breaking off.] What nonsense! That time will never come. (D H, Act I)

Unaware of what is written in the stars; Nora, full of herself bragging to Mrs. Linde is in for a shock.

Torvald Helmer's professed high morals turned out to be a sham, mere façade. All he cared about his social status. What others think of him matters greatly to him. His 'ethical' ego preferred to keep faulty appearances to tarnishing it:

Helmer: It is so incredible that I can't take it in. But we must come to some understanding. Take off that shawl. Take it off, I tell you. I must try and appease him some way or

another. The matter must be hushed up at any cost. And as for you and me, it must appear as if everything between us were just as before--but naturally only in the eyes of the world. 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. To think that I should be obliged to say so to one whom I have loved so dearly, and whom I still--. No, that is all over. From this moment happiness is not the question; all that concerns us is to save the remains, the fragments, the appearance—(D H, Act III)

The Christmas tree covered in shiny decoration resembles the Helmer's life; appearing ideal but in the realm of truth it has no ground; "*THE Christmas Tree is in the corner by the piano, stripped of its ornaments and with burnt-down candle-ends on its dishevelled branches.*" (D H, Act I) Therefore, before the arrival of the real storm at its first whiff all crumbled down.

Neither Nora nor Torvald is a fully realized individual because they were untruthful to themselves before others. The interference of society's norms and conventions is blatantly obvious. She was raised according to be a 'true woman' and she was naively fitting her role. He was the optimum of the Victorian male.

Helen Alving of *Ghosts* wasted her life preserving for a lost future as a result of a truth withheld. Striving for society's approval Mrs. Alving worked hard at the back of the stage and on the platform was the astute image of the Chamberlain receiving the public applause. Discovering in her first year of marriage that the captain was the man her mother and aunts foretold her to be. Mrs. Alving like her predecessor fled the scene. Only her act of rebellion did not last because the man she

loved rejected her: “*Manders. Yes, you may thank God that I possessed the necessary firmness; that I succeeded in dissuading you from your wild designs*”. Acting gallantly, Manders rebuked her and sent her back to ‘bear her cross’:

Manders: It is the very mark of the spirit of rebellion to crave for happiness in this life. What right have we human beings to happiness? We have simply to do our duty, Mrs. Alving! And your duty was to hold firmly to the man you had once chosen, and to whom you were bound by the holiest ties. (Ibsen, *Ghosts*, 1881, Act First)

A ‘cross’ she dutifully bore for 19 years till he passed away as honorable as he never was. Denied happiness she channeled her passion into work. She did not mind attributing her labor to the debauched degenerate of a husband for she did not have it in her to stand against the norms of the community.

All the while, she was thinking ahead for peaceful and amicable days with her son. Only the dim, wet, cold and dark hand of fate clouds the sun till everything is gone:

Mrs. Alving [Drumming on the window frame.]: I ought never to have concealed the facts of Alving's life. But at that time I dared not do anything else—I was afraid, partly on my own account. I was such a coward. (G, Act Second)

Mrs. Alving’s plans do not seem to go as she expected and she is reproaching herself. Wondering why she didn’t dare to acknowledge the truth; only to be reminded of her lack of courage.

Now, inability to face the society is one thing. But to conceal it from her own son is another thing altogether. She –bound by a sense of

duty- deceived her boy writing to him about a heroic father whom he made his idol:

Mrs. Alving: Do not let us talk in such general terms. Let us ask: Ought Oswald to love and honour Chamberlain Alving?

Manders: Is there no voice in your mother's heart that forbids you to destroy your son's ideals?

Mrs. Alving: But what about the truth?

Manders: But what about the ideals?

Mrs. Alving: Oh—ideals, ideals! If only I were not such a coward! (G, Act Second)

Too late she sees that masked 'ideals' and hypocritical 'law and order' cannot supplement Truth. The mist is clearing from her vision only to witness her perfectly laid plan falling down like a house of cards.

In short, Ibsen usually criticizes any claim that demands absolute validity. His aim was not to provide solutions in his dramas; but to present problems in everyday life in front of all to see and discuss. He wanted to force the individual to strive in order to find the best answer to life's riddles. Each of Ibsen's heroes does exert himself, becoming so individualistic in his search for truth that he fails miserably in his attempt to succeed.

We examined each of the rebel heroes, found in the representative dramas of *Brand*, *A Doll House*, *Ghosts*, *An Enemy of the People*, and *The Wild Duck*, in a trial to pin point Ibsen's marked ambivalence towards the truth. In each play, Ibsen investigated a different type of truth: in *Brand*, it was a highly idealistic divine truth; in *Nora* it was a naïve defiance led

by a broken heart. Mrs. Alving sheathing the truth kept her 'ghosts fitful' and stole her life. As for Dr. Stokmann, his is a very authoritative, imperative truth but not so for Gregers Werle's, needless, misconceived, erroneous truth.

5.4 Freedom

"Truth and Freedom are the pillars of Society". (Ibsen, 1882)

This affirmation is reiterated in various ways throughout his dramas.

Ibsen believed in the complete freedom of expression. He was unable to exercise this freedom at home, for he felt constricted. He left Norway in 1864 and moved to Rome. There, he was able to vent his suppressed emotions. Two years later in 1866, Ibsen completed *Brand*, a major work that reflects Ibsen's new-found freedom of expression. *Brand* was Ibsen's initial step into the exploration of a man's quest for his self-realization, and a personal step toward truth.

His hot indignation against narrow-minded Norwegian society and its smug righteousness is a strong hint as to the origin of the concept of self-realization. He once said:

It is said that Norway is a free and independent state, but I do not value much this liberty and independence so long as I know that the individuals are neither free nor independent. And they are surely not so with us. There do not exist in the whole country of Norway twenty-five free and independent personalities. (Laurvik ed. p. 350).

Summary

Ibsen presented in *Brand* a truth that is good in its nature and within people's capacity of reach; but *Brand's* method was faulty. He was an extremist his 'all or nothing' motto drove the followers away. Nora's belated self-awakening made her see the kind of deception she was engulfing herself with; so she left in search for her own truth. Mrs. Alving of *Ghosts* completed Nora's quest of the truth, found it, conceived it, yet opted to cover it for she lacked the courage to instill it.

In *Pillars of the Society* the issue is not the nature of Truth rather; the human capacity to accept and acknowledge that Truth. That Dr. Stokmann is a good and admirable man of the utmost integrity does not alter the fact that he is 'an enemy of the people'. Finally, Gregers Werle in *The Wild Duck* is a 'truth-hunter' who tries to save a family by destroying their illusions in life. Instead he destroys the family, although all he did was expose the truth.

The literal and philosophical concepts of freedom are one in the same and they fall in line with Ibsen's definition of self-realization; on the other hand, one cannot realize himself unless he first becomes true to it. Thus, the three are completely entwined and no taking them apart; each fulfills the other.

CHAPTER VI

CONCLUSION & FINDINGS

6.1 Conclusion:

This thesis examined two plays of Ibsen's middle period of writing in which he approached the social problems. It was his most influential because it projected the spotlight of the literary world on him. His particular focus on social problems brought him worldly fame. The plays of this period touched on the relation between the individual and society. He favored the right of the individual over social traditions which he felt were old fashioned. Ibsen's plays tapped a lot on society's expectations and private relationships because that is where most self-realization issues appear. Themes that he covered were heredity, individual emancipation, incest, illegitimacy, freedom, marital institution and family obligations.

This thesis timeline goes as follows: we started with the Introduction in which the thesis topic was introduced accompanied with the researcher's hypothesis, questions and the method used in looking for the answers to prove the hypothesis. The Literature Review with its three sections serves as the ground on which the whole thesis stands. Chapter three is the [*pillar*] i.e. the cornerstone on which the analysis rest; in it we find the answers for the three questions. In chapter four and five we prove the hypothesis and check the validity of the findings of chapter three through an analysis of the two selected plays [*A Doll House* and *Ghosts*].

Most of the issues Ibsen brought to the forefront have no gender bias. They were mainly wrongful conduct which needed to be changed. Ibsen presented real-life situations with their actual ramifications and consequences. In his plays he did not serve the spectators with ready solutions for he says he has none. Ibsen believed that life as he saw it was wrongfully arranged: “My object was to make the reader feel that he was going through a piece of real experience.” (Archer, G, Intro)

6.2 Findings

So far analysis of two plays, namely, *A Doll House* and *Ghosts*, have proved, hopefully in a satisfactory way, the assumption made in the introductory part. True art asks more questions than it answers. It first leads to controversy; open the floor for discussion consequently enhancing awareness and eventual understanding resulting into gradual change; that is precisely what this dramatist is all about.

1. Ibsen greatness as a dramatist came from the way he employed his genius to the betterment of ‘humanity’ through his social reform doctrine’. Through the analysis of his works the researcher found that Ibsen’s philosophy of social reform was valid and accurate; its result is seen in the advancement of his countrymen.

- A thorough survey of the playwright life and philosophy covered the different aspect of his doctrine illustrating its connection to social reform. Further analysis on the concepts [self-realization, truth and freedom] concerning the plays under discussion verified their importance. In his writing the poet went through different degrees to sustain a solid belief and understanding of what will

work best for both the individual and society. He concluded that the freedom attained through the combination of truth and self-assertion is not enough on its own. Love is the salt of the recipe, love is the base note in the symphony and that is his crucial note for the foundation on which Society must rest.

- Once again, Ibsen uses his story and dialogue to make the audience think about social norms and their consequences. He used women as his vehicle because of their vulnerable position. Moreover, because the audience was not used to such display which made the effect double.

2. Women were the best canvas for his drawing because the patriarchal society has [purposefully] left them blank. So in his scripture Ibsen stated that '*women are the pillars of the society*' and if society were to advance it should provide for healthier and far wealthier mothers.

- Women derogatory status encouraged the playwright to use them in presenting society's failings; for although women constitute the majority of the population and are the sanctuary for their men they remained unseen by society. In the plays; sometimes the male protagonists were drawn to give an advantage for the heroines [but mostly as their usual superior selves]. Nonetheless, they are valid examples of the standard male of the times.
- Ibsen's social reformatory plays were not merely for entertaining performance they achieve the desired effect on individuals on all aspects. As for the Women Cause it is still gaining force for as one reporter said "Things have certainly improved for women, but at

the top of both industry and government the faces still remain stubbornly male.”

3. The patriarchal society sketched certain ideals by which all must abide; through time they became engraved into the subconscious as a fact of life and the whole community thrived on it, looked up to it and judged by it and through it.

- An individual is a partial unit of society so it must have its fingerprints in each and every one. Tradition and convention make up the surrounding shelter and cultural background on which the individual is brought up. Nora’s sheltered life made her ignorant, and Mrs. Alving ‘blind duty’ fed her cowardice.

6.3 Epilogue

If we recollect the tales handed down (verbally) through the generations, we will have a sense of how the society looked at the time of our ancestors. Conjure up its culture, tradition, ethics & morals; what still stands & what changed? Where are we heading? Bettering our lives or lowering our standards? All these and many more could be answered through the looking glass of drama. We can look at this continuity, first, in the most general way. It is almost as if we are in an ongoing cycle; or as Williams (1981) puts it: “*All that is lived and made, by a given community in a given period, is, we now commonly believe, essentially related, although in practice, and in detail, this is not always easy to see.*” (p. 8)

Although the happenings of the present day succeed the Norwegian Dramatist Henrik Ibsen by a century and a half, the themes he dealt within his plays are very much relevant to today's situations. Ibsen was constantly concerned with ethical and moral problems of the individual and the narrow mindedness of society in handling them. Ibsen's contributions to drama were great and his impact was lasting. He deeply believed that certain truths should guide men and women in their conduct. He has been dubbed the 'Father of Modern Drama' - a title that no earlier dramatist was worthy of. Even though he denied the honor; he is celebrated as the champion of women's emancipation world-wide due to the ever-lasting Nora of *A Doll House*.

Ibsen was not always given credit for his genius as he is now. It is said he was too radical for the 19th century, though others consider him too conservative for the 20th let alone the twenty first. Never the less he made people listen and think. The first reactionary were abominable, that is for sure. But Ibsen's Nora made history and the European feminine entity was born anew and the world was never the same.

The Norwegian Poet and Dramatist Henrik Ibsen succeeded in creating the most outstanding and timeless texts that probe open a rotting wound sealed with a shiny bandage so as to blind onlookers from the swelling beneath. He charged in with a rebellious nature. The ink of his pen had the color of revolution [be that against family, society, the state, or the church]. The spirit of freedom sprinting between the lines encouraging his truthful muse; if the main theme was not around truth, individualism and duty then they are imbedded somehow; seeing that those were the 'ghosts' of his composition.

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