

# General Estimate on the Structure of the Play a Doll's House

Mrs.M.Kokila<sup>1</sup>, S.Abarna<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>M.A., M.Phil, Nadar Saraswathi College of Arts And Science, Theni

<sup>2</sup>M.A., English, Nadar Saraswathi College of Arts And Science, Theni

**Abstract-** Ibsen is often considered the greatest dramatist. He was a controversial but internationally honored writer who changed the direction of the modern stage. As the tide of modern taste has swung against realism, Ibsen's works have increasingly been seen to have more profound implications than their criticisms of social conventions and hypocrisy. There is a close relationship between Ibsen's work and his life. In a letter to his German translator Ludwig Passage, written on 16 June, 1880, he commented: "Everything I have written has the closest possible connection with what I have lived through, even if it has not been my actual experience; every piece of writing of has for me served the function of acting as a means of finding spiritual release and purification." Thus, for a proper understanding of Ibsen's plays, it is absolutely necessary to have some knowledge of Ibsen, the man.

**Index Terms-** Architectonics, Spontanouses, Reputation, Delineation, Potential.

## INTRODUCTION

Ibsen's play A Doll's House draws a parallel to the make believe world in which children play at life with their dolls. Children make the dolls perform social roles over which the lifeless dolls have no control. A parallel is suggested by the title and by several speeches in Ibsen's play between the life that is represented in the house and the falls life of a dolls house .The title dolls house should be seen in relationship to theme of home. Nora has never left home she was confined in her father's home and to do what he wanted. She must leave 'home' to stop being a 'doll' if she is to discover what she wants from life and if she is to realize her full potential as an individual. A Doll's House is a highly visual play. It communicates by other means besides words. Each Act is filled with visual and sound effects that suggest meaning. It must be remembered that

characters are the forte of an Ibsen play for Ibsen gives more importance to the delineation of his characters than his plot. Ibsen comes down to presenting his characters in his play only after conceiving them in all details in his mind. All the major characters of the play – Nora, Helmer and Krogstad – have been conceived well. The minor characters Dr .Rank and Mrs.Linde, though considered super fluous by a few critics, have their part to play for the purpose of balancing and contrasting beasties adding texture to the themes of the play.

A Doll's House has been excellently structured by Ibsen. It has won the admiration of critics of its architectonics. No doubt, the play has a sub-plot, but it is so closely knit with the main plot that it does not hamper the unity of action. The action extends over three days. Ibsen employs the device of the parallel situation very effectively in A Doll's House. He creates parallel between the lives of the characters to put his themes into a variety of perspective. Some parallels are: Helmer is a lawyer with an insecure practice who obtains a good place in society when he is appointed. Saving Bank Manager of the town; krogstad is a lawyer with a bad practice and involvement in the loan business, who hopes his job in Helmer's Bank will re-establish his reputation. Ibsen has worked out his plot. The play is noticeably simple in action, and it has an everyday 'dress'. The play is divided into three Acts. In the first Act, we are first introduced to the two women characters of the play – Nora Helmer, the heroine and Mrs. Christine Linde her old friend and come to know about their past and present life. Then we are introduced to Doctor Rank and Krogstad, the villain of the piece. In Act III,we are led to know about the meeting between Mrs.Linde and Krista and their decision to marry.The sub-plot of Krista and Mrs.Linde does not affect the

unity of structure of the play. Ibsen has exploited all the devices of dramatic structure to sustain the interest of the play throughout. Suspense has been maintained throughout the play.

It indicates the begging of a time of festivity, happiness and family security. The decorated Christmas tree indicates the illusive nature of Nora's life in her dolls house – the Helmer household. The macrons are one of the details by which Ibsen shows the conflict between Helmers and Nora's view of life. As they are mentioned several times in the play, they take on symbolic significance. The stove which is a conventional source of heat is used in the play as a symbol of emotional and physical warmth. The Tarantella, a kind of wild Italian dance besides serving other purposes in the action of the play, is employed as a symbol the play begins with a door opening, and it ends with a door slammed shut. The imagery of the doors throughout relates to themes of caged and free animals. It relates to freedom and restriction; preconditioned responses and Spontanouses responses.

Dramatic irony is a dramatic device to bring about a contrast between appearance and reality, between what seems to be case or the situation or the meaning and what really is that irony may be in words or situations. Irony may be employed by a speaker consciously or un consciously. A speaker is consciously ironical when he makes a remark conveying the exact opposite of its surface meaning. There are several occasions on which we find Ibsen making use of irony. Nora in the beginning of the play, during her conversation with Mrs. Linde tell her that she and Helmer have had a great stroke of luck because Helmer has been appointed the manager of a Bank, that he will now be getting a big salary and lots of commission, and thus they will be able to live a carefree life. Examples of unconscious irony may be gathered also from the remarks made by Helmer towards the end of Act I when Nora asks him if Krogstad had done something seriously wrong and if his action could not be exonerated. During the course of her conversation with Mrs. Linde in Act II, Nora prides about the fact that her husband is passionately in love with her and he wants her all to himself. This is unconscious dramatic irony. While Nora pleads with him not to dismiss Krogstad for he might endanger his future, Helmer dismisses her fear and says that she need not

fear anything from Krogstad for he is man enough to take everything on himself.

In A Doll's House, the middle class setting is immediately recognizable to the audience, as is the relationship between Nora and Helmer. Besides realism, one of Ibsen's major contributions to modern drama is economy of presentation. A Doll's House is a master-piece of tightly knit, compressed drama in which there are very few speeches that are not needed. A Doll's House is a naturalistic play and it is anti-romantic. Romantic love is shown as a delusion in the play. Ibsen distrusts romantic love as inhibiting the free development of an individual. Helmer is blinded by ideas of love as Nora. He thinks she is stupid, wasteful, helpless, yet he claims to love her. He dresses her in the costume of an Italian fisher-girl and imagines that he is going to bed with a young bride. By its settings themes, characterization, technique and realistic dialogue A Doll's House belongs to the naturalistic type of plays. Ibsen's play, A Doll's House was a crushing indictment of contemporary bourgeois marriage. Nora, the main character in the play, is first shown as a woman who reveals in her status as the wife of a city bank manager, Torvald Helmer. The play builds to a crisis point when Helmer momentarily abuses and rejects his wife after learning that she once forged her signature in order to borrow to help save his life. Initially, Ibsen uses an intrigue-play pattern to build a web of complications leading up to the central crisis. But instead of unraveling these in the second half of the play, the world of Nora and Helmer is exploded during their discussion of their motives and behaviour; the audience is left at the end with the broken fragments. The initial picture we are given of Nora is of a doll wife, who plays skylarks and squirrels with her husband and is excited at the thought of the various consumer luxuries she can at last permit herself now that Torvald is assured of a good income. She defies her husband's pompousness with kittenish flirtation and childlike acts of disobedience. The action of the play follows a linear pattern until halfway through the third and final act. At various points in the action, characters are used to focus ironic parallels with the problems facing Nora and Torvald.

Nora's friend Linde is a widow whose first marriage, contracted for purely financial reasons, was a fiasco. Dr. Rank, a family friend, brings another parallel.

The play is full of visual suggestions that provide a comment on the action or highlight a particular facet of a given character's responses. At the heart of the play is a detailed exploration of Nora's character and nature of her relationship with her husband. For Nora to sustain her submissive role to her husband she needs to believe in him and worst fears are confirmed. In spite of the pressures of social and economic determinism, both Mrs. Linde and Nora, in their totally opposed ways, make conscious and responsible choices about their future lives as a result of painfully acquired experience.

#### REFERENCE

- [1] Vaidhyanathan .G, Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House published by Lakshmi Narain Agarwal Educational Publishers.
- [2] <http://www2.hf.uio.no/polyglotta/public/media/libraries/file/10/A%20Dolls%20House-%20Henrik%20Ibsen.pdf>
- [3] [https://www.belhaven.edu/theatre/images1/A\\_Dolls\\_House/A\\_Dolls\\_House\\_Program.pdf](https://www.belhaven.edu/theatre/images1/A_Dolls_House/A_Dolls_House_Program.pdf)