

Ibsen held strongly unorthodox views about marriage, morals and religion.

In 1848 the democratic revolution were spreading through Europe. Like the other young poets who adopted a radical point of view toward social and political events, Ibsen took the side of freedom for the individual in all things. At this time he wrote poems and essays in praise of the rebels. In spare time, he studied for his matriculation examination and also found time for writing. His first drama, Catiline, was in part inspired by that revolution. It contained many of the themes and situations Ibsen was to deal with in his later work.

In April 1850, Ibsen went to Cristiania, the capital of Norway. There he lived for 18 months. He studied at a cranner's, he never became a fully matriculated student. But he participated in a number of ways in student life. He turned independently to intensive reading and writing. He wrote a short play, The Warrior's Grave, a historical and romantic verse drama.

A year later, in 1851, he was offered a job with the recently established Norwegian Theatre in Bergen, as dramatic author. Yet, it was discovered that Ibsen knew a little about the theatre. So he was sent off to Denmark and Germany to study theatrical production. There he impressed by a little pamphlet from Germany called "The Modern Drama". It made Ibsen interesting to the work of

the German playwright, Friedrich Hebbel, who had made the transition from romantic, historical drama in verse to modern social drama in prose.

After getting a knowledge about stagecraft and about modern drama, Ibsen returned to Bergen to assume the duties of stage manager. Ibsen observed characters psychologically like the French playwright, Eugene Scribe. As Randolph Goodman said (1971,21):

"despite his apparent scorn for the French playwright, Ibsen was indebted to Scribe for a foundation upon which he could build. It was Ibsen's addition of psychologically observed characters and controversial social problems to the Scribean technique that later produced the celebrated Ibsenic drama".

He became the director of the Norwegian Theatre in Christiania in 1857. In 1858, he married Suzannah Thoresen. Their son, Siguard, was born in 1859. Until 1864, Ibsen wrote a lot of poetic, romantic, historical plays. But most of them failed.

Because of his debt, Ibsen left Norway to live in Italy and Germany with his family. But Norway provided the locale for all but one of his plays. His leaving enabled him to view his past life objectively. Carefully he explored his own background and personality and poured his findings into his work. His four important plays which were wrote during his fisrt 13 years abroad : Brand (1866), Peer Gynt (1867), The League of Youtth (1869) and Emperor and Galilean (1873).

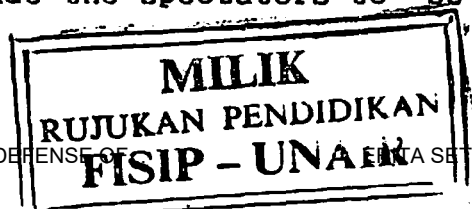
He began his revolutionary departure into realism with The Pillars of Society in 1877. His next play was A Doll's House. Most of the work on A Doll's House was done while Ibsen was resident in Rome in 1879. A few notes and jottings indicated that from the very first Ibsen was intent on writing a drama which would highlight the anomalous position of woman in the prevailing male dominated society. He stated :

"A woman cannot be herself in contemporary society; it is an exclusively male society with laws drafted by men, and with counsel and judge feminine conduct from the male point of view" (James Mcfarlane ; 1981,viii).

In 1881 Ibsen wrote Ghosts. This time Ibsen's jottings asked :

"These women (in A Doll's House and in Ghosts) of the modern age, mistreated as daughters, as sisters, as wives, not educated in accordance with their talents, debarred from following their real mission, deprived of their inheritance, embittered in mind - these are the ones who supply the mothers for the next generation. What will result from this ?" (James Mcfarlane; 1981,ix).

In A Doll's House, the problem was an extension of the one that had served A Doll's House; the exploration in dramatic form of the fate of contemporary woman to whom society denied any reasonable opportunity for self fulfilment in male world. It became popular. It was the most famous man in the English literary world, because of Ibsenic drama dealt with contemporary social, moral, and political problem. He made the spectators to be aware



what really happened in their life. As Ibsen stated :

The dialogue must seem perfectly natural and manner of expression must differ from character to character. Many changes in the dialogue can be made during rehearsals. Where one can easily hear what sounds natural and unforced, and also what needs to be revised over and over again until finally it sounds completely real believable. The effect of the play depends a great deal on making the spectator feel as if he were actually sitting, listening, and looking at events happening in real life (translated Evert Sprinchorn). (J.L. Styan; 1983,28)

And the emphasis of Ibsen's social plays is all on a new circle and evade the taboo subject.

Ibsen's next plays are An Enemy of People (1882), The Wild Duck (1884), and Rosemersholm (1886). In 1891 he returned to Norway. The last 15 years of his life were spent at Christiania. Slowly Ibsen's mind was slowly weakening. But before he got a stroke in 1900 which made him an almost helpless invalid, he produced some plays : The Lady From The Sea (1888), Hedda Gabler (1890), The Master Builder (1892), Little Eyolf (1894), and John Gabriel Borkman (1896). They expressed from social moralist and problematical mode of drama to more psychological, more visionary, and more symbolic style. Finally in 1906 Henrick Ibsen died in Christiania.

3.2. Synopsis

Christmas morning in the winter day, Nora Helmer comes from buying parcels for Christmas. Her husband, Torvald Helmer, greets her by calling her as his little

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lark twittering. They talk about little spendthrift Nora for Christmas parcels, and about their improved income, because Torvald has just been appointed as Bank manager. That time is the first time Nora breaking her husband's rule by indulging herself in prohibited confections, and to be out squandering money. And Nora denies Torvald's accusation about it.

Later there are two visitors coming to see them. They are Dr. Rank, their family friend, and Kristine Linde, Nora's old friend. Although Dr. Rank is Torvald's close friend but he has closer relationship with Nora. Really he loves Nora very much. Nora seems even more relaxed in his company than with Helmer. They often discuss their personal problem. So he knows more about Nora's problem than Torvald.

Nora here is illustrated as a childish woman who always get whatever she wants. While Kristine Linde is a widow who experienced the hardships of a woman to be forced to make her own way. She comes to this town to look for a job. She has to earn money by herself to support her own life.

Nora tells her big secret to Kristine only. Actually Nora had borrowed Twelve Hundred Dollars without her husband consent to save her husband's life by forging her father's signature. But she told to Torvald that money is got from her father. She won't tell the truth to Torvald

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yet. She tell it to him at the next time when he does not love her as now and when she is no longer as attractive as now. And she pays her obligations by herself. She does it without her husband knowing.

While they talk to each other, there is another visitor for Torvald. He is Nils Krogstad, a lawyer and money lender who now works at the Bank where Torvald is its manager. He is a gentleman who has lent money to Nora. He is dismissed by Torvald because he is accused that he has committed a forgery. Then his post is given to Kristine, his ex-lover, by Torvald.

Because he falls to keep his post through Torvald, Krogstad asks Nora to help him keeping his post. He reminds Nora that forgery is a criminal act, so it means that whatever he has done is nothing more nor nothing worse than what Nora has done. He warns her, if she won't help him, he will produce the forged bond in court.

Otherwise, Nora tries to ask Torvald to help him by giving his post again. Torvald denies her request because he thinks that Krogstad has to be responsible to his criminal act. He describes Krogstad as a poison pollutes for society especially for his family. It means that it can influence Krogstad children moral character.

Knowing that Nora avoids her children, fearing to pollute them. Because she feels that she is like Krogstad. She feels terrible after she fails to persuade

Torvald to allow Krogstad to keep his position. She is afraid if he will know about her secret. Krogstad also sends a letter informing Torvald of the forgery. Nora feels more upset to know it.

To deprive herself of terrible feeling, Nora makes conversation with Dr. Rank. She enjoys her relation with him very much. She talks whatever she wants to while with her husband, Nora cannot do it. Besides that she wants Kristine to act as a witness if anything should happen to her. She says that she alone was responsible for her crime. She would rather sacrifice her life than has Torvald suffer blame for her torts. At the first time Kristine wants to help Nora by asking Krogstad to recall the letter in Torvald's mail box. But, later Kristine thinks that Helmer must find out the truth. All the concealment and falsehood must be exposed in order for Nora and Torvald to realize a true marriage.

After he knows the forgery, Torvald is angry to Nora. He accuses her as a liar, criminal, and miserable woman who has no religion, no morals and no sense of duty. Although Nora did it to save her husband's life and because of her love to him. He considers that she has ruined his whole future. People might even suspect him of being an accomplice in that criminal acts of hers. They might even thinks he was the one behind it. So he has to be responsible for her crime. Besides that he cannot

allow her to bring up their children, because of her crime. It can pollute them.

While Torvald is still angry to Nora, another Krogstad's letter arrives. He sent Nora IOU and regrets and appologize for what he has done. It means that Nora and Torvald are saved again. Torvald forgives Nora's crime after he knows they are safe. He considers that it is all over. But Nora can't accept it.

Finally Nora decides to leave her family, her husband and her children. She thinks that Torvald really never loves her. She looks like a mere doll for him that can make him feel happy. He arranges everything to his taste. As if she lives by doing tricks for him and never made anything of her life. She must do on her own and educates herself. She must learn to stand alone. That is why she is leaving her family. She has to emancipate herself.