

Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*: A Postmodernist Study

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Abstract—Henrik Ibsen is deemed as one of the major Norwegian playwright of the late 19th century who 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. Most of his literary works are often dissected from a modernist perspective; however notions like women's emancipation, irony, and conflict, have paved the path for critics to survey his works from various angles and terms. This paper tends to lay stress on the postmodernist dimensions of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, a play which manifests different aspects of modernism as a common feature of Ibsen's works; nevertheless, demonstration of different notions of postmodernity cannot and will not be repudiated in the play.

Index Terms—postmodernism, modernism, irony, feminism, conflict, deception and truth

I. INTRODUCTION

Those who have just read *A Doll's House* for the first time are suspected to have little trouble forming an initial sense of what it is about, and, if past experience is any guide, many will quickly reach a consensus that the major thrust of this play has something to do with gender relations in modern society and offers us, in the actions of the heroine, a vision of the need for a new-found freedom for women (or a woman) amid a suffocating society governed wholly by unsympathetic and insensitive men. It is frequently argued that the play's theme is not women's right or emancipation, but rather the need of every individual to find out the kind of person he or she really is and to strive to become that person. Throughout the play we can feel the dusty and shattered framework of Helmer's marriage, reflections of unbelievably egotistical behaviors of the characters and the endless pain of searching for one's self in the characters mannerism and meditation. This study begins with an introduction to postmodernism and then it will specifically accentuate some of the postmodern elements of *A Doll's House*.

II. POSTMODERNISM

Postmodernism is a silent and non-violent revolt against the so-called rationality of Modernism. Modernism enjoys totalization of the well-framed principles; the principles, which simply get consolidated by the passage of time and move on a straight line. It believes that *History* is a kind of totalizing of unanimous episodes, while Postmodernism believes in fragmentation and segmentation. It emphasizes that history is made of fragmented segments of disintegrated episodes. It highlights the incessant but unrelated chunks of events. It does not believe that *Time* can be frozen and *Notions* mummified. As McQuillan (2007, p. 6) opines:

It is the play of *différance* within historical meaning as a non-totalisable figure of auto-immunity which puts the historical, histories and the idea of history itself into deconstruction. These mutations, these deconstructions, continue unabated (it is irreversible, after all). The mutation of the institutions and circumstances of today takes place under the incessant pressure of the future. The mutation is predicated upon the arrival of what comes and further still, the possibility of what might come after it. The future, having arrived, we must always ask, what comes after it. Thus, the open-ended anteriority of the future is what makes history possible. It is the very chance and motor of history as a ground without stability, where any meaning, experience or figure may make itself possible. History is not a thing of the past; it is always a question of the future. It is for this reason that we might offer a couple of related propositions. Firstly, that the future of deconstruction will be guaranteed by the deconstruction of the future, that is, the figure of auto-immunity which makes itself legible as the future. Here, the future is *différance*, that which generates all generation, makes possible possibility itself, and is the condition of all and every significance. One might say that there can be no future without the future.

The voracious politicians of the world of Modernism give a fresh decoration to the old and well-practiced rules and norms and toss them onto the well-trodden path of the past, which is the sole pushing lever towards the climax of their world of superiority.

Indeed postmodernism is not a welcomed guest within the World of Modernism. It is a threat to all those powers or superpowers, especially in the under-developed third world countries, which utilize these presupposed principles to run their political institutions smoothly and exploit the repressed and suppressed nations without any disturbing and preventive roadblocks. These mummified principles in the world of Modernism have turned into ever fixed red light signals, which never change to be yellow, let alone green. Crossing these red lights is considered ethical, moral, social and political violations, which may lead to irretrievable traumatic consequences. Actually one has to tread circumspectly in the World of Modernism where individual is under severe surveillance, while in the World of Postmodernism one can feel the fresh breeze of freedom and the amicable and welcoming ambience of belonging. Indeed, Postmodernism does not believe in any kinds of red lights, which are the main hurdles and stumbling blocks of individual progress. Hooti and Torkamaneh (2011, p. 40) assert:

The phenomenon of postmodernism cannot be enunciated in purely temporal words. It somehow shackles most of the obvious epistemological points in various scientific points. In postmodernism, unlike modernism, we are not dealing with any scientific rules, but it is the absolute incredulity toward Metanarrative, which became popular, mostly after the Second World War.

In the world of Modernism achieving success has got the paramount importance. Individual is taught to be successful and gain success at any costs, while postmodernism believes in success, which is wedded to efficiency and merit.

It goes without saying that one of the most frequently and hotly debated topics of recent scientific discussions is the confusing term “postmodernism”. Postmodernism is no ordinary term. As Hooti (2011, p. 330) asserts:

Postmodernism is a comprehensive concept which has been challenged and argued over in so many scientific, literary, philosophical, cultural fields. Some critics regard it as originating in architecture. Based on natural attributes, it can not be defined as stable and fixed.

Postmodernism cannot be clarified with simple words or definitions; however, the best possible way to feel the specific features of this extraordinary mode of thinking is by making a comparison with its chronologically proceeded and counterpart in characteristics term called “modernism”.

As we move into the twenty-first century the modern/postmodern divide has emerged as more apparent than real. Coming not only from a distinguished critic, but also the foremost academic champion of an avant-garde that – whatever disagreements its individual members have about their place in postmodernism – has defined itself against modernism. After all, the divide once seemed crucial to many literary historians.

But, what are the crucial differences between modernism and postmodernism?

Certainly by simple definition, the difference would seem incontrovertible. However, whatever matters in the modern world is closed off and impossible to develop to any further idea and scrutiny, while in the postmodern world every new idea is supposed to be true and respectful and therefore source of a new context by itself. Before going any further in surveying different aspects of postmodernism, it is required to juxtapose three diverse styles of thinking in various epochs through their epistemology and their sources of authority.

A. Premodernism (Almost up to 1650's)

Epistemology: The basic epistemology of the premodern period was based on revealed knowledge from authoritative sources. In premodern times it was believed that ultimate truth could be known and the way to this knowledge is through direct revelation. This direct revelation was generally assumed to come from God or a god.

Sources of Authority: The church, being the holders and interpreters of revealed knowledge, were the primary authority source in premodern time.

B. Modernism (about 1650-1950's)

Epistemology: Two new approaches to knowing became dominant in the modern period. The first was empiricism (knowing through the senses) which gradually evolved into scientific empiricism or modern science with the development of modernist methodology. The second epistemological approach of this period was reason or logic. Often, science and reason were collaboratively or in conjunction with each other.

Sources of Authority: As the shift in power moved away from the church, politics (governments, kings, etc.) and universities (scholars, professors) took over as the primary sources of authority. Mostly a religious perspective was integrated into these modern authority sources, but the church no longer enjoyed the privileged power position.

C. Postmodernism (1950's to Current Times)

Epistemology: Postmodernism brought with it a questioning and skepticism of the previous approaches to knowing. Instead of relying on one approach to knowing, they advocate for an epistemological pluralism which utilizes multiple ways of knowing. This can include the premodern ways (revelation) and modern ways (science & reason), along with many other ways of knowing such as intuition, relational, and spiritual.

Sources of Authority: Postmodern approaches seek to deconstruct previous authority sources and power. Because power is distrusted, they attempt to set up a less hierarchical approach in which authority sources are more diffuse.

In the postmodern world, every mode of thought is totally acceptable and is considered as another way of defining a certain point. In other words it is somehow bringing up a new kind of thinking. In reality, for every thought one must expect a strange tomorrow (Baudrillard, 1987). Therefore it is not inappropriate to state that postmodernism casts doubt on the previous methods of thinking and deconstructs and challenges all the proven metanarratives. Some of the most important and striking features of the differences between modernism and postmodernism are:

1. against the modernist idea of a rational, humanist, unified and autonomous subject, postmodernists call for a conception of the subject as socially and linguistically decentred, fragmented and multiple.
2. In reaction to modernist assumptions of social and historical coherence, linearity and causality, as well as to its macro-theoretical, universalizing and totalizing claims, postmodernists stress 'microtheory', relativism, indeterminacy, detotalization and multiplicity.
3. In opposition to modernist forms of political understanding and organization (i.e. Marxism and liberalism), postmodernists call for new forms of political life which stress plurality, locality and difference. Where modern political strategies focus centrally upon (macro) issues of political economy and the state, postmodernists concentrate instead on 'superstructural' concerns relating to identity, culture and the realm of everyday life.
4. In the strange and tortuous world of postmodernism nothing is absolute or eternal. What is true today may be wrong tomorrow. What is proven now is disavowed later on. In other words, nothing is fixed and all the scientifically substantiated rules are reshuffled in the postmodern world. On the other hand, suffice it to say that, modernism does not even dare to talk about these metanarratives and proven rules.
5. Postmodernism is a manifestation of how modernism was interrupted through several myths called society, communism or freedom or whatever; myths which are only justified through the proclaimed scientificity of classical sociology or social science, which themselves are the irrefutable features of Modernism.

III. IRONY

In the era of simulation, mass communication and disenchantment, how can one distinguish sincerity from irony?

How can one offer a critique of judging reason without adopting a tone of judgment?

How can one present the cruelties of morality without moralizing?

How can one criticize the rational point of view that detaches itself from all contexts, without such a criticism creating its own elevated context?

Only irony can, at one and the same time, judge the tyranny and moralism of a certain context and display its own complicity in that tyranny. But to attach or link up irony and postmodernity and a better understanding of postmodernity it is vital to state that postmodernity is a radical rejection or redefinition of irony. If irony demands some idea or point of view above language, contexts or received voices, postmodernity acknowledges that all we have are competing contexts and that any implied 'other' position would itself be a context. To sum up, it is apt to mention that irony tries to allude something other than what is perceived or discerned by ear or by heart. It sometimes conceals the truth, which is one of the commonplace features of the postmodern world. This literary device attempts to make a story seem more exiting and entertaining in the literature.

A Doll's House encompasses numerous instances of irony as well. Many of the examples of irony in this play are classified in the category of Dramatic irony. The abstract definition of this literary criticism according to Merriam Webster's Collegiate Dictionary is "the incongruity between a situation developed in a drama and the accompanying words or actions that is understood by the audience but not by the characters in the play" (p. 662). In this regard, irony is thought to be a method of adding depth and dimension to the characters in a play.

Throughout the play this irony is manifested distinctly between Nora and Torvald, the two main characters of the play, with Torvald being the character whose knowledge is insufficient. As a matter of fact the play is rich in symbols and imagery, but irony is one of the most magnificent ingredients of the play. The first instance of irony can be perceived in act one when Krogstad says that in case her husband dismisses him, he will have the courage to reveal the secret of the discrepancy in the loan paper which brought about this scandalous occurrence for Nora.

Nora: It would be perfectly infamous of you. (Sobbing) To think of his learning my secret, this has been my joy and pride, in such an ugly, clumsy way— that he should learn it from you! And it would put me in a horribly disagreeable position. (Ibsen, 1987, p. 26-henceforth Ibsen)

This is completely ironic in that her "pride and joy" is something that her husband would absolutely disapprove of, and the notable part is when Torvald asserts that he is not into any borrowed money as he puts it "No debt, no borrowing. There can be no freedom or beauty about a home life that depends on borrowing and debt" (Ibsen, p. 5)

But the fact is that, the die is cast and Nora has already borrowed that amount of money, and it is her pride and joy, although the audience is aware or is given the knowledge that torvald will come to know about this incident. Nora has been able to save up the money all on herself, on the contrary that women were never able to borrow money, but she made all the payment on her loan. What makes it more joyful for her is that she managed to secure his husband's welfare and save his life.

Another portrayal of irony arises in act three, in the climax of the play when Torvald becomes cognizant of his wife's loan. What makes it even more ironic is the statement that Torvald make after comprehending the secret. Even he uses the words "pride and joy" after his discovery of the vexatious secret accentuates this sense of irony.

Torvald: (walking about the room). What a horrible awakening!
 All these eight years—she who was my joy and pride—a
 Hypocrite, a liar—worse, worse—a criminal! The unutterable
 Ugliness of it all!—for shame! For shame! (Ibsen, p. 70)

Again this can be interpreted that, Torvald assumes his wife puts her through a scandalous situation and castigates her for what she did, but he soon finds out that he has made a wrong decision by reprimanding her.

Apart from all these points of dramatic ironies, it would be noteworthy to moot some of the examples of situational irony. Situational irony is a relationship of contrast between what an audience is led to expect during a particular situation within the unfolding of a story's plot and a situation that ends up actually resulting later on. It is thus the result of a special sort of discrepancy in perspective that is not "moment-bound," in that it involves the contrast between what we knew in one moment with what we have come to know in another.

The first and foremost illustration of situational irony presents itself patently not from a single occurrence of the play, but can be discerned conspicuously throughout the play, when Nora treats her children, the way she has always been treated. In fact, not only does she try to subjugate herself to her children's needs and freedom, but also she treats them exactly the way it happened to herself.

Nora: (undisturbed). I mean that I was simply transferred from Papa's hands into yours. You arranged everything according to your own taste, and so I got the same tastes as your else I pretended to, I am really not quite sure which—I think sometimes the one and sometimes the other. (Ibsen, p. 74)

And this can be deemed as an example of a situational irony, although she has always presumed that her brand new life with Torvald would bring her exuberance and elation, it shed a darker cloud of desolation upon her life, and she is treated by her husband as a doll in the way that she used to be treated by her father when he was alive.

Torvald's sanctimonious character reveals itself once more when he is trying to show his phony love toward gullible Nora as he puts it "Do you know, Nora, I have often wished that you might be threatened by some great danger, so that I might risk my life's blood, and everything, for your sake" (Ibsen, p. 69). In this situational irony both the audience and Nora know that it will never happen, but Helmer does not and it somehow turns out to be contradictory to what Torvald thought.

One of the most spectacular symbols of irony is Nora's brief and simple, yet ironical and thought-provoking statement.

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. (Ibsen, p. 76)

Although she believes that she has duties to herself as well, she has always subdued this kind of right from herself only for the sake of her spouse and her children, and this is ironic because she is just reminding this right and she had never even thought about this, and it is again a discrepant coincidence in which she has never provided herself with this right.

IV. CONFLICTS AND THE FALL OF GRAND NARRATIVES

In General, Postmodernists believe in different modes of thought, different interpretations of the narratives and disbelief, query and suspicion in all sorts of metanarratives in order to prove a free and cognizant self; however modernism is the exact belief in all the established, proved and orthodox metanarratives. One of the most effective terms in which postmodernism tries to make use of, is through the term "conflict". As a matter of fact, conflict is the impediment that puts any conscious human being in an unbelievably mind-boggling predicament in which that person cannot decide which alternative to choose from. To be exact, this kind of conflict is analogous to a selection between modernism and postmodernism or whether to say yes to the metanarratives and fossilized obligations of modernism or opt for micronarratives and a free self. In literature, conflict is regarded as a focal point in most of the novels and plays. In fact, conflict is utilized in most segments of nearly all works of literature in order to immerse the listener or the reader in the play or novel. Most of the time conflict is engendered between the protagonist and the antagonist in order to get them involved in the play thoroughly. Actually this literary element links characters and their actions together like a chain of events and therefore, the reader or observer is absolutely engaged with this chain of incidents. To be accurate, conflict is the essence of drama. In most parts of the play, a doll's house, generally, the psychological tension in the characters' mind and heart can be felt more rather than external actions. There exist two kinds of conflict in the play which are explicated as follows.

Internal conflict is one of the most salient features used in a doll's house. It involves a quandary, facing the character inside and its impact on the character. This kind of conflict arouses a kind of universal emotion in people, whether it is an inner need, desire or turmoil. One of the most crucial themes that the characters, especially the protagonist, have to cope with is the internal conflict, in which the natural feeling from one hand and belief in authority on the other hand attacks the character's mind and soul.

The first instance of this conflict occurs in the first act, when the audience discovers that Nora has borrowed a large amount of money, in spite of the fact that she was not allowed to do so without her husband's signature, which she does

not have. To make matters worse, she ignores the law one more time, by forging her father's signature in order to get a loan, which she finally succeeds in. However, it ensues an irritating chaos in her subconscious part of her mind which is too strenuous to deal with, although she believed that what she did was right. This is the initial dilemma that the postmodern features create for its followers.

Nora's mental growth leads her to a sort of self-recognition and self-identity. It slowly unravels her mental complexities and leashes her towards self-determination. She does not remain docile and submissive any longer. This change and growth is tangible in Nora's following statement:

I don't believe it. Is a daughter not to be allowed to spare her dying father anxiety and care? Is a wife not to be allowed to save her husband's life? I don't know much about law; but I am certain that there must be laws permitting such things as that. Have you no knowledge of such laws— you who are a lawyer? You must be a very poor lawyer, Mr. Krogstad. (Ibsen, p. 29)

It is easily tangible that Nora ignores the rules of the modern world once more by selecting what she thinks is right. In spite of the fact that she has never done anything extraordinary, out of her ordinary life with Torvald, but this postmodern tendency finally wins over her thoughts and emotions. Therefore; Nora does what she believes is right; she is between the devil and the deep blue sea, but she finally prefers getting the loan, no matter she is taking the risk of putting her life at stake by forging her father's signature on a promissory note.

External conflict arises as an outward roadblock or as an avalanche of setbacks to the main character's success and often provides the motivation for relationships, struggles and the primary action of the plot. This literally device has been subject of numerous debates and is predominantly deployed effectively in nearly all parts of *A Doll's House*. As a matter of fact, Ibsen's use of this conflict has turned him into one of those writers who depicts the society's praxes and difficulties, and tussles they bring about for people. He has made use of this in *A Doll's House* as well.

In 19th century the most pivotal role of a woman was to stay at home, raise her children and attend to her husband, and this is exactly flouting the norms and the laws of the postmodern world by lashing the female emancipation. In *A Doll's House* as well as other Ibsen's works, this unfair role and Cause C  tre conflict is reverberated in a tormenting and poignant way; as Azher Suleiman puts it:

Ibsen focused in many of his plays on problems of mature and capitalist society. He was concerned with the crisis of liberalism, the conflict of the bourgeois families, women's emancipation and the psychological breakdown of the individual and the power of economy over human relations in capitalist society. (2010, p. 10)

Nora Helmer is the character who plays the role of a nineteenth century woman and a victim of this fallacy.

In most parts of the play she is oppressed by the unjust behavior of her husband and numerous tyrannical social conventions. Torvald, her husband, often treats her as if she is one of his responsibilities in his workplace or a part of his ordinary work; hence she is always treated like a child. Consequently, she becomes fully aware of this unscrupulous relationship, therefore in the climax of the story, at the end of the play, she takes a stand against Torvald, who plays the role of a character, who causes conflict between Nora and himself.

Basically, the end of the play is not a conflict between Nora or Torvald or Even the society, but it is definitely the endless struggle of choosing between modern belief or a postmodern solution.

The following dialogue between Nora and Helmer shows Nora's revolt against the presupposed metanarratives. It shows how Nora tries to break the shackles of obedience and passivity and claim her own identity:

Helmer: first and foremost, you are a wife and mother.

Nora: I don't believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a 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. (Ibsen, p. 76)

She is actually fighting with the meaningless and imposed rules of the current period of time when and where women do not have the right to stand against the notions of their husbands, no matter what happens, but she is standing still against those rules that are dictated by the society. On the other hand, though Torvald indicts her for giving up her code of ethics and religion and also the unacceptability of leaving one's spouse, she is again in this irksome predicament, whether to leave her husband or not, but she follows her postmodernity-shaped labels of her instincts one more time and sets her heart on deserting him. She proves that her personal feelings and growth are more important than the decrees, which the society imposes on her, although it is absolutely forbidden by the not standardized beliefs of "appropriate" actions prescribed by the discriminatory society for mothers and wives.

The other thought- provoking dialogue which reveals how Nora has been tyrannized in her conjugal life is presented in act three.

Helmer: To desert your home, your husband and your children! And you don't consider what people will say!

Helmer: It's shocking. This is how you would neglect your most sacred duties.

Nora. What do you consider my most sacred duties?

Helmer: Do I need to tell you that? Are they not your duties to your husband and your children?

Nora: I have other duties just as sacred.

Nora: Duties to myself (Ibsen, p. 76)

Due to the unfair behavior of Helmer, she even prefers to desert her children too, because she has always sacrificed herself to her family's well-being; she believes that it is time to think about the duties for herself and seek her own freedom.

V. DECEPTION AND TRUTH

The abyss gap between appearance/reality, truth/falsehood and morality/immorality are manifesto of a mind-boggling plot of a novel or a play. These key terms of postmodernism, which can be interpreted as the absolute notion of binary opposition as well, are all converged in the suffocatingly misleading world of *A Doll's House* and harbinger of numerous instances of opposition and conflict.

In *A Doll's House* nothing is always what it seems. Nora, the protagonist, is considered to be the mother and a wife, thoroughly devoted to her children and her connubial life, latterly turns out to be a self-centered person who regards herself as autonomous woman to live on her own and discovers the true meaning of life. During her life with Torvald, she takes a great deal of patience, but because of their dishonest and unopened married life she decides to leave the murky and gloomy ambience of Torvald's home replete with lies and duplicity.

On the other hand, Torvald, a loving, committed and generous husband does not unveil his true character as a shallow and egotist person till the end of the play. Her admiring behavior with Nora makes the audience believe that he is such a perfect husband, but the truth turns out to be something else. From the beginning of the play she is swindled by her husband's blandishments. He calls Nora with appellations like "my little songbird" (Ibsen, p.30), "my own darling" (Ibsen, p. 41) or "my little skylark" (Ibsen, p. 64) which shows his affectionate, but deceitful behavior through words of affirmation.

The other character that is introduced as the symbol of hatred and is characterized with abominable features in the play is Mr. Krogstad. Torvald describes him without even being slightly sure about his claims.

Helmer: Just think how a guilty man like that has to lie and play the hypocrite with everyone. How he has to wear a mask in the presence of those near and dear to him, even before his own wife and children. And about the children—that is the most terrible part of it Nora. (Ibsen, p. 32)

He is characterized as a detestable person, as a vengeful extortionist and a person to have poisoned everyone with his lies and hypocritical behavior, but again this claim turns out to be somehow contradictory. Most important of all when he finds out that his old flame, Mrs. Linde, after a long period of time is still in an unconditional love with him, and because of the fact that she does not want to lose her once more, he tries to recall the letter so as to make her happy, although Mrs. Linde changes her mind and talks him out of his decision for the sake of Helmers. His innate characteristics are changed dramatically, when he finds out that they can be together at last, he is turned to be a benevolent, merciful and honest person.

Krogstad: (grasps her hands) Thanks, thanks, Christine! Now

I shall find a way to clear myself in the eyes of the world. (Ibsen, p. 60)

Therefore his callous, shallow and narcissistic personalities which considered to be right in his description, do not seem to be fair in the abstruse and deceitful world of *A Doll's House*, where people's behavioral characteristics changes in every instance of the play. On the other hand, Mrs. Linde at first strikes the audience as a self-sufficient person, but as times goes forward, she herself declares and reveals that she actually feels "empty", due to the fact her husband is passed away and her children are gone to their own separate ways. She finds the direction of the rest of her life with Krogstad's companionship and the interesting part is that Krogstad himself is absolutely willing to this relationship.

To be realistic, the reason why there is such a profound gap between reality and appearance, truth and deception, which are incontrovertible and undeniable dimension of the postmodern building, created by its residents, is that every single character of the play is trying so hard to gain the trust and approval of others in particular and the society in general. Nora lies about the loan and hides her own strength and even lying about trivial matters such as eating sweets just to put a dark cloud on her dishonest relation with Torvald in her mind.

VI. INSUFFERABLE FEMINISM

The term feminism is a collection or set of movements towards having equivalent economical, political, cultural and social rights in the society for women as well as men. Flex explores his definition of feminism in this way, "Feminist theories call for a transvaluation of values—a rethinking of our ideas about what is just, humanly excellent, worthy of praise, moral, and so forth". (1991, p. 21)

To be exact, alleviating and weakening the efficacy of the problematized notion of feminism made by people's altered way of thinking and obliterating a great deal of this fallacy made in this mostly male-dominated world by women's interminable endeavors toward shackling these impediments during the past few centuries, have paved the path for creating a more balanced and equitable conditions for an alive and conscious living for both genders.

Apart from this general view about feminism, this fallacy is debatable in literature as well. For instance, Ibsen himself is a playwright who mostly inquests into people's freedom in the world and how they can vindicate their individual right specially, through women's point of view. Nora Helmer and Mrs. Alving, main character of Hedda Gabler, are instances of this feature in Ibsen's works.

Koht (1931) believes that the thing which filled Ibsen's mind was the individual man, and he measured the worth of a community according as it helped or hindered a man in being himself. He had an Ideal standard which he placed upon the community and it was from this measuring that his social criticism proceeded.

Treating women as inferior and not considering their self-esteem and values were rampant and relatively accentuated in 19th century. This injudicious belief is certainly perceptible in *A Doll's House* as well. Ibsen always brings this kind of unjust way of thinking into question.

One of the most common themes enduring in folklore and in less spontaneous works of art is the notion of innocent journeying through the world to discover the basic human values. In *A Doll's House* too, the most poignant and traumatic incidents of the play are intended to affect Nora, the protagonist of the play. She has always been under mental pressure by her father, society, and most irritating of all, by her husband who has treated her like nothing more than a doll in their married life.

Consequently, she finds her only exit, away from all these restricting traditional obligations and dehumanizing oppressions of women in just abandoning everything in search of a new identity and meaning in her life. Templeton puts it better when he says:

Patriarchy's socialization of women into servicing creatures is the major accusation in Nora's painful account to Torvald of how first her father, and then he, used her for their amusement . . . how she had no right to think for herself, only the duty to accept their opinions. Excluded from meaning anything, Nora has never been subject, only object. (1997, p. 142).

The interwoven themes of *A Doll's House* recur throughout most of the Ibsen's works. The specific problem of this drama deals with the difficulty of maintaining an individual personality, in this case a feminine personality within the confines of a stereotyped social role. The problem is personified as Nora, the doll, strives to become a self-motivated human being in a woman-denying man's world.

The final scene of *A Doll's House* is one of the most famous and hotly debated moments in modern drama, which is endlessly argued about. There have been various analyses of this part, as some critics refer to it as the tragic part of the play, where Nora, decides to leave. This part of the play is the absolute notion of postmodernism that not only defines postmodernity in a magnificent way, but it also shackles and attacks the elements of modernism as well.

Helmer: Can you not understand your place in your own home? Have you not a reliable guide In such matters as that?—have you no religion?

Nora: I am afraid, Torvald, I do not exactly know what religion is.

I know nothing but what the clergyman said when I went to be confirmed. He told us that Religion was this, and that, and the other. When I am away from all this, and am alone, I will look into that matter too. I will see if what the clergyman said is true, or at all events if it is true For me. (Ibsen, p. 76)

In these meaningful dialogues Helmer is trying to trap and leash Nora with religious matters, but the notion of postmodernity is totally awake in Nora's mind. She not only succumbs to modernist ideas of her husband, but she also attacks the outdated notions of modernity by emancipative power of postmodernity.

VII. CONCLUSION

Those who see Nora's predicament as something primarily imposed on her from the society around her, by oppressive men especially, may well feel that this play has become somewhat antediluvian. After all, so many progressive strides have been made since then and leaving house and home to forge a self-created life is so much easier in all sorts of ways, for women and for men. Templeton pertinently observes that "such an assessment is a great mistake" (1997, p. 143), but her observation serves to remind readers that there is still much to do if women are to be truly free of the "chivalric ideal and the notion of a female mind" (p. 145).

For Ibsen's conclusion, especially in *A Doll's House*, it is proper to put it that, this riveting and gripping play is something much more profoundly tragic, unconditionally harrowing and pointing, as it does, to the inescapably notion of self-identification.

As a matter of fact, *A Doll's House* is not about the prevalent notion of feminism or the insufferable domination of men in a modernist world of 19th century, but it emphasizes the absolute right of each individual, no matter single or married, to abscond from multitude of restricting rules of the modern world to find his or her right in the postmodern world where each individual is deemed as a respectful society by itself and to find the freedom which is summarized in choosing what you truly believe in.

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