

WOMEN BREAKING BOUNDARIES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF IBSEN'S A DOLL'S HOUSE AND GHOSTS

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the award of Bachelor of
Arts degree in English

by

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DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH
SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND
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SATHYABAMA

INSTITUTE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

(DEEMED TO BE UNIVERSITY)

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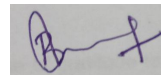
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S

Abstract

"A Doll's House" and "Ghost" are two plays that deal with issues concerning women's rights and independence.

The protagonist of "A Doll's House," Nora Helmer, protests against her society's established gender roles and seeks the right to be acknowledged as an equal human being rather than just a wife and mother. This is similar to the late-nineteenth-century feminist movement, which fought to ensure women's rights to education, work, and suffrage.

Similarly, the female characters in "Ghost" are constrained by a patriarchal culture that denies them agency and autonomy. Unlike Nora in "A Doll's House," the women in "Ghost" are unable to break away from their societal positions and are eventually eaten by them.

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CHAPTER-I

INTRODUCTION

“Great literature is simply language charged with meaning to the utmost possible Degree.”

Literature is a term used to describe written and, sometimes, spoken material. Derived from the Latin word "literatura," it means "writing formed with letters." Literature represents the culture and traditions of a language or its people, and it epitomizes the minds of human beings. It echoes the truths and realities of people's mentality, character, and even the society of a particular period. However, literature cannot be tested in a laboratory, and its meaning comes from its readers, not from science.

Literature is generally divided into three groups: poetry, prose, and drama. The word "drama" comes from ancient Greek and literally means "things done." Simply put, drama is the use of actions. The origin of drama is deeply rooted in the religious predispositions of mankind. Drama is formed with acts and scenes with dialogues, comedies, tragedies, and tragic comedies. It is the oldest form of storytelling. More than two thousand years ago, the Greek philosopher Aristotle defined drama as the "imitation of action." Drama is the imitation of action, which sets it apart from other literary forms. In "Poetics" (335 BC), Aristotle says, "All plays must be written in dramatic, not in narrative form". All dramas set forth a problem or conflict. In tragedy, the theme should be dark and serious, while in comedy, it should be light and active, which gives a happy ending.

Drama is the representation of life in miniature that should be enacted. If a story is dramatized, it means that the characters and events in the story are brought to life through a stage performance by actors who play the roles of the characters in the story and act out its events, which takes the story forward like any other story. Drama has six constituent parts, such as plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, and song, which are called Aristotelian elements given by the Greek philosopher Aristotle. Drama requires the

creative effort of many people, including playwrights, actors, directors, set designers, musicians, costume designers, and others, to help make a play good in its own way.

In drama, plot is more important and should be divided into many acts and scenes according to the dramatist. The plot of a story or play is made up of related events. In a plot, events cause something to happen, which is called an effect, and it leads to other events. Classical drama had the conflict between the good and the evil forces; good being rewarded and evil being punished and was broken by hundreds of examples of the opposite kind also. The characters that form a part of the story are interwoven with the plot of the drama. Each character in a play has a personality of its own and a set of principles and beliefs. At first, drama was played by Christians to preach the Bible in church. Later, drama began to come outside the church and was staged for people to produce knowledge and wisdom.

With the advent of the Renaissance in the 15th and 16th centuries, most European countries had established native traditions of religious drama and farce that contended with the impact of newly discovered Greek and Roman plays. Drama was introduced in England from Europe by the Romans, and later many theaters were constructed around the country. By the medieval period, mummer's plays had developed. During the period of English Renaissance, approximately 1500-1660, there was a great development in drama and other art forms. The English drama of the 16th century was not bound by classical rules.

During the late 16th and 17th centuries, a culture centered in London produced great poetry and drama that was both civil and popular. William Shakespeare, the most famous playwright in the world, wrote plays that are still performed today. He was not only a dramatist but also an actor and was deeply involved in running the theater that performed his plays. His theater, the Globe, played an important role in performing his plays. The three main types of plays during this period were histories, comedies, and tragedies, and Shakespeare was remarkable for producing all three types.

Other important playwrights during this period included Christopher Marlowe, Ben Johnson, Thomas Kyd, Thomas Dekker, and John Webster. After 1610, changes began to occur in English drama. There was an increase in technical skill, playwrights handled exposition better, they began to compress action to fewer episodes, and they built extraordinary climaxes to surprise audiences. With these changes came a new class of playwrights who created drama more focused on thrilling and exciting subject matter than complex characterization or tragic emotion. During the reign of James I, English drama began to decline until the closing of the theaters by the Puritans in 1642. This period was marked by sensationalism and rhetoric in tragedy as seen in the works of John Webster and Thomas Middleton, and wit in comedy as begun by Francis Beaumont, John Fletcher, and furthered by James Shirley.

The second half of the 17th century was distinguished by the achievements of the French neoclassicists and the Restoration playwrights in England. Jean Racine brought clarity of perception and simplicity of language to his love tragedies, which emphasized women characters and psychological motivation. George Farquhar was a later and gentler master of Restoration comedy. Many innovative designs were developed during the Restoration period, including the work of Philip Jacques de Loutherbourg, who was the first designer to break up floor space with pieces of scenery, giving more depth and dimensions to the stage. Other designers experimented with lighting by using candles and large chandeliers that hung over the floor of the stage. The influence of Restoration comedy can be seen in 18th century plays of Oliver Goldsmith and Richard Brinsley Sheridan. This century also ushered in the middle class or domestic drama, which treated the problems of ordinary people. George Lillo's *The London Merchant; or The History of George Barnwell* is an example of this type of play because it brought the bourgeois tragic hero to the English stage.

The Romantic movement did not take hold in French drama until the 1820s. Prior to this, melodrama dominated the theatrical scene, but the emergence

of realism in the 19th century led to more serious drama. The desire to generate excitement in melodramas led to a greater focus on plot construction, as seen in the well-crafted plays of Eugene Scribe and Victorien Sardou in France, and Arthur Wing Pinero in England.

Realism found its most profound expression in the works of great Russian dramatists of the 19th century, including Nikolai Gogol, A.N. Ostrovsky, Ivan Turgenev, Leo Tolstoy, Anton Chekhov, and Maxim Gorky. Many Russian playwrights emphasized character and satire over plot in their works. Naturalism, a selective form of realism that emphasizes the more pessimistic aspects of life, also emerged during this period.

Towards the end of the 19th century, a shift occurred in the plays being produced on the London stage. The works of Irishmen George Bernard Shaw and Oscar Wilde, as well as Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, who had a significant influence on domestic English drama, gained popularity. Ibsen, in particular, is often regarded as the father of modern drama for his exploration of the hidden lives of the rising middle class. In many ways, Ibsen's work served as a bridge to the symbolism of the 20th century.

Norwegian literature is composed in Norway or by Norwegian people. Its history begins with the Eddaic poems and Skaldic (Nordic) verse of the 9th and 10th centuries, with poets such as Bragi Boddason and Eyvindr Skaldaspillir. The arrival of Christianity around the year 1000 brought Norway into contact with European medieval learning, hagiography, and history writing.

The period from the 14th century to the 19th century is sometimes referred to as the "Four Hundred Years of Darkness" by authors such as Henrik Ibsen due to the relative lack of literary output during this time. However, with the advent of nationalism and the struggle for independence in the early 19th century, a new period of national literature emerged. The dramatist Henrik Wergeland was the most influential author of that period, while the later works of Henrik Ibsen earned Norway a place in Western European literature.

Two major events helped spur a resurgence in Norwegian literature. In 1811, the University of Oslo was established, and after the signing of a new constitution in 1814, an exciting and difficult age began for Norway. Immediately, a series of authors emerged who were recognized first in Scandinavia and then around the world. Henrik Wergeland is generally recognized as the pioneer of modern Norwegian literature.

One of the primary goals in creating Norwegian literature was to introduce a pure Norwegian language, based on the dialects spoken in more isolated areas. The genius of Ivar Aasen (1813-1896), a self-taught linguistic scholar and philologist, was at the heart of this effort. He documented a written grammar and a dictionary for Nynorsk (New Norwegian), which remains one of the two official Norwegian languages.

In the late 19th century, a wave of nationalistic romanticism swept across Norway and gave rise to four great authors: Henrik Ibsen, Bjornstjerne Bjornson, Alexander Kielland, and Jonas Lie. This period of Norwegian literature, known as National Romanticism, reflected the country's aspirations and many works turned to Norway's heroic past and its peasants. However, the political crisis of 1884-1885 had a significant impact on the social and material life of Norway. The industrial revolution brought about economic and social changes, and the scientific developments of the time led to a lack of faith in religion and culture.

As a result, literature began to focus more on sociology, the study of human behavior and society, with a focus on social stratification, class, mobility, religion, secularization, law, and justice. Herbert Spencer, a popular and influential sociologist of the time, was interested in the development and transformation of society and social structure. Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw also dealt with social issues concerning the middle class, such as equal rights for men and women, the abolition of private ownership of productive land, and promoting a healthy lifestyle. Similarly, Henrik Ibsen, a Norwegian dramatist, explored similar themes in his plays.

Returning to the topic of Henrik Ibsen, it is interesting to note that despite the initial failures of his early plays, he persisted and went on to become one of the most significant figures in the history of Norwegian literature. His plays dealt with controversial topics and challenged the norms of the society of his time. For example, his play "A Doll's House" (1879) addressed issues of gender roles and the oppressive nature of marriage, which was highly controversial at the time of its publication.

Ibsen's plays also often explored themes of guilt, shame, and moral responsibility, which may have been influenced by his personal experiences with poverty, illegitimacy, and fatherhood. His years abroad in Italy and Germany also had a significant impact on his writing and helped him develop his unique style. Overall, Ibsen's legacy continues to influence Norwegian literature and theater, and his works are still widely read and performed around the world today.

Ibsen's plays often deal with controversial themes such as social and political issues, women's roles in society, and the nature of truth. His plays were also known for their realistic and psychological depth, often portraying characters struggling with inner conflicts and moral dilemmas.

An Enemy of the People, for example, deals with the conflict between the individual and society, as well as the nature of truth and the importance of free speech. The Wild Duck explores the consequences of living in denial and the destructive power of secrets, while Hedda Gabler portrays a woman trapped in a loveless marriage and struggling to find meaning and purpose in her life.

Ibsen's plays had a profound influence on modern theater, and many of his techniques and themes can be seen in the works of later playwrights such as Samuel Beckett, Tennessee Williams, and Arthur Miller. Today, Ibsen is widely regarded as one of the most important and influential dramatists of the modern era.

Henrik Ibsen's legacy as a playwright is significant and enduring. His realistic and socially conscious approach to drama influenced generations of writers and continues to be celebrated today. Some of the major themes that can be seen in his works are individual and social morality, the struggle for personal and political freedom, and the tension between tradition and modernity.

Ibsen's plays are known for their complex characters and their examination of human psychology. He was a master at exploring the inner lives of his characters and their motivations, often revealing the hidden desires and fears that drive human behavior. He was also a pioneer in his use of symbolism, using imagery and metaphors to convey deeper meanings and emotions.

Many of Ibsen's plays were controversial and provocative in their time, challenging traditional values and beliefs. But they also resonated with audiences and helped to usher in a new era of modern drama. Today, Ibsen is considered one of the greatest playwrights in history, and his works continue to be performed and studied around the world.

Like Shakespeare, Henrik Ibsen's life can be divided into three periods. The first period ended in 1877 with the successful appearance of *The Pillars of Society* (1877). The second period covered the years in which he wrote most of his dramas protesting social conditions, such as *Ghosts* (1882) and *Hedda Gabler* (1890). The third period was marked by symbolic plays such as *The Master Builder* (1892) and *When We Dead Awaken* (1889). Ibsen influenced other playwrights and novelists such as George Bernard Shaw (1856-1950), Oscar Wilde (1854-1900), Arthur Miller (1915-2005), Eugene O'Neill (1888-1953), and August Strindberg (1849-1950).

Before Ibsen, many literary works were based on religious faith and history, with tragedy focusing on higher-class people and comedy on middle- and lower-class people. However, Ibsen's writing expressed the themes of sociology, the suffering of the middle class, and the rules and regulations of tradition among women. During Ibsen's time, there was an industrial

revolution that brought new technologies and urban growth, resulting in the great expansion of the middle class by the late Victorian Age. A strict enforcement of the separation of men and women was implemented, with women expected to look after the household and men responsible for business and politics.

Underneath the elaborated social manners of the late Victorians, people were shocked and confused by the changes in science, technology, religion, politics, and social morals that transformed their lives. This revolution, which took place in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, has been seen as a great turning point in the nature of women's lives. There has been a debate among feminists and historians since the early age of the century over the positive and negative impacts of industrialization on women's work and status. Optimists argue that it brought gains in employment and higher wages, which improved the status of women within the family, while pessimists argue that women's work was narrowed to less-valued, soft-skilled jobs, and that the social position of women was ruined.

Most of the debate focuses on women's work in industrialization and manufacturing, but it is important to note that more women, absolutely in numbers, were involved in agricultural work and domestic work in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. These were affected, in turn, by three factors: population change, institutional change, and organizational and technological innovation.

Gender ratios were slanted towards women for much of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, with women marrying late and a higher number of single women and widows in the population than in the nineteenth century. When women worked within the family economy, their earnings were insufficient, especially at times in their life-cycle dominated by rearing small children. In his works, Ibsen used many maid-servants, even for middle-class people, which reflects the society's condition during the period of the industrial revolution. Domestic servants were expected to work more than sixteen hours per day and were often fired if they became sick or pregnant,

or if they got old. Separate law codes were often in place for servants, and most were degraded by their employers, even raped and abused.

There were five cheap ways for young women without children to earn money in both the city and countryside: domestic work, street selling, manual labor, factory and agricultural work, mining, and prostitution. Women in cities with children had fewer options, such as piecework at home or taking in residents, which paid considerably less than those without children. As the middle class grew in size and wealth, there was an increased need for domestic workers. However, these working-class women were often blamed by the middle class for contributing to the decline of traditional family values and morality.

Henrik Ibsen's famous work, *A Doll's House* (1879), explores the theme of the liberation of women from male-dominated society. Liberalism, which is a political and economic doctrine that emphasizes individual autonomy, equality of opportunity, and the protection of individual rights, played a significant role in the play's theme. Classical liberalism also stressed the importance of individual property, rights, natural rights, the need for constitutional limitations on government, and especially freedom of the individual from any kind of external restraint.

Ibsen's realistic social dramas, such as *A Doll's House*, *Ghosts*, and *Hedda Gabler*, feature protagonists who are second-class citizens in Victorian society. Nora Helmer, Mrs. Alving, and Hedda Gabler find themselves caged within a male-dominated and outdated social rule. The sacrificial role of women in social and family life is one of the major themes of these plays, along with women's suffering, religious intolerance, class struggle, and stereotypes. Ibsen's characters are faced with self-realization and portrayed the clash between the individual and societal pressures.

In *A Doll's House*, Ibsen is concerned with the problem of a woman's position in society. The most interesting theme of this play is the duty towards oneself and achieving individuality and individual rights in society. Discovering individuality is also an important theme of this play, where the protagonist

finds her state in that society. The play focuses on themes such as individual and social fabric, feminism, love and marriage, deception, and parental obligations.

In *Ghosts*, the play explores the extent to which society invades personal lives. Mrs. Alving wants to keep up appearances and tries to protect the reputation of her late husband, building a memorial to his false reputation, but in doing so, she also ruins the lives of her husband's two children, Oswald and Regina. Pastor Manders is also ruled by a neurotic concern for public opinion. Duty and self-sacrifice are also major themes of this play, as Mrs. Alving had to maintain the public image of her husband, Captain Alving.

In these two plays, Ibsen left the ending to the audience. In *A Doll's House*, Nora's husband finally accepts her, but Nora is aware of her situation and chooses to leave. In *Ghosts*, Mrs. Alving is left with the decision to mercy kill her son Oswald, to relieve him from the pain of his disease, but it is not revealed whether she follows through with it. These plays explore the theme of how people present themselves, showing that people living immoral lives often still have untarnished reputations. Duty and self-sacrifice are also prominent themes in these plays, with Mrs. Alving feeling obligated to maintain the public image of her husband, Captain Alving. However, to fully understand the significance of Ibsen's plays, we must consider the following excerpt from critic Krutch:

"During a considerable part of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the contemporary acted drama in England and America was both intellectually and artistically stagnant. From the death of Sheridan to the emergence of Oscar Wilde, no Englishman and no American of considerable talent devoted himself chiefly to writing plays. The theatre, though it was sometimes commercially flourishing, was generally considered as non-literary as intellectually dead as it was artistically null."

This was also true of the drama in other countries, including France. It was Ibsen who revitalized the art of drama, making it a serious means of self-discovery and awakening rather than just pure entertainment. As James Joyce said: "His plays are so packed with thought. At some chance expression, the mind is tortured with some question, and in a flash long reaches of life are opened up in vista..." (McFarlane J.W 72). Ibsen's influence can be seen in later dramatists such as Bernard Shaw, Bertolt Brecht, and Satre.

CHAPTER II

NORA: DEJECTION TO REBIRTH, IN A DOLL'S HOUSE

A Doll's House created an uproar upon its initial release. The play was first performed at the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen. The issues raised are largely representative of the prevailing conditions of women during that era. The roles of women were limited to that of a mother, daughter, and homemaker. Ibsen began thinking about writing the play around May 1878, and he argued that "a woman cannot be herself in modern society, for it is an exclusively male society, with laws made by men and with prosecutors and judges who assess feminine conduct from a masculine standpoint" (Meyer 466).

Nora is the protagonist of the play, and the entire plot revolves around her. She is initially portrayed as flighty and excitable, but she is sensitive and completely unaware of her own character until the end. When the play opens, Nora returns from Christmas shopping and over tips the porter. Her husband asks her if she is overspending again. Although she is a perfect wife, her husband calls her a "singing lark," "little squirrel," and "little spendthrift." Nora replies to these names in the same manner. This shows Torvald's superior attitude towards Nora, as he places himself as the master of the house.

Nora spends most of her on-stage time as a doll, a passive character with little personality of her own. Her entire life is a construction of societal norms and the expectations of others. Until she comes to the realization that her life is a sham, she spends her whole life in a dream world. In this dream world, Nora does not take life seriously, an attitude that leads to many of the plot's complications. Until her change, Nora is childish and whimsical. Her first act on stage is paying the delivery boy. Although his service only costs a small amount, she gives him an additional hundred before he can thank her. It is not a significant amount of money, but the way she gives the money

indicates her fiscal irresponsibility. She decides in the middle of the transaction that she is not patient enough to wait for change. "Torvald: My little pet is very sweet, but it runs away with an awful lot of money. It's incredible how expensive it is for a man to keep such a pet." (DH 4)

One can find that Torvald is a moralist. Whenever he gets the opportunity to do so, he advises Nora never to borrow money. Her money plays an important role in the play. "Torvald: Nora, you know what I think about that sort of thing. No debts! Never borrow!" (5) Nora is shown to be a devoted wife, and she is also convinced that her husband is devoted to her. He regards her as a "helpless little thing," meaning she is unable to look after everything by herself. At the beginning, Torvald compares Nora with her father. Although the comparison seems sarcastic, he makes the remark in a casual way. It is known in the play that Nora's father was a spendthrift, and Torvald refers to her shopping as an example. Nora is the daughter of her father, and her spendthrift ways, playacting, irresponsibility, and amorality all run in her blood. "Torvald: What a funny little one you are! Just like your father - always on the lookout for all the money you can get, but the moment you have it, it seems to slip through your fingers, and you never know what becomes of it. Well, I must take you as you are; it's in your blood. Oh yes, Nora, these things are hereditary!"

Nora also accepts her faults due to her father. This shows her submissive behaviour towards Torvald, who acts more like a father to her than a husband. Mrs. Linde, another woman who is a close friend of Nora, is shown to be an unfortunate woman in need of money. She tries to seek help from Nora. Her name is Christine Linde, and she was widowed at a very young age. She comes with a hope to get a job at Torvald's bank. Nora is moved by her friend's plight and decides to help her as soon as possible. It is later revealed that Mrs. Linde married without the aspect of love only to help her mother and her brothers, and she takes pride in making that decision. Christine is the daughter of a poor family, forced to sacrifice her young love life. She seems to be the exact copy of the self-reliant and useful woman that Nora yearns to be. Once a critic named Harold Clurman talks about

Christine's "fortitude, compassion, and understanding" in renewing her relationship with Krogstad. It seems to be a personal motive over this large-hearted generosity. "Mrs. Linde has suffered a great deal of uncertainties all her life, and her sole aim was to escape that condition," as she tells Nora. She is definitely more mature but not as courageous as Nora (109). Mrs. Linde is a helpless victim of the social environment. "Christine: What a difference - What a difference! Someone to work for and live for. A home to look after" (DH 63).

At this particular juncture, it is revealed that Nora too had almost sacrificed her life for her husband. Nora has been a very controversial character with the critics from the very beginning. One of the critics known as George Brandes was not concerned with acknowledging any change in Nora, "Nora is a reborn creature strong enough to bear the consequences of her choice" (170). One of the recent critics, Inga Stina Ewbank, believes that "A Doll's House is a play about anagnorisis or self-knowledge ranking Nora with the other protagonists of Ibsen's play like Lona Hessel of 'The Pillars of Society'" (118).

Further in the play, it is revealed that some years ago, Torvald was ill and Nora's father was not in a position to afford money for his treatment. Nora, being a truly devoted wife, had forged her father's signature to gain money for Torvald's treatment. In eagerness to serve her husband and in perfect innocence of the legal aspect, Nora too does not give the matter much thought. Moreover, she regarded this as a trivial matter because she had done this for the sake of her husband. Torvald was unaware of his wife's borrowing. Now, clearly examining Nora's character, one can realize that Nora in the beginning, though treated as a child, is not so immature as she is portrayed. In her conversation with Mrs. Linde, Emma Goldman remarks, "Nora reveals her inner self and forecast inevitable debacle that forecasts of her doll's house."

Nora: When Torvald gave me money for clothes and so on, I never used more than half of it; I always bought the simplest things. Torvald never

noticed anything. But it was often very hard, Christina dear. For it's so nice to be beautifully dressed. Isn't it?"

Enter Krogstad, a lawyer employed at Torvald's bank, things unfold and Nora comes to know that Krogstad is a man of shady character. Audience gets to know that Krogstad is the very same person from whom Nora had borrowed money. Things get complicated when Nora is bribed by Krogstad for retaining his job at the bank. Nora is threatened by him, her forgery would be exposed to Torvald. Nora on the contrary believes that Torvald though has abhorrence for borrowings and debts, will still stand by her as he is a devoted husband and rather take the blame on himself. To avoid Torvald taking the blame on his shoulders Nora plans to run away. She even considers the idea of committing suicide though she admits she doesn't have the courage to do the latter. She then brings to avoid her children believing that her influence upon them would corrupt them. "Nora: Corrupt my little children - poison my home? That's not true! It could never, never be true."

She is not afraid of Krogstad's threat, what scares her is that her husband would sacrifice his life for her. Somehow it is Krogstad who makes her conscious of the offence she had committed. At the time of signing the bond on her father's signature was the most central act of her life, an act which determined the essential action of the play. Michael Mayer has expressed his astonishment that "a grown woman like Nora, however sheltered, could be so ignorant of the law" (104). this main act of forging her father's signature lets her develop throughout the play, whereas act one had initially set up the invasion of reality into Nora's world and rattling the basic falseness of her life i.e., marriage and motherhood. The act two eventually sees her set up a test that will determine whether the world is false or not. In other words, she will confront the fact that Torvald will find about her lie but believes that if he is the man, she thinks he is, his discovery will only strengthen their marriage. Coming back to the naturalistic tendencies in the play, Mrs. Linde's enforced rejection of Krogstad because of his lack of wealth so embitters him that he embezzles money, and later degenerates into a blackmailer, thereby permanently damaging his reputation and endangering his position at the

bank. Money and the need to maintain social status commensurate with their class, also shape the lives of Nora and Torvald.

Torvald's refusal to borrow money even in crises, and the contemporary law that women could not take loans without the consent of a male relative, compel Nora to forge her father's signature and lead ultimately to the collapse of her marriage. Another character that catches the attention is Dr. Rank. Though it is a minor character in the play he has a great influence on Nora and Torvald. He is a friend of the Helmers. Dr. Rank embodies and subverts the theatrical role of the male force that had been traditional in the plays of the time. Of all the characters in the play Nora is the freest on with him. She feels she can behave with him as a grown woman and not as a child, as in their long encounter in the act two. This leads to her flirting with him to disguise her desperation. It also leads her to confide in him that she has never been able to express her true self either with her father or with Torvald. For his part, Dr. Rank intuitively divined that Nora is the emotionally stronger partner in their marriage even though Torvalds is vested with patriarchal authority, and confides only to her the secret of his approaching death. Just as Nora is absolutely at ease with Rank, being unburdened by the strain of the playacting, and the baby talk that she put on for Torvald, Rank, too, declares his love for her as a fascinating woman who is a person in her own right and not a 'frisky squirrel'. (DH 2)

Dr. Rank has been secretly in love with Nora and has been affected by his father's corruption, suffering from syphilis that he inherited from his father. Nora's realization of Dr. Rank does not permit her to ask his help. Dr. Rank is genetically a victim of his father's profligacy, suffering from syphilis. Dr. Rank ascribes Krogstad's perverse nature to the factors heredity and environment and suggests that a society that nurtures Krogstad is diseased. However, Nora has been criticized by some critics Evert Spin horn who spoke of three Nora's first the frisky squirrel, the second as the determined individualist and lastly, he condemns as, "a person who apparently heartless flirt who toys with the feeling of the faithful Dr. Rank and teases him with her

flesh - coloured stockings; then they go on to wonder whether so thoughtless a woman can ever undergo a moral transformation".

Rank: Still stockings.

Nora: Flesh coloured - aren't they lovely? the lights bad in her now, but tomorrow...no, no, no, you must only look at the feet. Oh well, you may look at the rest too

Rank: Hm...

Nora: Why are you looking so critical? Don't you think they'll fit?

Rank's disease is physical degeneration and decay served as a foil to Nora traumatized fantasies about suicide to escape Krogstad.

Coming back to the female characters in the play, attention is turned to Mrs. Linde, an old friend of Nora's who comes to her aid. Deprived of childhood and happiness, Mrs. Linde represents the hollowness of the role of the wife and mother. Left destitute and unhappy by an unloving marriage, she had spent her childhood making herself useful for her family. Critics believe that Christina is, in many ways, a foil for Nora. Unlike Nora, who received many indulgences in her father's and her husband's homes, Christina has struggled to survive. Her marriage was unsound, and she had supported her family to survive. After becoming a widow, she discovered that her husband's estate was not financially sound. With her mother dead and her brothers old enough to support themselves, Mrs. Linde had no means to support herself. Her unexpected engagement with Krogstad was based on no illusions at all, either about her own motive in getting herself a new home for the sake of security or about Krogstad's real nature. This is in contrast to the Helmers' marriage, which is marked by play-acting and delusions.

Another point to note is that Mrs. Linde seems to be a self-reliant and useful woman that Nora yearns to be. But appearances can be deceptive, and her

actions don't seem to be the result of free choice. Apart from contributing to the play's major concern with women's lot, Mrs. Linde also has a functional role in the working out of the plot. Her sudden appearance after eight years and her failure to realize that Nora has changed from the childish schoolgirl, she knew leads Nora to reveal the details of her fateful trip to Italy, which contributes to the exposition of the play and conveys important information to the audience.

Mrs. Linde's role is more significant at the end of the play when, in the final act, she wins over Krogstad with the proposal of marriage. She has the power to change his mind to save Nora from the humiliation she was about to confront. But she does not do so, as the audience or Krogstad would suspect that it would be only a play to save Nora. She confesses that she believes in integrity and leaves it to the Helmers to discover the truth themselves. It may seem that some of her entrances in the play may seem fortuitous, and some of her actions appear to be forced, as though designed for the purposes of the plot. She not only helps to further the plot but also illustrates the helplessness even of intelligent women in a patriarchal society dominated by the power of money.

John Northam believes that the minor characters in the play somewhat illustrate the predicament of Nora. Mrs. Linde fills the useful role of confidant to Nora. Her greater experience and steadiness throw Nora's childish excitements into higher relief.

The portrayal of women as victims of a patriarchal society is a major theme in the play, and both Mrs. Linde and Nora exemplify this predicament in different ways. Mrs. Linde's acceptance of her situation and her pragmatic decision to marry Krogstad for financial security illustrates the limited options available to women in a male-dominated society. On the other hand, Nora's questioning and challenging of this societal expectation is reflected in her decision to leave her husband and children to pursue her own individuality and self-realization. The character of Anne Marie, the nurse who raised Nora

as a child, also serves to highlight the limited choices available to women in this society. Despite her brief appearance in the play, her role as a caretaker and nurturer of children underscores the expectation that women are primarily responsible for domestic duties and child-rearing. However, as the play progresses, it becomes evident that there is more to Nora's character than her initial portrayal as a flighty and frivolous woman. Through her actions and decisions, Nora demonstrates a deep sense of morality and a desire for personal growth and fulfilment. Ultimately, Ibsen's portrayal of these women highlights the need for societal change and the recognition of women as individuals with their own agency and autonomy.

Nora: Do you think so? Do you think they'd forgot their Mamma if she went away altogether?

Nurse: Went away altogether? But bless my soul...?

Nora: Tell my Nanny... I've often wondered, how did you ever have the heart to handover your child to strangers?

Nurse: But I had to, so that I could come and be Nanny to my little ones

Nora: Yes, but how could you want to?

Nurse: When I had the chance of such a good place? Any poor girl who'd got into trouble would be glad to. And that blackguard of a man never did thing for me.

The play also studies the pernicious effects of money, class and patriarchal ideology in distorting social behaviour and marginalizing the lower orders and women in general. Anne Marie, the nurse, has to abandon her illegitimate child and become a household help because of social strictures and poverty. Anne Marie had her own incomprehensible circumstances that made her to leave the family. From the above lines it can be learn that her husband was not a good person and did not provide her proper means to bring up the family. Circumstances led her to leave her own daughter to strangers and carry on in her life. Her character is quite similar to Mrs. Linde

who had to give up her youthful love for the sake of money and security. She has played the substitute Nora's mother. It seems to be callous of her giving up her own daughter and serving as a mother to another girl.

From the above lines an irony is represented, the nurse seems to be more sincere to Nora than her own daughter but the fact was that she has left her daughter for the sake of security and money. Here a negative image of the nurse is built, a selfish image of the nurse is conceived, i.e., her working for her own life security and survival.

“John Nathan here illustrates a parallel between Nora and the old nurse Anne Marie. He believes that: the brief discussion with the old nurse is therefore, on Nora's part, a covert discussion of her own situation and her sympathy for the old nurse is to be transferred to herself. It is important to note that this brief scene emphasizes the pain of leaving one's children – a point of some importance in the final interpretation of the play”.

Moving back to the main characters of the play critics believe that Nora's problem is that, despite sensing many unattractive facets in Torvald's character, she idealizes her husband because that is what she has been socialized to do. Not being as independent as Mrs. Linde, she for her own security, needs to believe in what she says to Dr. Rank:

Nora: you know how much how incredibly deeply Torvald loves me. He wouldn't hesitate for a moment to give his life for me.

She accepts Torvald's fine declamation about shielding her from all troubles when Torvald really plays a hero. Nora always knows about Torvald's pride and his desperate need for social approval. When Mrs. Linde asks whether she would consider confessing everything to her husband, she involuntarily exclaims.

Nora: Good heaven's no... besides, Torvald has his pride most men have he'd be terribly hurt and humiliated if he thought he owed anything

to me. It'd spoil everything between us, and our happy home would never be the same again.

Nora confesses to Dr. Rank and look forward to the final exchange with Torvald in the last act.

"Nora: I've been your doll wife here just as at home I was papa's doll child." (78) It shows, too there had always been a failure of communication between Nora and Torvald, as it was earlier with her father. There is an illuminating exchange in the episode just prior to the interlude with Dr. Rank, in which Nora makes a sharp innuendo about their relationship that Torvald completely fails to understand.

Torvald: now that wasn't a good idea for mine. (To suggest going to the fancy dress party in the Neapolitan costume).

Nora: Splendid. But wasn't it nice of me to do as you said?

Torvald: (lifting her chin): Nice? To do what you husband says? All right, little scatterbrain, I know you didn't mean it like that.

Nora indirectly saying that she has opinions of her own too, which Torvald ought to respect, but he is unable to take the hint since this would challenge his notions about male authority. Critics think that Nora when facing other people except Torvald showed her real self more. As it is evident in the beginning of the play. Nora avoided being seen eating macaroons at home because it was not allowed by Torvald, but she took it for granted in the presence of her friends. Besides, only Nora's friends could know her true thought whether it was serious or not. She disclosed her anxiety about her marriage and the desires for money naturally in the presence of her friends.

A Doll's House has been for a long time been appropriated as a work of feminist literature because of its portrayals of struggles of a woman caught in the grip of patriarchal society. The appropriation is rightly made on its apparent level. It revolves around precisely such a theme, a woman struggling to free herself from her husband and her society. Her subjection

is clearly communicated through the words and gestures her husband uses of her.

Since the premier of Ibsen, *A Doll's House*, much has been discussed regarding the final controversial scene. Many critic and theatre - goers questioned the morality of the play's resolution. In fact, some productions in Germany refused to produce the original ending. Ibsen acquiesced and grudgingly wrote an alternate ending in which Nora break down and cries, deciding to stay, but only for her children's sake.

Some says that Nora leaves her home purely because she is selfish. She does not want to forgive Torvald. She would rather start another life than try to fix her existing one. Or perhaps she feels that Torvald was right, she is a child who know nothing about the world. Since she knows very little about herself or society, she feels that she is an inadequate mother and wife. She leaves the children because she feels it is for their benefit because, Torvalds once said their children would become spendthrift or bad like her as it is said hereditary, painful as it may be to her.

Nora's last words are hopeful, yet her final action is less optimistic. She leaves Torvald explaining that there is a slight chance they could become a man and wife once again. But if a miracle of miracle occurred. This gives Helmer a belief that they would be together again. However, just as he repeats Nora's notion of miracles, wife exits and slams the door, symbolizing the finality of their relationship.

CHAPTER- III

LOVE AND AFFECTION IN GHOSTS

The play Ghosts was published in December 1881, two years after the publication of A Doll's House. It follows the earlier play not only in time but also in theme. The word "ghosts" is not used in the literary sense of a spirit of a dead person appearing to someone still living. While ghosts do appear in Shakespeare's plays, they have nothing in common with the ghosts in Ghosts, such as the spirit of Hamlet's father, Julius Caesar or Banquo, all of whom are represented as spirits of dead persons appearing to living characters.

Ibsen utilized 'Ghosts' as a symbol, whose significance spreads over the whole play. The title Ghosts suggests not only the continuing influence of a dead father over his son - visible in the latter's hereditary disease and lifestyle - but also the dead old beliefs and ideas which continue to exert their impact on coming generations. In fact, the word "ghosts" symbolizes here the very past, all that has happened in the past, which continues to haunt and condition the present.

The play Ghosts was written as a response to critics who found fault with Nora's leaving her husband and children in A Doll's House. One way of looking at Ghosts is as a defence or justification of Nora's conduct, as Oswald's tragedy is seen as the result of Mrs. Alving's staying with her husband. Another equally valid view regards Ghosts as a continuation of A Doll's House.

In A Doll's House, the subject of Dr. Rank's hereditary disease, which was only touched upon in the earlier play, is treated as the central theme. In the case of Ghosts, Oswald's physical weakness and mental instability are caused by inherited venereal disease. The reality of syphilis is that it does not always reach its final tertiary stage in all who contract it. At its most explicit level, the play may be regarded as a social document, dealing with indecent subjects like venereal disease, incest, and mercy killing. The play

may also be considered as a deliberate attempt at transposition of moral values, substituting a new morality for the old.

There is another level at which the play may be taken as a metaphysical inquiry into the human condition. Ibsen believes that the root of our parents' suffering lies in our past, which determines and shapes our present. The physical and psychological aspects of our heritage from the past have a continuing and crippling effect, represented in the play in two forms: hereditary disease and the influence of old beliefs and ideas.

The play opens in a happy mood as Oswald comes home to spend the winter with his mother, and it ends with his death. Oswald has most recently been in Italy, living a relatively unconventional life, and he is also a promising painter. By nature, he is an idealistic person who shows romantic interest in Regina.

Regina is a maid servant to Mrs. Alving, believed to be the daughter of Jacob Engstrand, a carpenter, and the late Johanna, who was Mrs. Alving's former maid. In fact, she is the illegitimate daughter of Johanna and Captain Alving. In Ibsen's personal life, he became the father of an illegitimate son named Hans Jacob and supported him for fourteen years. The frequent themes of guilt and retribution, as well as the appearance of a fairly large number of illegitimate children, are present in his plays. Mrs. Alving knows that Regina is an illegitimate daughter of her husband, but Regina learns only at the end of the play. She thinks that Mrs. Alving has given her a sufficient life.

Engstrand: I want to take you with me, Regina.

Regina: you want to take me? What you talking about?

Engstrand: I want to take you with me, I say.

Regina (scornfully): Home with you? Not likely I won't. You bet your life you We'll see. You expect me to go back and live with you? In that house? After Mrs. Alving's bought me up in her own home, treats me as though I was one of the family? Get out!

Engstrand: What the hell's this? Are you setting yourself up against your father, my girl?

Throughout the play, she refuses to accept her father's unsure affection and takes pride from working in Mrs. Alving's home. She thought that her father was the only reason for the death of her mother.

Engstrand: And when your mother was being difficult. I had to think up some way to nark her. She was always acting the fine lady. (Mimic) let me go, Engstrand! Stop it! I've been in service for three years with chamberlain Alving at Rosenveld, and don't you forget it!" (Laughs) she never could forge the captain and been made a chamberlain when she was working for him.

Thus, it shows the opinion of Engstrand on his late wife Johana. As a daughter Regina didn't even accept the opinion of her mother by her father because she thought that her mother was a very innocent maid in Captain's house. But later she realised her mother was also one of the women for joy of life to the master Captain Alving.

Captain Alving was a very famous man in the society with a good reputation, and before he died, he was made as a chamberlain. He never appeared in the play but is when referred too, according to Mrs. Alving, he was, in fact, a lazy, dissolute man.

Mrs. Alving: And this happy, carefree child- for he was like a child. then-had to live here in a little town that had no joy to offer him, only diversions. He had lived here with no purpose in life; simply a position to keep up. He could find no work into which he could throw himself heart and soul- just keeping the wheels of business turning. He hadn't a single friend capable of knowing what the joy of life mean; only idlers and drinking- companions.

At the same time, she is a free-thinking woman and the situation compelled to tell her son the truth about his father. Even though she thinks badly about

her husband. she wanted to build a new orphanage by the name of Captain Alving. After the death of her husband, she gets some amount by his name but she didn't want: to use it for her awe. Many of them didn't notice that, Captain Alving did his duties. as a husband to his wife. Even though he died, he made some money to his family to survive. That shows the duty of responsible husband to his wife. Pastor Manders was a local priest from the nearby town. Pastor Manders was resolute, in this play that. There many people with a right to opinion- I mean, People who really have the right to hold an opinion- who might take offence?" At the time of Industrial Revolution, many scientific things had been discovered. So that the people's mind was changed, that results in lack of faith on God and traditional virtues.

He often lectured others about morality and religion. Sometimes, his financial dealing regarded the orphanage seem suspect. He believed that Mrs. Alving should not have abandoned her husband and should not have sent her son into the world at such an early age. Using irony, as a modern element, it is very common among writers in different genres, especially in drama. Even in postmodern works, use of irony is very popular. To put it in a nutshell, irony shows how a writer is able to convey his or her message indirectly to the reader. By the same token, writers use irony to challenge the readers mind and make them think and find out the massage of the irony.

Ibsen uses dramatic irony in different: parts of the play that let the reader be curious about the character's reactions to the events in the play, as the reader knows some facts but some characters do not. For instance, in the very beginning of the first act, the reader becomes aware that Engstrand wants to open a tavern, not a home, for sailors.

Engstrand: Yes, well you see, so I thought I'd put the money into something that might bring me in a bit. A kind of hostelry for sailors-

Regina(disgusted): Oh, my God!

Engstrand: A real smart place, you understand - not one of those low waterfront joints. No, damn it. this is going to be for captains and officers

and- tip top people, you understand. However, in the second act, Manders does not know the truth and thinks that Engstrand wants to open a home for sailors. As Manders said to Regina about her duties towards her father, "We must assist Engstrand with this Sailors' Home. Regina must go to him and help him-"

In the beginning of act two, Mrs. Alving: The girl left my service at once, and was given a considerable sum of money to keep her mouth shut. The remaining difficulties she solved for herself when she got to town, she renewed an old acquaintance with Engstrand, let it be known, I dare say, how much money she had, and spun him a story about some foreigner or other who'd been here with a yacht that summer. Then she and Engstrand got themselves married in a hurry.

The reader knows that Mr. Alving had illegal relationships with Johanna and Regina is her real daughter but before that readers think that captain Alving was a good person and Regina was a lovable maid to Mrs. Alving. Tragic Irony is a type of dramatic irony and it is the unexpected results of a character's actions that are against his or her desires. Nevertheless, Regina and Oswald hear the story about her birth in the third act from Mrs. Alving, as she says, and day in day out I dwelt on the thought, that Regina belonged here in this house-

Just as much as my own son". It shows that Regina would become a half-sister for Oswald, after that Regina thinks her mother is one of them to Captain Alving and she decides to leave the house of Mrs. Alving.

However, an unexpected event, burning of the orphanage. proves him to be Wrong and creates a tragic irony. During the third act, orphanage was totally burnt to the ground. Every one rushes to the burnt ground, Manders takes the fault as himself and thinks that the orphanage was not insured. As Engstrand say, "Not insured. And then to go straight over and set fire to it all, Oh, good heavens, what a tragedy". As the orphanage burs to the ground as a result of carelessness with a candle. The play proceeds toward more

revelations. Oswald learns that his father led a dissolute life and that Regina, whom he had become very attracted to, is his half-sister.

In *Ghosts*, the author deals with such dichotomies throughout the play. Ibsen creates situations where two opposite ideas live together. For instance, the argument about regular and irregular marriages between Manders and Oswald can be considered as binary oppositions. Each one tries to support his idea by denying those of the other person. Manders and Oswald never agree on the issue because they have totally different philosophies.

Manders: So, you are speaking of unlegalized relationships! These so-called free marriage!

Oswald: I've never noticed anything particularly free about the way such people live.

Manders: But how it is possible that- that any reasonably well-brought up man or young woman can bring themselves to live that- openly, for everyone to, see?

Oswald: But what else can they do? A poor young girl. It costs a lot of money to get married. What can they do?

Thus, it shows two different types of people who outlook the marriage. Manders, as a priest thought that marriage is a royal legal relationship between man and woman. But Oswald delivers that a marriage is a waste of cash. Here Ibsen clearly explains the situation of 19th century people mind who only things for money. Likewise, Oswald only things about money and he lived in Paris, so he brings out the nature of foreigner's thought about the marriage. Although he is strictly on the business of the orphanage, Pastor Manders, upset he free-thinking books that Mrs. Alving has been reading, feels moved to remind her fatal spirit of wilfulness, led her to disown and her duties as a wife.

Manders is moved to elevated religious public speaking as he spiritually condemns the woman who fled to him twenty-eight years earlier. Thus, it

shows how a woman suffered with mental stress in a known for a long period and the perfect mentality of a widow Mrs. Alving.

In *Ghosts*. Mrs. Alving's light-hearted and determined spirit progresses toward recognition of her own guilt in the course of events that has led to her son's illness. Over the course of the play, light sometimes acts as a potential remedy to this gloominess. Oswald refers to sunny Italy, where he can feel the joy of life. Mrs. Alving has a lamp lit, apparently to comfort Oswald, although it does little good. When the fire erupts in the orphanage, the memorial to Captain Alving's reputation is literally destroyed, so this light serves to destroy some shadows, although it is in no way constructive, as it only leads to further confusion, with Engstrand blackmailing the Pastor. Finally, the sun rises just after Oswald and Mrs. Alving have learned the full truth of their conditions from one another and with the sunlight, Oswald goes mad.

The idea of the 'joy of life' is introduced by Oswald. He first understood it when he saw Regina and noticed her beauty, confidence, and energy. He then applies the term backward to all that he values in life: specifically, to all the things he ever painted, such as sunny days and smiling faces. He contrasts the joy of life with the gloom of Norway.

Oswald: Mother- when I saw that spending. handsome, healthy girl standing there in front of me - well, I'd never really noticed her before but now, when she stood there, so to speak, with open arms ready to receive me-

Mrs. Alving: Oswald!

Oswald: Then realized that in her I could find salvation: for I saw that she was full of the joy of life. She finally able to rid herself of the burden under which she has lived all these years the orphanage will be the final act of compensation.

Oswald: He was one of the leading doctors down there. I had to tell him how I felt. And then he begins to ask me a lot of questions, which

seemed to me to have absolutely nothing to do with it. I don't understand what the man was driving at-

Mrs. Alving: Yes!

Yet Ibsen handled the theme in Dr. Rank's character in his previous work *A Doll's House* and also takes the main theme in *Ghosts*, why because at the time in Norway there are many articles were published in this particular disease called *Vermoulu*, a sexual disease which spread through the father's blood to his sons.

Occurring at the end of Act II, it concludes the scene in which Mrs. Alving has the first recognition of the responsibility by keeping up appearances at all costs. Oswald has introduced to her, the idea of the joy of life, a concept that has escaped her completely. Contrasting here the cruel Norway, the harsh house with out there, Oswald states that in Paris:

Oswald: They feel it's wonderful and glorious just to be alive Mother have you noticed how everything I've painted is concerned with the joy of life? Always, always, the joy of life. Light and sunshine and holiday. That's what makes me afraid to be here at home with you. I'm afraid that everything in me will degenerate into ugliness here.

"*Ghosts* will probably cause a stir, but it will also probably be a success, as it deals with a subject that is of general interest, and that few have dared to tackle. The play will be a tremendous shock to the public, but I must be prepared for that. The whole thing will be terribly realistic, and the effect will be startling. It will be a play for the times, and I am convinced that it will have a great impact on the theatre."

Ibsen's prediction proved correct. When *Ghosts* premiered in 1881, it was met with widespread controversy and condemnation due to its frank discussion of taboo subjects such as venereal disease and incest. Many critics deemed it obscene and immoral, and some even called for it to be banned.

However, despite the initial backlash, *Ghosts* went on to become one of Ibsen's most successful and influential works. Its unflinching portrayal of the destructive power of inherited sins and societal expectations continues to resonate with audiences today, and it remains a powerful example of naturalist drama and modern theatre.

It may well be that in certain respects this play is somewhat audacious. But I thought the time had come when a few boundary marks had to be shifted. And it was much easier for me, as an elder writer, to do this than for the many younger writers who might want to do something of the kind. I was prepared for a storm to break over me. What has most depressed me has been not the attacks themselves, but the lack of guts which has been revealed in the ranks of the so-called liberals in Norway. They are poor stuff with which to man the barricades.

Ibsen was disappointed that the liberal newspapers and cultural commentators in Norway did not support him over the controversy caused by his play, *Ghosts*. He had hoped for more from these influential organs in shaping public opinion. However, it seems that a fear of public opinion had silenced them.

Ghosts is a play that is full of postmodern elements. The presence of flaws in the luxurious plot in *Ghosts* gives the reader the opportunity to re-evaluate old traditions, dead beliefs, and superstitions that are present in almost every society. It is also a powerful reminder of how following unjustified beliefs can create terrible disasters for a family. Binary oppositions and the existence of characters with different natures make *Ghosts* a play full of opposite divisions such as truth vs. lies, dependence on people's ideas vs. independence from people's ideas, to name a few.

Applying postmodern elements to *Ghosts* helps individuals in the twenty-first century to understand the necessity of adjusting their ideas about dead beliefs in society. To liberate the grand narratives and those who have power

and misuse it, people should unite so that they can have a better life. Mrs. Alving, like a true tragic protagonist, finally observes the truth through the permanent destruction of her present life.

It is through her rejection of all hopes that she finally comes to terms with life. When she first notices the physical change in Oswald, she shrieks, but soon she controls her reaction and stares at the horrible scene in complete silence. She accepts the inevitable. Furthermore, the lovable relationship between Pastor Manders and Mrs. Alving is revealed in their dialogue.

Mrs. Alving: Oh, how can you say that? Oswald takes after me.

Manders: Yes; but there's an expression at the corner of his mouth, something about his lips, that reminds me so vividly of Alving- at any rate now then he's smoking.

Mrs. Alving: How can you say that? Oswald has much more the mouth of a clergyman, I think.

Manders: True, True... have a similar expression. (GH 37)

In their conversation, it becomes apparent that a sexual relationship has developed between Pastor Manders and Mrs. Alving, hinted at by the way they discuss the physical appearance of Oswald, particularly his mouth and lips. Ibsen skilfully highlights this physical attraction while also warning against the dangers of smoking.

McFarlane argues that hereditary diseases, such as congenital variations of the sexual constitution, can lead to abnormal sexual lives and are often an expression of hereditary deterioration. In many cases of severe psychological disorders, such as hysteria and compulsion neurosis, Freud found that the patients' fathers had a history of syphilis or other sexually transmitted diseases. While the children of these parents may not exhibit

signs of the disease, they may still inherit abnormal sexual constitutions as a result.

This Freudian concept of hereditary disease can be applied to Ibsen's *Ghosts*, where the Alving family's legacy is ultimately harmful. McFarlane specifically comments on the role of syphilis in this context.

Woman who continues to cohabit with a syphilitic husband may expect to have defective children; ... that a neurotic and lascivious woman is apt to be horrified when she finds that she is pregnant; ... that the world is barbarously cruel to a woman who has violated the seventh commandment or a man who has violated the Eighth.

The pathos in *Ghosts* is overwhelming. Ibsen allows the truth of heredity, which was being pressed upon his attention due to scientific speculation and a rationalistic trend, to colour the play continuously and ultimately lead to one of the most dreadful endings in modern drama,

The play concludes shortly after Oswald appeals to his mother for a promise to give him a lethal dose of morphine when his disease overtakes his mind. The closing scene depicts Mrs. Alving's sorrowful decision, while her son is suddenly reduced to a catatonic state. No one knows whether Mrs. Alving will relieve her son's misery or let him live in this mindless state. Ibsen leaves the end of the play to the reader's imagination. Oswald's last words, "The sun. The sun," reveal his desire for a comfortable life, while Mrs. Alving, as a mother, wants her son to live in comfort, but ultimately fails.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMING UP

Henrik Ibsen is widely recognized as one of the most prominent modern playwrights who addressed the social issues related to the marginalization of women in his time. Through his dramatic works, he delved deep into the family, social, cultural, economic, and psychological conflicts faced by women in their daily lives. Ibsen's works have gained immense popularity and critical acclaim worldwide by shedding new light on women's struggles.

During the Industrial Revolution, many women were frustrated due to materialism and sexual harassment, as they held a minority status in the nineteenth-century western culture. Ibsen's plays are regarded as a gallery of portraits of various men and women facing social and psychological conflicts in their quest for truth and freedom. However, his female characters outshine their male counterparts by demonstrating great courage in times of crisis and misfortune. Ibsen's strong women characters exhibit great devotion towards their goals and enormous determination to achieve individual freedom and existence. They are bold, revolutionary women warriors with independent and intelligent psychology and an aspiration for spiritual liberation. They tolerate great pains to defend their dignity and rights as human beings rather than being subservient to the male-dominated society.

Conflict is an essential aspect of literature and is utilized in most segments of nearly all works of literature to engage readers or audiences. Ibsen's female characters bear testimony to strong personalities that are incomparable to social conventions. Generally, Ibsen's female characters can be categorized into two groups: strong, independent, and deviant, and weak, tame, and obedient. Ibsen's personal experiences and knowledge of nineteenth-century western culture provide insight into the creation of memorable and challenging female characters. Conflict is usually generated between the protagonist and the antagonist to fully immerse the audience in the play.

In *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts*, the psychological tension in the characters' mind and heart can be felt more than external actions. Internal conflict is one of the most

critical features used in these plays, where the character faces a difficulty inside themselves and its impact on their character. This kind of conflict arouses universal emotions in people, whether it is an inner need, desire, or confusion. The protagonist in these plays has to deal with internal conflict, where the natural feeling on one hand and belief in authority on the other hand attack the character's mind and soul.

The character of Nora is influenced by her affectionate relationship, as she feels transferred from her father to her husband. Nora's risky journey to self-enlightenment begins with captivity to money. She is enthralled by the power and freedom of money that is only available to men. The captivity to money begins as a taste of the freedom of this world. In a patriarchal society controlled by men's rules, Nora tries to get her rights.

“Helmer: What duties do you mean? Nora: My duties towards myself.”

It is true that Nora's slamming of the door at the end of *A Doll's House* signifies her rejection of her traditional role as a wife and mother, and her desire for personal freedom and self-determination. However, it is important to note that Nora's decision to leave is not solely motivated by her desire for individualism. Throughout the play, Nora's struggle is not just against societal expectations and gender roles, but also against the patriarchy and the oppression that it entails.

It is also worth mentioning that while Nora's actions may seem radical, they are not necessarily meant to be seen as a condemnation of marriage or family life. Rather, Ibsen's intention was to show the importance of individual agency and the right to self-determination, regardless of one's gender or social status.

Furthermore, the idea that Nora's departure from her family leads to their eventual downfall and ruin is not necessarily a reflection of Ibsen's views on feminism or the consequences of female empowerment. It is more likely a commentary on the social and economic conditions of the time, which often left women and families vulnerable to poverty and destitution.

Overall, *A Doll's House* is a complex play that explores themes of gender, power, and individualism. While Nora's decision to leave her family is a central aspect of the play, it is important to view her actions within the larger context of the societal

and cultural norms of the time, and to consider the various factors that led to her ultimate decision.

Nora: In future we shall be able to live quite differently- just as we please, in fact. Oh. Christina, I feel so light- hearted and happy! It's delightful to have lots of money, and no need to worry about things, isn't it?

Nora: oh, sometimes I was so tired, so tired. And yet it was splendid to work in that way and earn money. I almost felt as if I was a man.

In conclusion, Henrik Ibsen's play "A Doll's House" is a ground-breaking work that explores the themes of gender roles, societal expectations, and personal freedom. Through the character of Nora, Ibsen challenges the traditional notion of a woman's role in society and advocates for individual autonomy and self-determination. Nora's decision to leave her family at the end of the play was a bold and radical act that had a profound impact on both the character herself and the larger cultural conversation around women's rights. While some characters like Christina demonstrate the importance of family responsibilities, Ibsen's larger message is one of personal liberation and the rejection of societal norms that restrict individual freedom. "A Doll's House" remains a seminal work in the history of feminist literature and continues to resonate with audiences around the world today.

In *Ghosts*, the disassociation of fact and value is a common theme that has been explored in tragedy throughout history. However, there is a significant difference in the way Ibsen approaches this theme. Unlike in traditional tragedy where the hero goes through the dark night of the soul and is viewed as responsible and capable of action, even if that action is a grasping for the sun, Ibsen presents characters who are trapped in a world of outmoded beliefs and ideals.

Actress Alla Nazimova, who played the roles of Regina in *St. Petersburg* and Mrs. Alving throughout the United States and at the Empire Theatre in New York in the 1935-1936 season, notes that *Ghosts* is not merely the presentation of a single social problem. Rather, the "true ghosts" of the play are a legion of dead ideas of

conduct with which we have been brought up, notions of duty and obligation, and conceptions of law and order.

Mrs. Alving, one of the play's central characters, comes to realize the uselessness of her efforts in the face of her son Oswald's disease. She finds herself in one of the cruellest of tragic situations, not only having to watch the end of a life she loves, but also having to serve as an instrument of its ending. For her, death would be a blessing compared to this harsh punishment.

Ibsen does not provide closure in the play's conclusion, leaving the audience with a feeling of uneasiness that continues to haunt them for days to come. *Ghosts* is a powerful commentary on the human condition and the limitations of our beliefs and ideals.

“A woman cannot be herself in the society of today, which is exclusively a masculine society, with laws written by men, and with accusers and judges who judge feminine conduct from the masculine standpoint.”

The central conflict in *Ghosts* is not unique to the modern world; the disassociation of fact and value is a common theme in all tragedy. However, there is a significant difference when this theme is used before Ibsen. In this kind of tragedy, the hero goes through the dark night of the soul with all its pain, suffering, doubt, and despair, but man is viewed as responsible and capable of action, even if that action is a grasping for the sun.

The play has been remarked upon by Alla Nazimova, who played the role of Regina in St. Petersburg and Mrs. Alving throughout the United States and at the Empire Theatre in New York in the 1935-1936 season. She said that it is only a very imperceptive person who sees *Ghosts* as the presentation of a single social problem. The "ghosts" in the play are a whole legion of outmoded beliefs and ideals, dead ideas of conduct with which we have been brought up, notions of duty and obligation, conceptions of law and order that, in the lines of the play, Mrs. Alving comes to realize the uselessness of her efforts in the face of the beginning of Oswald's disease. She is placed in one of the cruellest of tragic situations. She has not only to watch the end of a life she had come to affectionately understand but

also to serve as an instrument of its ending. Perhaps there could be no harsher punishment for a human being. Death looks like a blessing in comparison with it. And Ibsen lets the curtain drop without giving up the tension. The audience leaves the theatre, not having the calm of mind, all passion spent, but with a feeling of uneasiness that continues to haunt them for days.

The main theme of the play is to show how a son could be affected by the sins of his father. Even though Mr. Alving was good to society, his son was influenced by his father's habits and joy of life, which ultimately resulted in Oswald's death. *Ghosts* is about the actual and symbolic diseases of heredity, which destroy the joy of life in the younger generations.

For centuries, marriage was considered to be a woman's destiny, irrespective of whether she was happily married or miserable due to constant oppression by men in the patriarchal setup. A woman was always seen in relation to a man. She was expected to lose her identity and merge her individuality with her husband. Her only concern in life was to see that all services needed by her husband were properly performed to his satisfaction as he was the sole joy in her life. There was no question of raising a word against her husband, even when he was found to be ill-tempered, cruel, diseased, or drunk. The man was proud and arrogant and did not want, whatever be the circumstances, the woman to contribute her share towards weekly expenses.

Ibsen's heroine, like Nora Helmer and Mrs. Alving, is first and foremost a human being, rather than merely a woman. The word "woman," in fact, implies the role intended for her by society or men who set norms for her. Today, women have become indispensable not only to maintain the fire at the hearth but also to make men accomplished in their public affairs. The great change in the attitude and lifestyles of women is due to the environment created by men by shifting their interest from their wives to machines.

The Industrial Revolution did indeed bring significant changes to the concept of the family, but it is not accurate to say that the family reputation is solely dependent on women. Both men and women contribute to the shaping of their children's characters and attitudes from birth. It is important for both parents to model positive

behaviours and attitudes towards each other and towards others in order to raise well-rounded individuals. If a man shows love and respect towards his wife, it sets an example for their child to also value and respect women in society. However, it is not just the responsibility of women to ensure the proper upbringing of children. Both parents play a crucial role in shaping the future generations.

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