

## CHAPTER FOUR

### CONCLUSION

After analyzing the theme through the portrayal of the protagonists in *A Doll's House* and *Miss Julie*, I would like to draw some conclusions. Both plays deal with the same problems which happen to women in 19<sup>th</sup> century which are caused by gender roles. Based on this fact, it is obvious that gender roles are very important in the eyes of the society at that time.

In *A Doll's House*, Ibsen tells the readers about the problem that happens to Nora Helmer, who at the beginning seems to be a woman who lives according to the society's norms. She is a caring, dutiful mother and wife, and also a submissive woman just like the other women at that time. However, it turns out that she has to break the rules by doing an illegal loaning and forging her father's signature without her husband's knowledge and permission to get money to save her husband, Torvald, who suffers an illness and needs to get health treatment. The fact that Nora's breaking the rules to save her husband's life cannot be accepted by her husband and also by the society at that time. What Nora has done for her husband is still wrong and improper in the eyes of her husband and the society.

Feeling disappointed towards her husband's reaction and being treated unfairly, Nora becomes a rebellious woman who does not care about the society's norms any longer. She decides to leave her family she loves. Based on this story it can be seen that women have their own roles based on the rules in the society. Nora thinks that it is right for her to save her husband's life. She has her own perception of being a good wife and mother which is different from the society's perception. However, still, it is wrong and obvious that the society will judge women for doing improper thing no matter what the reason is. This fact leads to the theme: "for women individuation seems difficult to reach as they have to live according to the norms the society sets for them."

In *Miss Julie*, Strindberg tells the readers about Miss Julie, who appears as a dominant and rebellious woman who does not care about society gender roles, the social norms and what the society will think about her. She appears as a woman who does not want to be under male domination. However, it turns out that she falls in love with her servant, John. She wants John to do everything that she tells him to do without considering what the society will say about them.

However, Miss Julie's not caring about the society brings her into a shameful deed which is having sex with John. What Miss Julie has done with John, turns her into an inferior and submissive woman who feels not equal to men any longer, and also becomes a woman who concerns about what society will think about her. She becomes afraid of her father and the society's awareness of the shameful deed that she has done with John.

Being anxious about it, Miss Julie, who turns into a submissive woman, obediently does John's order to commit suicide to escape from her father and society. This story proves

that although Miss Julie has her own perception about being a woman and she wants to be equal to men, still, at the end of the story she cannot bear the pressure from the society because of her improper deed. It can also be proved that the judgement of the society is stronger than anything, which makes Miss Julie lose her self-esteem and be willing to commit suicide. As a result, the most suitable theme for *Miss Julie* is “Women who wants to reach individuation may suffer as they should act in accordance with the norms that the society has constructed for them.” Based on the stories of both plays, it can be seen that the two plays show a similar theme; they deal with the fact that in the late 19<sup>th</sup> century European society, women’s individuation is difficult to reach, as women should live following the social norms.

Other than the similarity in the theme of both plays, the readers can also find some other similarities which both authors also show. Both protagonists are portrayed as a dynamic character, who “undergoes changes throughout the narrative, due to conflicts he encounters on his journey.” (Dynamic Character) From the characteristics of the two protagonists, the readers will be able to know what kind of characteristics that women at that time should have. Both plays have the 19<sup>th</sup> century Europe as their setting of time and place. Both protagonists live in a society who constructs standards for women at that time, and both the women protagonists feel the pressure of the norms of society in their struggle to be themselves.

Apart from having similarities, the readers can also find some differences in the two plays. Miss Julie and Nora Helmer are portrayed differently by the authors; at the beginning of the story Miss Julie is portrayed as a dominant and rebellious woman who does not care about gender roles and the society’s rules. However, at the end of the story, she turns into an inferior and submissive one, who concerns about what society will think about her and also

appears to be not equal to men any longer just like the other women at that time. In the end, Miss Julie commits suicide as she cannot bear the pressure. On the other hand, Nora Helmer is portrayed as a woman who concerns about the social rules but has to break them because she cares about her husband. In the end, she cannot bear male domination and she decides to leave her family she loves.

Another difference that the readers can find in both plays is that at first Nora Helmer secretly disobeys male domination and openly submit to it, but in the end she openly rejects the domination. On the other hand, at first Miss Julie openly rejects male domination and secretly falls in love with a male, but in the end she discreetly obeys male domination.

From the differences and the similarities that can be found in both plays, the unifying element is that both protagonists of both plays are women who in the beginning have their own perceptions of being a woman, which can also be called individuation. However, due to Nora's point of view as a wife who has her own perception of being a caring and dutiful mother and wife and also Miss Julie's point of view as a woman who has her own perception of being a woman who wants to be treated equally as men, still, their not being able to bear the pressure from the social rules forces Nora to lose her beloved family and forces Miss Julie to lose her self-esteem so that she is willing to commit suicide.

In my opinion, there are some values that I can learn from both plays. I think the two plays describe how difficult it is to live as a woman in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It can be seen that it will be wrong for women at that time to have their own point of views and will which are different from the social norms.

In *A Doll's House* and *Miss Julie*, it can be seen that no matter what the reason is, when women do something which is improper in the eyes of the society, they will be the ones who will be blamed the most and considered wrong. Nora Helmer who clearly has a reason to do the illegal loaning and forgery for her husband, is considered wrong and is the one who has to be blamed without considering the reason why she does so. The same as Nora, Miss Julie is the one that is considered to be a disgraceful woman due to her having sex with John, although, in my opinion, their having sex is the decision of both the man and the woman

