

## CHAPTER THREE

### CONCLUSION

After analyzing the portrayal of the female protagonist in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, I would like to draw some conclusions in this chapter. The protagonist of the drama is Nora Helmer, a middle class young woman who lives according to the society's demands at that time.

At the beginning of the drama, Nora is portrayed as an acquiescent woman. Nora's being acquiescent can first be seen when she accepts the pet names Torvald uses for her, even if the use of the pet names actually suggests Torvald's domination over Nora. Nora's acquiescent characteristic is also depicted in the drama when Nora does anything she can in order to meet Torvald's wish. Nora readily agrees to dance tarantella at the party they are going to attend and is even willing to repair the broken Neapolitan peasant girl costume Torvald wants her to wear. All of her actions indicate that Nora is acquiescent.

Besides being acquiescent, Nora is also portrayed as a selfless woman. Nora's love for her family causes her to put aside her own desire and prioritize her

beloved family's needs and happiness. For example, Nora willingly chooses to wear cheap clothes so that she can use the rest of the little money that she has to fulfill her family's needs and keep the household going properly. Nora also decides to take her dying husband to Italy for his recovery and looks after her newly-born son at the same time. Though it means double work for her, Nora readily sacrifices herself, her money, and her time. All of the actions above show that Nora thinks more about her beloved family than herself, thus suggesting that she is selfless.

Nevertheless, near the end of the drama, there is a trigger that changes her characteristics. Torvald finds out that Nora has secretly borrowed some money from Krogstad by forging her father's signature and this makes him angry at Nora. Torvald thinks that his wife has committed an illegal action that might destroy his reputation in the society, even if the money is actually used for his health recovery in Italy. Torvald then scolds Nora for her unlawful deeds and calls her using various rude terms. On the other hand, Nora herself feels that she has not done anything wrong. Though Nora knows that her action is against the society's norm, she feels that saving Torvald's life is more important than anything. Nora simply thinks that she just does what needs to be done to save her husband.

The different points of view between Torvald and Nora regarding this matter are also made worse when Torvald openly refuses to sacrifice himself for Nora. Nora considers Torvald's refusal as a clear sign that Torvald and other men in the society are selfish beings that treat women unequally. This realization causes Nora to feel a huge disappointment that later triggers the change in her characteristics.

Nora's huge disappointment of her husband's selfish point of view and unfair treatment then turns her into a rebellious woman. The rebelliousness can be seen when she goes against Torvald's wish to leave her family and live alone so that she will have time to find more life experiences to learn and develop herself as an individual. She wishes to become a better woman in every aspect so that some day she will be more appreciated by others. Nora also dares to oppose Torvald verbally and speak up her thoughts even if these actions are considered inappropriate for a wife to do to her husband. Nora's attitude in this example shows that she is no longer the acquiescent woman she used to be before Torvald disappoints her.

Other than rebellious, Nora is also depicted as a selfish woman at the end of the drama. Nora's selfish characteristic can be seen when she chooses to abandon her duties as a wife and a mother. Nora realizes that she does not always have to sacrifice herself for other people's needs and happiness. Instead, she now understands that she also has the rights to be happy as an individual. Nora's decision in this instance shows that she now cares more about her own happiness than about other people's, thus suggesting that she is selfish.

Based on the analysis of Nora's portrayal in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that Ibsen as the playwright has several purposes in creating such a character. First, through Nora's characteristics at the beginning of the drama, Ibsen wants to show the readers the extent of patriarchal power over women and its consequences in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Second, Ibsen also wants to show that the society itself has deprived women of their individual rights as a human being. Third, in relation to the previous two purposes, Ibsen finally wants to demonstrate

his belief that it is important for all people, especially women, to struggle for their rights to be treated equally as a human being.

Having analyzed the purposes of the author through the portrayal of the protagonist, I am of the opinion that Ibsen has successfully delivered his messages to the readers. His realistic style of writing facilitates the readers to get an understanding of the social issue easily, as well as attracting them to explore more about this work. I believe that this is the reason why the selling of the book was very successful and the drama was one of the most frequently performed in the world in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

As one of the readers, I myself agree with Henrik Ibsen's opinion that a woman should struggle for her rights and be treated as an individual that is equal to a man. This drama has made me aware that every individual, a man or a woman, has the same rights to live as they want to without being dominated by others. Therefore, I believe that this drama is interesting to read as well as worth analyzing.