

## Nora: A phoenix from the Ash

Sudipta Basak\*

### **Abstract**

This paper is an attempt to discover Nora's metamorphosis. *A Doll's House* is all about Nora, its pivotal character, who after having lived as a conventional wife for nearly a decade had decided to liberate herself from the restraints under which she had been living contentedly. In order to establish herself as a human being she took the extreme step of leaving her husband, the shelter that she took as her home and even all her children. Had the play ended with a compromise between Nora and her spouse the effect of the play would have been less powerful. This drastic decision and slamming the doll's house's door had been able to send shock waves through the then society. She proves to be a living being full of vitality and courage rather than a toy i.e., doll in the hands of the patriarchs. She left the house that she loved, that she believed to be her home to establish an identity of her own. Her action symbolizes the personal liberation from the conventional covenants that torment one tremendously and discourages one's development. In other words, Nora points towards a path of freedom.

### **Introduction**

*A Doll's House* is universally accepted as the most celebrated play of Henrik Ibsen. In fact, this play is an inspiration for women. This play bears a revolutionary message and this message is particularly relevant to this part of the world today in the present times. Thus Ibsen appears to be a social realist with a sense of commitment. This paper makes an attempt to show the metamorphosis of Nora in the play. To show the transformation of Nora from a feminine to a feminist I have tried to explore a few issues like the position of a woman in relation to her husband and her home, the illusions that shape Nora and Torvald's lives and force Nora to confront reality, the reasons of Nora's leaving her home, her husband and even her children, and the appropriateness of her decision. This is an attempt to trace the possibility of Nora's return.

### **Methodology:**

Throughout the paper, the introspective method has been used and relevant literary theories. Content analysis, text synthesis and library work were also very useful in this process. This paper is developed on the basis of secondary sources. The secondary sources that have been followed are books, several research papers, articles, news reviews and have visited different sites of Internet which are related to this topic.

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\* Lecturer, Department of English, Jagannath University, Dhaka

### Objectives and Justifications

The situation that Nora faces in her conjugal life is very much similar to that of the women of Bangladesh. In fact we find a reflection of Nora in the lives of our women. This is how feminism has become a global issue. Literary history exposes women's long and untiring struggle to make them visible and to alter the existing patriarchal social order. Kelly is of the view that "one of the most powerful things feminism has done ... is to create new language and meanings which provide women with ways of naming and understanding their own experiences."<sup>1</sup> Language, the product of society, is an emblem of women's coercion. The most powerful gender, the man, always imposes his own definitions of masculinity and femininity. Man considers woman 'the other' as the one who is not oneself. "If men are active, women must be passive, if men represent good, women must represent evil...all the negative characteristics of humanity, as men perceive them, are projected onto women."<sup>2</sup>

Regarding language and its symbolic meanings, Sree writes that "it is difficult for women to express their feelings in a language which is chiefly made by men."<sup>3</sup> So, a language is essential by means of which women can break their silence and express their feelings and ideas. Butler writes: "she [Kristeva] argues that the semiotic potential of language is subversive, and describes the semiotic as a poetic-maternal linguistic practice that disrupts the symbolic, understood as culturally intelligible rule-governed speech."<sup>4</sup>

Scholars have adequately documented what Henrik Ibsen intended *A Doll's House* to be when he first sat down to write: a study of the two different moral laws that the sexes are by nature required to follow, and the moral conflict that follows when women are judged by masculine standards.<sup>5</sup> They also have established that in the course of the writing he abandoned the concept that the play was about gender roles. It was, instead, "the need of every individual to find out the kind of person he or she really is and to strive to become that person."<sup>6</sup> Much research has been done on *A Doll's House* since its publication. The author has been addressed as feminist one because of the play's numerous feministic interpretations. In recent times, a feministic study of the play by Yuehua has exposed the conflicts between male and female. Yuehua explored the ideological elements "to reveal male misconception of women and causes that entail men's power."<sup>7</sup> The history of humankind is a testimony to the scuffles women have had to suffer in the process of demanding their rights to freedom and equality in society. From the

earliest times the women are kept under male suppression. Women's yearning to equal social status, access to equal opportunities, and right to expression have encountered stiff resistance over the ages. Regrettably, gender discrimination is rampant in several cultures and societies even today.

### **Textual Analysis of *A Doll's House***

The play focuses our attention on the conjugal life of a middle-class couple and shows us the relationship existing between the husband and the wife and the possible consequences of that particular kind of relationship. The play deals with the predicament in which a married woman finds herself under extreme control of her husband and it shows the method which the woman employs in order to get out of that predicament. Marriage is thus very much the theme of the play, and Ibsen therefore appears here as a dramatist of social realities. The particular social reality which engages Ibsen's attention in this play is marriage and the position which a married woman occupies in her home. Ibsen is definitely on the side of Nora in this play; and she wins our sympathies also. Thus it would not be wrong to say that *A Doll's House* is a feminist play, even though Ibsen himself refused to accept this description of the play.

When the play was staged, it had the affect of a bombshell. Today, of course, it is difficult for us to appreciate the sensation that the play caused. To the Nineteenth century Europe, the idea of a woman violating her marriage vows and exhibiting a mind of her own by refusing to render unquestioning obedience to her husband was something entirely alien. Of course, it is only at the end of the play that the refusal comes. Nora in the play not only defies her husband at the end but makes him look small. The very subject of the play was one which was bound to give rise to endless discussion. The play had a message for society: it sought to awaken a sense of individual responsibility among women. Whether Nora acted rightly or wrongly, naturally or unnaturally, in leaving her husband, her home, and her children in order to develop her own individuality—this was hotly debated by people after witnessing the play on the stage. It may seem to some that Ibsen in this play thinks too much of a woman's rights and too little of her duties, but Ibsen was not dealing with the status of women in all its implications or in every context. His purpose in the play was limited. He wanted to show that, if a woman was not allowed to establish her own identity and develop her own individuality, she could not be really happy. If Nora had continued to live with Helmer for ever under the conditions in which we find her

living with him at the beginning of the play, she would have felt wretched and miserable, and even the normal duties of her life would have seemed irksome to her under those inhibiting conditions. The method which Nora adopts at the end to get out of her intolerable situation may appear to be destructive and may seem to be a threat to the stability of all homes and families; but Ibsen's aim was to point out a particular weakness and flaw in the social fabric, and to leave constructive philosophy to others. He diagnosed the malady, and left the cure to others.

When the play opens, we find that Nora has been, and still is, leading the life of a pet in her husband's home. There is no doubt that her husband is very fond of her, but the endearing expressions that he employs when addressing her clearly show that he regards her as a kind of pet. On hearing her humming a tune, he asks, "Is that my little Skylark twittering out there?"<sup>8</sup> In this sentence three lexemes can be marked to show the symbolic concept of language. My, little and skylark all connote to the patriarchal concepts associated with woman. 'My' refers to the sense of possession, very much the part and parcel of male gender. Woman is considered a belonging, a possession, a property. Father, brother, husband and then son are her possessors and owners who have an ultimate control of her being. Her own feelings, desires, ideas, notions, opinions are of no value. She has to lead her life according to the framework framed for her by her possessors. *A Doll's House* is replete with hundreds of such lexemes and phrases where Nora is treated as possession by Torvald Helmer. In the following phrases, clauses and sentences Nora is addressed to as 'my':

Is it my little squirrel bustling about?  
 When did my squirrel come home?  
 Has my little spendthrift been wasting money again?  
 Has my little featherbrain been out wasting money again?<sup>9</sup>  
 My little skylark must not droop her wings.  
 Is my little squirrel out of temper?<sup>10</sup>  
 My dear little Nora.  
 You extravagant little person!<sup>11</sup>  
 A sweet little spendthrift.  
 My sweet little skylark<sup>12</sup>  
 My little songbird.<sup>13</sup>  
 My little Nora.  
 My obstinate little woman.<sup>14</sup>  
 My precious little singing bird<sup>15</sup>

In Act I of *A Doll's House*, certain other lexemes are also noteworthy. The lexeme 'little' is used twelve times in these lines. 'Little' refers to something or someone very tiny, diminutive, miniature, and specially the one who can never be self-sufficient and always depends on others for existence. As Kristeva says that the symbolic language is the language of power, associated with patriarchy, such expressions 'My' and 'little' are the preferably adopted lexemes of the male gender. In the above mentioned examples the nouns like 'skylark', 'squirrel', 'songbird', and 'singing -bird' are also worth noticing. For Helmer Nora is not a human being with brain and personality. Rather she is a bird or squirrel, a beautiful and colourful creature meant for male enjoyment and pleasure. In a male dominated society where language is a tool in the hands of the dominating gender, and is utilized fully to create an impression of ruler and subjects; possessor and possessed, supervisor and subservient. Kristeva is of the view that patriarchy creates the concepts of man's power and woman's otherliness on the basis of symbolic or cultural concept and not the natural ones.<sup>16</sup>

The play is filled with many phrases and clauses which are the indicators of man's desire of control over woman, and his always-evident wish to be obeyed and submitted to. In the first act of the drama we are informed of Nora's liking for macaroons and Helmer's strict orders against this confectionary item. "Hasn't Miss Sweet Tooth been breaking rules in town today?"<sup>17</sup> The sentence shows how there are rules in the House of Helmer, which are formulated by Torvald and must not be broken by Nora neither at home nor outside of it. She never imagines going against his wishes. As she says, "I should not think of going against your. [Torvald] wishes"<sup>18</sup> At another place she says, "as you please, Torvald."<sup>19</sup> Nora in the entire action of drama remains busy in pleasing Torvald. She believes firmly that a happy home is a place where husband is kept pleased. She states, "to be able to keep the house beautifully and have everything just as Torvald likes it"<sup>20</sup> is a height of success. According to the prevalent norms husband is the sole authority without whose consent, nothing is possible. The wife has no choice of her own; all must be that may please him. When Nora narrates her past to Mrs. Linde and makes the story of borrowing for Helmer clear, Mrs. Linde says, "A wife cannot borrow without her husband's consent."<sup>21</sup> Such socially constructed thought-patterns are deeply fixed in human conscience and deviation from them is never possible. In Rabindranath Tagore's "Strir Patra" we find that Mrinal was also treated like a pet by her husband. She had the talent of writing poetry but neither her husband

nor her family members had praised it and accepted it. So she had to write poetry secretly.

Nora is an object of pleasure for Torvald. For him Nora's one quality is important, the quality of being beautiful and charming with "dear eyes" and "pretty little hands."<sup>22</sup> He does not want her to spoil herself or to damage her appearance. He forbids her to eat sweets because they can spoil her teeth. She tells Mrs. Linde and Dr. Rank that "Torvald had forbidden them [macaroonns]. I must tell you that he is afraid they will spoil my teeth."<sup>23</sup> At twelve places the lexeme 'sweet' is used for Nora which refers to socially-constructed feature of woman. She must be 'sweet' in all senses; sweet in appearance and sweet in behavior.

So there can be no doubt at all that Helmer loves her, but it is the love of a superior for somebody lower in rank. This superior attitude which Helmer adopts towards Nora is seen also in his laying down the rules, for running the household. He leaves no doubt in her mind that he is the master of the house. He insists that she should exercise economy in spending money on household needs. It is true that he gives this advice to her in a very gentle and loving manner, but he is very firm about it. He speaks like a moralist, urging her not to have any frivolous ideas about spending money.

Nora, Nora! Just like a woman! But seriously Nora, you know what I think about that sort of thing. No debts, no borrowing. There's something constrained, something ugly even, about a home that's founded on borrowing and debt. You and I have managed to keep clear up till now and we shall still do so for the little time that is left.<sup>24</sup>

Helmer reminds her that her father was a spendthrift and expresses the view that she has inherited her habit of extravagance from her father. Subsequently, when she recommends Krogstad's case to him, he speaks again like a moralist, telling her that a man like Krogstad, who has been guilty of serious misconduct, is bound to have a corrupting influence upon his home and his children. In fact, on this occasion he speaks with such an air of conviction that Nora trembles to think of her own criminal act of forgery and begins to fear that she too may be corrupting her children and poisoning her home.

When Helmer fell critically ill, Nora took him to Italy under medical advice, in order to do so she had to borrow money and even though had to forge her father's signature. Of course, at the time she did not realize that the act of forging her father's signature could be regarded as a crime;

but whatever she did was prompted by her love for her husband. In fact Nora said to Helmer that, "I've loved you more than anything in the world"<sup>25</sup> Since then she has been feeling proud of the fact that she had saved her husband's life. She has even refrained all these years from telling Helmer what sacrifice she had made in order to save his life, because telling him would mean hurting his self-respect and wounding his ego.

Although her life appears secure, Nora has had no training or chance to develop into an individual. Her father would lecture her, make her listen to his opinions, but would be angry if she had different views of her own. She went directly from her father's house to her husband's house with no time to form a life of her own. She has been taught to accept the opinions of men and leave her fate in their hands. Having no opportunity to earn money and therefore no independence, she must use flattery and her attractiveness as a way of getting what she wants. Her social role is to please and obey her husband and to bring up their children.

Nora is an example of how society restricted the experience and choices available to women. Their only duty was to their family. While the play indicates the lack of opportunities available to women, both Anna-Maria and Kristina gain experience and make responsible decisions about their lives. It is Nora, the protected middle class daughter and wife who remain inexperienced, impractical and romantic until her revolt.

If Nora loves Helmer devotedly, she feels convinced also that Helmer loves her with equal devotion. For instance, she tells Doctor Rank that her husband would, if necessary, sacrifice his life for her without the least hesitation. Not only that, with Krogstad's threat echoing in her mind, she firmly believes that, if the worst happens, Helmer would take her whole guilt upon his own shoulders. So Nora once said to Mrs Linde that, "We're going to see a miracle. Yes, a miracle. But it is so dreadful. Kristina, it mustn't happen - not for anything in the world" (Ibsen 57). In fact, Helmer has even said to her that he is man enough to be able to take upon his own shoulders all the blame in case any unpleasant situation arises for her. He has even said that he wishes that Nora were faced with some great danger so that he could risk his life to save her. Of course, he said all this when he was totally unaware of Nora's guilt in having forged a signature. But Nora believes Helmer's assurances to her, and takes them literally.

There are two reasons which lead to the whole trouble between Helmer and Nora. In the first place, he regards her as his property. He has a possessive attitude towards her. He believes that she belongs to him wholly and solely, and he behaves accordingly. His treating her as a pet is just a manifestation of his possessive attitude. This position has been perfectly acceptable to Nora all these years. When he gets into an amorous mood and wants to make love to her, he gazes at her longingly, saying that all her beauty and loveliness belong to him, and that she is entirely his possession. Later in the play he says that she is “doubly his property” because he has been able to save her from a grave danger. Perhaps Nora could have continued in her position of subordination if her expectations with regard to Helmer had not proved to be absolutely false. And here is the second reason for the breakdown of this marriage. When Helmer has gone through Krogstad’s incriminating letter, he becomes furious. Nora had thought that he would take the whole blame for her criminal act of forgery on his own shoulders. In fact, she had wanted to prevent him from taking everything on his shoulders; and in order to prevent him she had contemplated suicide as Nora said:

I shall never see him again! Never – never – never! And never see the children either – never, never again. The water’s black, and cold as ice – and deep .... So deep .... Oh, if only it were all over! He has it now – he is reading it .... Oh no, no –not yet! Good-bye, Torvald, good-bye, my children.<sup>26</sup>

But Helmer’s reaction to Krogstad’s disclosure of Nora’s act of forgery shows that Helmer is absolutely selfish and self-centered. Not only that; as soon as the danger from Krogstad has been averted, Helmer returns to his previous self-complacency and resumes his previous patronizing attitude towards Nora. He now tells her that he has forgiven her and that she can take refuge in his love and care. He compares her to a hunted dove whom he has rescued from the clutches of a cruel hawk. He again looks upon her as a “helpless little thing” who needs his guidance and his direction. But Nora is now completely disillusioned about Helmer. All his protectiveness towards her had been a projection of his own ego. He had himself realized that his protectiveness towards her was only a conventional husband’s attitude towards his wife. As soon as Helmer found himself in danger, he began to accuse Nora of having ruined his happiness and damaged his whole future. He failed to appreciate or even understand her reasons for having committed the act of forgery. Not only that; he forgot all his moral uprightness and his moral principles and got ready to accept all the demands of Krogstad in order to hush up the

matter. Thus Nora finds that both his love for her and his moral values have collapsed in the face of a crisis in their married life.

Nora has to suffer a lot in her conjugal life. In fact she is physically, mentally and psychologically exploited by Helmer. She completely lost her freedom after her marriage. Then she started living a passive life under the active domination of Helmer. She has started to lead a life of deprivation and subjugation. In the same way the plight of a married woman, chained to her husband's house is depicted in the opening lines of the poem "The Old Play House" by Kamala Das in the following manner:

You planned to tame a swallow, to hold her  
In the long summer of your love so that she would forget  
Not the raw seasons alone, and the homes left behind, but  
Also her nature, the urge to fly, and the endless  
Pathways of the sky. . . <sup>27</sup>

So Nora realizes that marriage is an institution that does not support her as well as any other woman. It rather ensures the eternal bondage for women. In such a bonded life the dreams of Nora are constantly repressed. So she stated that: "At that moment, Torvald, I realized that for eight years I had been living here with a strange man, and, that I had borne him three children. Oh, I can not bear to think of it- I could tear myself to little pieces." <sup>28</sup>

In the same way the indifference of man to woman's miseries is depicted by Kamala Das in her poem "The Stone Age". To quote from it:

You turn me into a bird of stone,  
A granite dove,  
You build round me a shabby drawing room  
And strike my face absentmindedly while you read. <sup>29</sup>

As a consequence of her discovery of Helmer's true character, Nora decides to leave Helmer. When he tries to dissuade her from leaving him, she gives him her reasons for leaving. She tells him that first her father and then he (her husband) had wronged her. Under the paternal roof, she had to adopt the opinions and views of her father; and under her husband's roof she had to adopt the ideas and the tastes of her husband. So Nora argued that:

I mean when I passed out of Papa's hands into yours. You arranged everything to suit your tastes and so I came to have the same tastes as yours ....or I pretended to do. You and Papa have committed a

grievous sin against me: it is your fault that I have made nothing of my life.<sup>30</sup>

Subsequently we find that her father used to treat her as his baby-doll; and her husband had been treating her as his doll-wife. So Nora once said to Helmer:

But our home has been nothing but a play room. I have been your doll wife here, just as at home I was Papa's doll child. I liked it when you came and played with me, just as they liked it when I came and played with them. That's what our marriage has been, Torvald.<sup>31</sup>

Now she has realized that she has a mind of her own; now she wants to establish her own identity and, in order to do so, she must educate herself. As for her duties to her husband and her children, there is another duty which is even more sacred, and that is her duty to herself. She is certainly a wife and a mother; but first and foremost she is an "individual". She would no longer be content with what most people say or that what the books tell her. She wants to think things out for herself, and get things clear. When Helmer speaks to her about religion and morality, Nora replies that she does not really know what religion is and that, when she has left her home and her husband, she would go into that matter also and would find out whether the teachings of religion are sound. As for morality and conscience, these things also seem to be confusing to her at present. She had thought that the laws of society would forgive a woman who was compelled to forge her father's signature so that she could arrange money for her husband's medical treatment who was critically ill. However the society held her accountable for this benevolent act. She then tells Helmer that she has ceased to love him because he is not the man she had thought him to be. She had believed that some day a miracle would happen and he would prove that he too was capable of making a sacrifice for her; but she has found that the miracle did not happen. Nora therefore wants to have no further dealings with Helmer. She demands her wedding-ring back and steps out of the house, slamming the outer door behind her. Before stepping out of the house Nora said to Helmer:

I have heard that when a wife leaves her husband's house as I am doing now, he is legally freed from all his obligations to her. Anyhow I set you free from them. You are not to feel yourself bound in any way and nor shall I. We must both be perfectly free. Look, here's your ring back – give me mine.<sup>32</sup>

When Nora gives back her ring to Helmer we find an echo of Aunt Jennifer in her decision. Adrienne Rich, a leading feminist poet of America, shows that women suffer from male domination after marriage in her poem "Aunt Jennifer's Tigers". Aunt Jennifer has been married to an Uncle. Her husband presented her a ring as a traditional gift during their marriage. This wedding ring is the symbol of Uncle's superiority as a husband. So Aunt Jennifer is ruled by her husband and her wishes, desires and her sense of freedom have always been repressed by Uncle. Like Aunt Jennifer Nora cannot bear the massive weight of Helmer's wedding ring. Like Aunt Jennifer, Nora feels that this wedding ring legalizes the authority of the husbands over their wives. Its heavy weight symbolizes all those restrictions and controls imposed upon them through marriage. In fact wives are so completely mastered by their husbands that they remain terrified not only during their married life but also after their death. This picture is realistically depicted by Adrienne Rich in her poem, 'Aunt Jennifer's Tigers' as we find:

The massive weight of Uncle's wedding band  
Sits heavily upon Aunt Jennifer's hand.  
When Aunt is dead, her terrified hands will lie  
Still ringed with ordeals she was mastered by.<sup>33</sup>

It is clear from all this that Nora leaves her husband because he has been treating her as his property and that at the same time he has proved utterly incapable of making any real sacrifice for her. He has even failed to appreciate the sacrifice that she made for him. After going through Krogstad's letter, he concentrated on her criminal act of forgery but did not go into the circumstances which had compelled her to forge the signature. He hardly allowed her to speak at that moment, but went on with his accusations, dragging her father's name also into these accusations by saying that she had inherited the lack of religious and moral sense from her father. At this stage Helmer said:

What a terrible awakening! For these eight years you have been my joy and my pride and now I find that you are a liar, a hypocrite – even worse a criminal! Oh, unspeakable ugliness of it all. All your father's shiftless character has come out in you. No religion, no morality, no sense of duty.<sup>34</sup>

Helmer's whole attitude at that time was very stiff and callous. It is only when he feels safe that he softens again and resumes his previous attitude like patronizing, loving, and protective. But now Nora has understood him too well, and would not like to live with him. He is a man with an inflated ego, and he has failed to appreciate her worth. At a time of crisis

he has even gone to the length of saying that she was not fit to bring up her children. Furthermore, he failed even to uphold his own moral values. So Nora says to Helmer, "You have never loved me, you have only found it pleasant to be in love with me."<sup>35</sup>

At the end of the play, as we have already indicated above, our sympathies are largely with Nora. We feel convinced that she is justified in claiming the right to hold her own views and opinions and to form her own tastes. Why should a wife be subordinate to her husband? Why should a wife be always servile to her husband? However, it is open to question whether Nora was justified in leaving her home and her husband altogether. It may be argued that, after the episode involving Krogstad's disclosure of Nora's act of forgery, and the subsequent withdrawal by Krogstad of his threat, Nora should have given a chance to Helmer to amend his attitude towards her. Perhaps he would have given her a status equal to his own in the house. Perhaps a working compromise between them could have been reached, and perhaps the family life of the two could have been preserved. It may be argued that Nora took too drastic a step in leaving not only her husband but also her children. Her maternal instincts should not have allowed her to leave her children, some would say. But if the play had ended with a compromise between Helmer and Nora, the impact of the play and the effect of its message on us would have been much less powerful. It is only by taking that drastic step and by slamming the outer door that Nora could have produced a forceful effect on the readers and the audiences. It is only by taking such a step that Nora could have compelled husbands to examine their relationship with their wives. It was only a drastic step like the one taken by Nora that could have sent shock waves through the society of the time. So Nora argued that:

I don't believe that any longer. I believe that before everything else I am a human being – just as much as you are ... or at any rate I shall try to become one...but I cannot be satisfied any longer with what most people say and with what's in books. I must think things out for myself and try to understand them.<sup>36</sup>

*A Doll's House* advocates the rights of women, and especially of wives in relation to their husbands. Ibsen himself denied that he had written this play in order to put forward the claims of women. Nineteen years after having written this play, he was invited to address the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights. In his address to the gathering, he declared that he had never written any play to promote a social purpose, that he was more of a poet than a social philosopher, that he had never

actively worked for the movement for the rights of women, and that he was not even very sure what the rights of women were. *A Doll's House*, in other words, was not about female emancipation. What Ibsen meant was that the theme of this play was the need of every individual, whether man or woman, to find out the kind of person he or she really is, and to strive to become that person. But Ibsen's contention in his address does not change the emotional and psychological effect of the play on the audiences and the readers. It is a woman's predicament with which the play deals; it is the disillusionment of Nora that is the subject of the play; it is the drastic step taken by Nora with which the play ends; it is Nora who wins our maximum sympathy. Whatever may have been Ibsen's intentions, the effect of the play is to arouse in us a great deal of empathy for the cause of woman called Nora. *A Doll's House* is a problem play or a thesis play, because it gives rise to a problem in our minds and it even suggests a solution though it does not emphasize the solution and does not suggest it as the only solution.

Nora leaves her home, her husband and even her own children in order to establish her own identity and individuality in the world and in order to form her own ideas and opinions. Her action is a symbol of the liberation of the individual from the traditional bonds and restraints under which the individual suffers and which hinder one's development.

But, more than that, the drastic step taken by Nora was at that time a trumpet-call to the women of the time to assert their rights and not to continue as the property of their husbands.

In Rabindranath Tagore's 'Strir Patra' one finds that Mrinal has also left her home and her husband, though in a different manner. She left the house silently even without letting others know because our socio-economic condition is totally different from Norway. But the decision of Nora and Mrinal are identical and I feel that both Nora and Mrinal have taken a right and logical decision. Thus both of them appear to be feminists.

### **Importance and Results**

From the evidences stated above, it is understood that Nora has to leave her husband and even her children because the situation in her home will not allow her to discover who she is and how to live truthfully. It becomes clear to us that her whole life has been based on illusion rather than reality. For this reason she left her doll's house to become a human being and to establish her own identity.<sup>37</sup> Her action is a symbol of personal liberation from the age old marital bond that torments any free

spirit. These bonds and restrains bar one's development. Nora will never return to Torvald to live under this unbearable bond, because she cherishes to develop herself as a person rather than one's wife or one's mother. Marital code of that era would never allow a woman to wipe out her identity as a wife or as a mother. So Nora would never accept the existing marriage system of that era. She could not forgive Torvald for his rejection. She has lost her faith in Helmer and her illusion is also shattered. She can make it on her own in the world.

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