

Use of Realism in Henrik Ibsen's "A Doll's House"

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ABSTRACT : Henrik Ibsen's renowned drama "A Doll's House" stands as an illustration of latest realism. This play portrays the characters and also the conflicts honestly. This play is not an example of over-romanticizing. Nothing is canonized. There's no "happy ending" in this play. The ending is surprisingly shocking, given the society in which Nora lives, but it is consistent with the way Nora's character has been developed throughout the drama.

The marriage between Nora and Torvald is stated realistically for what it is: a sham Nora points this resolute about her husband within the play's conclusion, explaining that they need been "playing" at the wedding instead of living in an authentic partnership of mutual caring and sharing. Their home has been solely "a doll's house." Ibsen shines a robust light-weight on the Torvalds' relationship, softening none of its aspects.

Torvald's character during this play is treated realistically, as well, revealing his superiority, totalitarianism, and stinginess. His "concern" for his partner isn't romanticized. Torvald doesn't "take care" of Nora as a result of he loves her; he "takes care" of her solely as a result of he treats her as his inferior. In truth, he doesn't beware of her in the least. He solely controls her, demonstrating his power over each side of her lifestyle.

The play's conclusion is very realistic. As a genre, realism doesn't specifically demand or need an "unhappy" ending; but a conclusion that is consistent and affordable, given the circumstances is necessary Nora's going away from Torvald is a mature gesture of her character. The play doesn't supply an explosive "happy ending" with Nora and Torvald falling into every other's arms. Even once Torvald swears he can change himself and begs Nora to stay, she appearance truth within the face and rejects his guarantees, putting no religion in his integrity. Ibsen doesn't glorify or romanticize Nora's going away. She is to be separated from her children and she will have to deal the world alone. Nothing in her life is ready now. Her future will not be a straightforward one. There's no glory or sentimentality during a Doll's House, "solely a painful decisions.

Keywords: A Doll's House, Discover, Ibsen, Nora, Realism.

I. INTRODUCTION

Realism may be a movement in art that started within the middle nineteenth century in France and later unfolded to the whole world. Realism entered literature at almost an equal time. It's real objective was to uproot what called fantastic and romantic in literature and art, to insert what's real. In literature, writers use realism as a literary technique to explain story components, like setting, characters, themes, etc. In yank literature, the term, "realis" encompasses the amount of your time from the warfare to the flip of the century throughout that William Dean Howells, wife Chief Executive Davis, writer, Mark Twain wrote fiction dedicated to correct to illustration and a look of yank lives in varied contexts.

Norwegian author Henrik Johan Ibsen is regarded as the "Father of Realism" in the literature world because he was the director of two totally different theaters. One in the city, one in Christiania, Oslo, and dramatist learned the craft of playwriting by leading over a hundred plays so setting out to write his own plays. His early dramas were written in rhyme and subsume the history and mythology of the Scandinavian nations. In his middle of the career, he started to write realistic plays supported the superior play formula. The superior play maybe a play with a strictly outlined format or formula. There's careful exposition associated with the structuring of events that result in an inevitable conclusion. Despite the fact that the conclusion is inevitable,

there's abundant suspense aiming to it. This is basically a conflict between sensible and evil, with the great forces winning get in the top by a shocking twist (but logical) twist within the plot. In the case of A Doll House, the main target is on the dearth of choices for ladies in society. Really, one may say it's a study of the dearth of choices for all folks in society for discussing realism in 'A Doll's House.' We have got to note these four topics:

- Realism in "A Doll's House"
- The Living Stage Set
- Key Words in the Play- The 'Wonderful'
- An Observation on the 'Game' of Realist Drama

II. REALISM in "A Doll's House"

For the first half of his career, Ibsen wrote mainly poetic and historical dramas, but it is the Realist Cycle twelve plays of modern life that have made him famous. This realist drama grew out of the poetic and historical dramas and continues the themes and often even situations and characters of these earlier dramas. Theatre audiences today, however, come to this Modernist Realism not from the Romanticism from which it evolved, but from a later 'realistic' tradition that has discarded the ambitious perspectives of Romantic art. This means we tend to see and perform Ibsen reductively, small, as if his drama was pioneering work in the modest task of reproducing the reality of the world around us instead, as is the case, of offering a radical 'counter-discourse' to it. It would be useful for us to keep in mind a distinction, familiar to painting, between the 'realist' and the 'realistic'. The 'realistic' has always been with us since classical times: in the skillful rendition of persons and objects throughout a number of aesthetic styles. 'Realist' art, on the other hand, was itself a distinct stylistic approach, as in Impressionism, which subjected reality to a highly demanding aesthetic discipline. The artwork did not seek to render on the canvas a facsimile of reality: instead, it subjected reality to the demands of the aesthetic discipline. Ibsen's frequently dyspeptic comments on the world he found himself living in should lead us to question the idea that he sought to render faithfully the experience of our everyday reality. Ibsen's method was not to imitate Norwegian reality but to invent it: - as a metaphoric and 'histrionic' space that could never exist in actuality: an 'occult' space where his archetypal dramas could be acted out via the metaphors of the realistic aesthetic: a more rigorous aesthetic, by the way, than much non- realist drama. The great difficulty Ibsen's art sets itself is not to get his dramatic characters to act and speak like modern men and women: it was to get them to embody a new kind of poetry where 'archetypes' from our huge cultural past could invade and agitate his scenes of modern life. In the words of his son, Sigurd Ibsen said that art gives freedom of action to forces and promises to which life does not grant the chance of coming into their civil liberties. These forces and possibilities could exist only under the peculiarly controlled conditions of art. This, in fact, is one of the principal strategies of modernist art: especially the art of Ibsen's lifelong admirer, James Joyce. When we acknowledge this we will discover that many of the seeming, 'implausibilities' of A Doll House, which directors might at first wishing to cover up, are deliberate and indispensable aesthetic strategies of art that is trying less to recreate an off-stage actual reality than to bring on stage forces and possibilities that off-stage reality denies. Here, I will mention just one example that I will elaborate on later: the uncanny way the 'world of the play responds to the iteration of the word 'wonderful' wherein Act One, the doorbell twice rings when it is uttered, bringing on each time just those characters who will ensure that idea of the wonderful will not take place. This obviously is more occult than realistic timing. There seemed little in our world Ibsen found a worthy imitating. The world already was a bad work of art, evolved through blundering centuries of collective error as an artificial, unnatural, repressive, system standing in the way of our true self-determination. Realist painters like Edouard Manet and the Impressionists, Ibsen's contemporaries, shared this critical and subversive attitude towards everyday reality and selected only those elements of the modern scene that conformed to the requirements of their own aesthetic needs. Impressionist painters frequently were derided for ineptitude in recreating an everyday reality familiar to the viewer, in contrast to the meticulous verisimilitude of the salon painters. Ibsen, likewise, was accused of not knowing his art, of being unable to recreate the familiar and wholesome reality of everyday life. But the everyday reality was not a Truth Ibsen was trying to reproduce: on the contrary, the everyday reality was a sham, to be radically reorganized into the demands of aesthetic truth. It was all the more deceptive for seeming so pretty: A Doll House that had to be exposed, even if sadistically, as a prison of the human soul. In an Ibsen play the dramatic plot is an alienating, deliberately subversive perspective brought to bear upon the idea of reality conveyed by the play's story. By plot, we mean the sequence and arrangements of events in the stage between the beginning and the end of the stage action. This is what Aristotle meant when he described the dramatist as a maker of plots, not a teller of stories. The story is the material in which the plot will significantly reshape into aesthetic truth before our eyes as we watch the performance. It is not Nora and Torvald's life story that we should focus on, but what the play's three-act plot structure will do with that story: the emphases, manipulations, artistic structuring to which the plot submits the story. To interpret

a play like *A Doll House* by reassembling the story behind the plot's structure is as if one were to interpret a painting by reassembling Manet by trying to recreate some hypothetical photographic "real object" behind it. In painting, the Impressionists won the battle: in the theater and theater criticism, the battle still is being fought and one still hears that Ibsen's 'plot-driven' method does violence to our experience of everyday reality. The point is, of course, that it is supposed to do so! There even are attempts to tinker with the plot, even to interpolate elements into it a practice that, if one were to attempt it with, say, a late Beethoven string quartet, would provoke ostracism from the musical community, where the art form is taken seriously. If like many naïve interpreters, one imagines the cast of characters of *A Doll House*, to be 'real, living men and women', the sheer plethora of potential details would crowd upon and crush the stage and the play could not proceed. Their ancestors, parents, siblings, acquaintances, all of whom would impinge on actual life, would have to be accommodated. Their physical conditions, internal and external, their unceasing subconscious life, would all have a right to be represented. Otherwise, the artist already is severely distorting the reality he or she claims to be reproducing. Once one allows the principle of aesthetic selectivity one already has separated art irremediably from any preexisting actuality. To accept this fundamental principle of the realist — or any — aesthetic is to admit the necessary artificiality of the enterprise. This makes absurd the tendency to morally judge fictional characters. These characters are brought into being for their indispensable function within the total aesthetic structure. It is the height of absurdity to 'psycho-analyze' or morally condemn them as if they had any choice in the matter! Ibsen's theatrical method plays by the most difficult rules of any dramatist: He has to create, within the confines of modern drawing rooms, huge archetypal conflicts behind the rhythms, and images of everyday life: keeping to his actions of believable motives, entrances, exits, while at the same time, get getting the great ghosts, the powers to invade his plays as in séances. And the result has to be, as in a taut musical structure, a work of controlled symmetry: in *A Doll House*, a three-act structure, each act containing its own peripety and anagnorisis while enacting a progressively evolving dialectic in three stages. When interpreting or performing an Ibsen play we should search out, from within the structure of the play, its aesthetic terms of existence: what makes it a work of art. The plot of the play, for example, is not unfortunate recidivism to the well-made-play format that Ibsen so detested: the plot is the organizing principle of his art. In *A Doll House*, it forms dialectic, in three acts, each act building to its own crisis of peripety (reversal) and anagnorisis — perception. The average Norwegian housewife of the 19th Century was not likely to undergo three major peripheries and anagnorisis in three days. Nor would that housewife find all the surrounding characters, and their actions, carefully programmed, on cue, to bring this about, while themselves following the same dialectic trajectory! As the second play of a twelve play Cycle, *A Doll House* is only one stage of a long dialectical evolution that does not end until the last play, *When We Dead Awaken*. Only by knowing the whole Cycle will one be able to 'see' *A Doll House* adequately. Like all the plays in the Cycle, therefore, the play has a double life: (a) As a part of a huge completed design, the Collected Plays on the shelf, which Ibsen asked us to read in the order in which they were written, to see "the mutual connections between the plays" (b) As the show we are putting on now, to be brought alive and reinterpreted before a contemporary, first night audience without reference to the Cycle. *A Doll House* charts the possibility of the spiritual, 'awakening' of both Torvald and Nora; for both live in an illusory 'doll house' idea of the world. Those who know Brand will recognize this attractive young couple as Einar and Agnes — who has now married and set up home and have their 'awakening' to reality yet to come. This pair needs to be ejected from its illusory "Eden" and there is a 'satanic' character Krogstad, provided for this service! If it is Nora who awakens from a doll existence first, it is because it is she, not Torvald, has been put through the violent shocks of the three days. But the play finishes with Torvald, and the chance of his awakening too. This is less the mimesis of everyday reality than a carefully organized dialectic game that has strict rules and sets itself difficulties which raise the method to the level of major art. This is true of all major dramas, which gets us to accept the terms of the game because the 'pay-off' will be worthwhile. One of the rules of the game is to get rid of everything: irrelevant to the central action: to omit details that do not serve the function of the work. As in painting, this involves a selectivity that not only ignores or distorts things 'out there' that don't serve the composition but also requires incorporating elements, not 'out there,' that are essential to it. All dramas have 'gaps' which exclude elements irrelevant to the game being played. As Aristotle noted, in Sophocles' *Oedipus Tyrannous*, Oedipus and Jocasta seem not once to have discussed the nature of the death of Laius, or their extraordinary pasts, before the fateful day of the plot. That huge implausibility of the story, outside the plot, is needed to get the tragedy going. Within the structure of the plot, however, the play exhibits a devastating logic. Shakespeare's plays even have implausible plots, which we are willing to overlook because the pay-off, the human drama that emerges through the expressive verse rhetoric, is so compelling. Ibsen's realist plays are more plausibly plotted, but there still will be some very strange gaps. Thus, Torvald seems to have no parents, Nora has no mother, Dr. Rank dies on cue, almost, and Christine Linde will have her Act Three reconciliation with Krogstad in the Helmer home, of all implausible places. Implausible, but metaphorically significant: to juxtapose the tragically separated couple, below, who will join in free union, with the dancing united couple, above, who will descend to tragically separate. These are some of the many necessary shaping

devices manipulations of reality needed for the game Ibsen is playing. Ibsen shapes his play to bring out certain large, archetypal conflicts and presences. To do big things, he will overlook some small things. Minor dramatists take very great care of the small things and miss the big ones. Ibsen's games play by the most difficult rules of any dramatist: creating, within modern drawing rooms, large arclietyal conflicts behind images of everyday life. He must all the while sustain his actions of plausible modern realistic motives, actions, dialogues, entrances, exits, and yet still get the great ghosts, the archetypal powers to invade his plays. As a play about a spiritual rebirth within the modern world, its action is set at a time of symbolic rebirth. Christmas is the time of the death of the old year and the birth of the new. This seasonal feast, in Norway, is given the pagan name of 'Yule' (Jul) and has the pagan associations of feasting, dancing, gifts, and the good life in material terms: the pleasures of the senses, of beauty, art. But Christmas is a major event in the Christian calendar, and Christianity celebrates quite opposite values to the pagan: of renouncing this world, for ideas of sacrifice, of suffering. It is earth renouncing, reverencing allegiance to values that are not of this world. Two couples, therefore, experience this 'turning point' of the year in radically different ways. One couple has the pagan names of Torvald (Thor) and Nora (Eleonora = Helen). Torvald, like Einar the artist. In Brand, adopts an 'aesthetic' attitude towards reality and the play associates him with a preoccupation with costume, music, dancing, 'appearance,' aesthetic propriety: even on the aesthetics of embroidery versus knitting! The pagan tradition has been resurrected within the Christian feast, and, reverences this world, its season of the yule tree, the gifts, and the tarantella dance, the feasting; and this goes along with the young couple's whole outlook on life: the emphasis on joy, the beauty of physical things, aesthetic values: The fantasies they build up for each other in their doll house, of the heroic Torvald and his beautiful bride- wife, derive from a pagan joy in this world and its possibilities. But, like Einar and Agnes in Brand, they are "dancing over an abyss" and do not know it. The other couple, Christine and Krogstad, might be called the world's insulted and injured" that have lived through the "sorrow" that Nora wants her world to be, "free of(sorglos). Their outlook on the world, with Christine's life of sacrifice for others and Krogstad's of guilt, and painful expiation, is the 'Christian' one which will get its wonderful reward this Christmas. These identities seem located in their names: Christ-me Linde (Kristine) and Nils Krogstad. In the last act, we have the two worlds vertically juxtaposed: the pagan couple is heard dancing, 'above,' just before their world is about to be smashed up: while the Christian couple, Kristine and Krogstad, below, effect their 'miraculous' mutual salvation. In this play, Krogstad will be redeemed' by Christine. In the contrasting names and actions of the two couples, therefore, Ibsen already has hinted at other dimensions assembling behind the modest seeming characters and their domestic setting. These and other discreet metaphoric presences make up what I have called the Supertext that creates the expanding dimensions of the Cycle. Ibsen called his plays poems and the best way to approach A Doll House is to see it organized as intricately and as imaginatively as the best poems. The disastrous deed of Torvald and Nora also seems to remind us a well-known Greek play about a marriage — Euripides' Alcestis, in which a wife expires to save her spouse, as Nora, 'figuratively' does in Act II when she decides on suicide to spare her husband. The imagery of the play is first her death by drowning, and then with the tarantella dance, the death from the poison of the tarantula spider. Nora's Greek-derived name now begins to be suggestive. When she finally rebels against, not only her husband but also her whole society, she takes on the identity of another Greek heroine, Antigone. In these first four plays in the Cycle, the Greek ghosts are crowding back into the modern world. Ibsen, in fact, is doing something which such modernists as Thomas Mann, James Joyce, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, were to do after him: of rediscovering those 'archetypes' of our communal psyche, hovering behind the banalities of everyday consciousness.

III. THE ALIVE STAGE SET

To create a suitable 'haunting ground' for his dramatic séance, Ibsen makes his sets 'come alive' and take part in the drama. Just as Nora evolves from the 'mini-Nora' of Act One to the 'super-Nora' of Act III, so the set of A Doll House goes through a drastic evolution, from light to dimness, from heaven to prison until, by the end of the drama, it has been ethically ruined and could visualize the doll house settings, when Nora slams the door, collapsing like a house of cards, to reveal the harsher winter the landscape surrounding this little human shelter. Ibsen himself creates something like this scenic desolation at the end of Ghosts when the light breaks over the icy peak of a glacier beyond the devastated a living home. Looking at the set we see, first of all, those two doors in the rear wall. T door on the left (from the audience's viewpoint) leads to Torvald's study and is opened and closed only when he chooses. It represents security authority, patriarchal power, like the door leading to the inner chamber of a prince in neo-classical drama. Entering and exit through that dl carries particular weight: Torvald's invisible presence behind that door felt as godlike. When Krogstad goes through it, it is to receive dismissal from the bank. Rank must try to keep Torvald in that room while Nora has her desperate conference with Krogstad in Act Whenever Torvald emerges from this door, until the last act, it is constantly on his own terms, to direct and govern events. His first emergence is the cue-world 'spend', to lecture Nora on the domestic economy. The door to the right in the back wall hints to the outer world. Damaged people

come through this door: Christine, Rank, Krogstad, of whom have been variously hurt by the world outside the dollhouse, This door lets in the terrifying Krogstad and, in the last act, his letter to Torvald lies in the mailbox on the door. This door, then, represents the menacing reality of the outside world, its power to hurt but also, a scene of danger and conflict, its power to force one to grow up, to stop being a doll. Outside this door is the social world of a hostile community that has inflicted harm on Krogstad and made life harsh for Christine, and whose opinions Torvald himself fears: and, beyond the social dimension, the natural world of winter weather, through which, Nora observes, it took Christine courage to make her sea-voyage. In the course of the play, those two doors will undergo dialectical change. The door to Torvald's study, in the form of emasculation will lose all its authority and power; whereas the menacing door to the outside world will be transformed to become the door of liberation from the doll home which will become an unbearable prison to the newly awakening, Nora. There is another door, in the right wall - the door to the nursery and bedroom and the shared sexuality of Torvald and Nora. This, we find out, is a world of sexual fantasy, of Nora performing childish roles (squirrel, lark, etc.) to keep Torvald infatuated with her and assured of his dominance in the doll home. Nora, however, is hardly innocent. She plays along with this for her own convenience, and lies to and manipulates her husband. Ibsen's point is that both Nora and Torvald are damaged by the lie by which they live. If not, there would be no necessity for this trial of awakening. One of Nora's cruelest actions, for instance, is to blame the children for tampering with the lock on the mailbox. And her approach towards the dying Dr. Rank in Act Two, in which Nora first trifles with him show the skin-colored stockings, brushing his cheek with them and then coldly refusing him is a behavior that does not have a respectful name. (The scene so shocked one translator, Eva le Gallienne, that she omitted it altogether). Those who sentimentally exculpate Nora have to ignore many of the less than admirable things she does. The role-playing assists her benefits until she is woken to higher interests. If Nora were not damaged 'by' her situation, she would not need to be shaken into adulthood.

IV. WORD - THE 'WONDERFUL'

Each Act within the play organizes its actions characters and dialogues around a crisis, wherever there'll occur an, 'anagnorisis (perception/recognition) and a surprise (overturning): so, there will' be three during this play. And every such 'turning point' is additionally engineered round the word 'vidunderlig - fantastic. What ought to be noted is that this word, "the wonderful" means that a drastically totally different factor in every act of the play. That is, the sooner meanings of the word are more and more 'deconstructed' and totally different meanings replace them - solely to get replaced successively. (Other words undergo an equivalent organic {process|biological process} and deconstructive process. vejiede-guide; plikter-duties; sorgelige-sorrowful, sorgløs - sorrow-free, carefree, etc.). These word-clusters, wherever the word is sometimes perennial thrice, modification their emphases and meanings at intervals the evolution of the play: that's, the dialectic at adding the play is unconcealed within the evolution of the words, the characters speak. In Act two Torvald offers to 'guide' (vejiede) Nora in her dance and she or he agrees she wants steerage. In Act 3 he rhetorically asks her that if she won't settle for his guidance; later, doesn't she have AN inerrable 'guide' within the church, that she conjointly rejects. once he reminds her of her duties "plikter" she responds that she includes a higher duty to herself. This word, plikter, duty, rising during this Act, can become a keyword within the next play; Ghosts. Therefore, whereas keywords modification their which means, at intervals a play, different keywords are introduced which will evolve in a very later play within the Cycle; very much like themes emerge and develop in music: however we'll focus primarily on 'vidunderlig' (wonderful), and its dialectic transformation within the play, for it's a melodic line of this play and not of the other within the Cycle. It is, one will say, the "doll-house word" - I even as 'plikter' and livsglede' (duty, the joy of life) are the leitmotifs of Ghosts. In Act One, the 'wonderful' means that the great life in domestic, material, and social terms. It is the new job Torvald can get at the bank with AN hyperbolic income; for Nora, it's the tip of the recent hardship of economizing and debts. Ton-aid can now not work on the home, and Nora needn't hassle herself with work - it's the nice life seen in material economic terms. once Nora utters the word three times, the push rings, delivery onto the stage Christine Linde, one in every one of the characters. it's obvious that Ibsen's stage is changing into AN occult house wherever uttering sure words proves dangerous. As Norwegians are not any additional given to continuation themselves three times at key moments than different ethnic teams, this is often clearly a deliberate theatrical device, a transfiguration, not AN imitation, of everyday reality. The passage wherever Nora uses the word 'sorgløs' is price noting. She believes she and Torvald are on the point of entering a life free of sorrow, "Because my troubles are over. Oh, God, it's therefore pretty to think about, Kristine! Carefree! (sorgløs). To be carefree, fully carefree" The fatal triple iteration, we notice. "Sorgløs" means that "free of sorrow" - the simplest way of life involved to evade tragedy. however the theme of the play is that to grow out of the doll house manner of life one should be able to soak up the tragic perspective: this is often true for the arena, too, that is insufficient if it fails to require within the tragic vision. once playwright confronted his theater audience with the tragic even additional grimly within the next play, (Ghosts) that audiences violently protested - so Ghosts was

formally illegal from the theatre for years. during this act, the theme is 'society'. All the characters discuss human identity in social terms. Rank talks of society as a hospital that appears once ethical cripples like Krogstad; Nora declares she doesn't take care of "dreary recent society", revealing her immature nature; Christine, United Nations agency has suffered in her role in society desires a social, monetary position, and gets employment at the bank at the expense of Krogstad one in every of society's pariahs, United Nations agency threatens Nora with social disgrace. Finally, Torvald complacently divides society into sensible and evil and believes he will quarantine his doll home from social evil. What Torvald doesn't notice is that his world - his doll-home -relies on the ethical credit extended by Krogstad moreover as on secret monetary credit: for Torvald's naive concept that his house is secure from all taint of evil and guilt goes to be dreadfully shattered once he can discover that the foremost innocent center of that house, his wife is as guilty because the social outcast, Krogstad. a playwright once wrote, "Each person shares the guilt of the society to that he/she belongs." just by being a part of an individual's society, we tend to share its guilt.

NORA: A wonderful thing is about to happen

MRS. LINDE: Wonderful?

NORA: Yes, a wonderful thing. But also terrible, Kristine, and it just can't happen, not for the entire world.

This time, however, it means something utterly different even "terrible", which must not happen, not for all the world. What does this word mean, now? In this scene, the Christmas tree that Nora decorated now is stripped bare. The toys and gifts have been vanished — all the symbols of joy. And, not just Nora, but all the characters shift the subject of the play from "society" and social/material values to the 'psychological' to something within the individual psyche. It is in this act that Torvald tells Nora how he has the inner strength to take on whatever Krogstad may threaten; that Rank, as the stage darkens, reveals the depth of his love for Nora; that Krogstad and Nora, in a deep, and searching, intimate duologue, share their contemplation of and final inability to commit suicide; and that Nora discloses the wonderful that is at the moment, about to "occur. That 'wonderful' is what she fancies will be the dreadful but heroic inner drama where to avert Torvald from taking the blame for her misconduct, Nora will, at last, find the courage for suicide. It is in this agitated spirit that she dances the tarantella, the dance those bitten by the tarantula reputedly danced either until they died or until they expelled the poison from their blood. We will see another dimension to that tarantella dance in Act III. This new inner, psychological 'wonderful' element, therefore, is a Romantic and inward value that is the antithesis of the material 'wonderful' of Act One. That it is just as much of an illusion, is what Nora must learn in Act three. When the word will be sounded again, at the end of the play. (Translations that varied the word as "miracle" are obscuring Ibsen's intentions.) In Act III, the subject of the play again evolves into something new — not material, nor a psychological, but an existential dimension. In this Act, one couple will be united, and the other will separate. Christine and Krogstad survey their own damaged, shipwrecked lives, and agree to fill the emptiness through a marriage without illusions. As they move from desolation to joy, we hear the sounds of the tarantella above, with Nora and Torvald, dancing above these shipwrecked lives. The tarantella music suddenly stops, and as Krogstad hastily³⁶ leaves, the couple now descends, Nora in her fancy dress costume with a black shawl, Torvald in an elegant evening suit with a black domino. The emphasis on night, darkness, and black ushers in the tragic themes that are to follow. The dance also subtly introduces a reference to 'tragedy' Nora learned the dance on Capri. Torvald will call Nora, "My Capri girl, my capricious little Capri girl." Again, a triple iteration: a signal to Ibsenites to take note! Capra means, 'goat' and the Greek word, 'tragedy' means 'goat- ode/song.'" It is, I think, a covert signal that, at this moment, tragedy is about to be born in the Cycle. It is a moment when Torvald and Nora's last childish illusions vanish, and the doll home will be shattered. Dr. Rank enters, also in black evening dress, irritating Torvald who is sexually aroused and eager to get into the bedroom with Nora. Rank, in a coded conversation to Nora, reveals to her that he is about to go out into the night to die — the tragic death themes and sex themes eerily juxtaposed. Nora and Torvald, like sentimental playwrights, write the kind of romantic scripts for themselves that were (and are) the staple of conventional theatre. Torvald fantasizes that Nora is in some terrible danger and that he, Torvald, will heroically rescue her. Nora elaborates on the fantasy: he will try to do this, and she will heroically hurl herself into the river to prevent his destruction. Both are play-acting in the terms of a melodramatic theatre that actually is being demolished around them. When, in Ibsen's play, Torvald collapses over the revelations in Krogstad's first letter, both are awakened from their fantasies. Torvald's shock is terrible. He is in the hands of a blackmailer (he thinks) who can do what he likes with him. Furthermore, his pure doll wife has turned out to be a criminal. Nora has had three days to absorb the shock: Torvald has had less than three minutes.

His collapse reveals to Nora the fantasy world she had inhabited until now. In her confrontation with Torvald she realizes that she does not know the reality, does not know the world, or herself, and certainly does not know Torvald. She confesses she is not fit to bring up her children - and Torvald is the last person to teach or guide her how to, for him and her father have most invigorated her to animate in imaginary; a false doll existence, bearing three kids with a stranger. The marriage could only be recovered if the "wonderful" were to

occur. In the Norwegian, she now uses its superlative form of wonderful 'vidunderligste' and it is again sounded three times, the last time by Torvald, as the door slams. This time, the idea of the wonderful means an 'existential' transformation of the human way of living in the world: not just a combination of the wonderful of Acts One and Two, but a new category, altogether, which has yet to be discovered. Another 'faeful' word repeated three or more times, we saw, is 'sorrowful' or 'sorrow-free' sorgelige- sorgløs'. In Act One, we remember, Nora tells Christine how she looks forward to a sorgløs future, free of sorrows. In Act Two she could not bear to listen to Dr. Rank's sorrowful history. Putting her faith first in material happiness and then in a fantasy of romantic heroics, she had counted on a life free from tragedy. While evasion of tragedy is a very natural and human thing to wish for, which we can sympathize with, it is a bad thing for a theater to wish for. A theater that can't face up to the tragedy, to recognize it's the world as tragic, as the Greek and Elizabethan theatres could, is an inadequate theatre. So Ibsen will have to train not just Nora, but his theatre audience, to see how the tragic is inextricably involved in human experience. In Act Two, the dialogue between Nora and Dr. Rank hovered around this word, sorgelige, the sorrowful, as Rank and Nora, contemplating Rank's inherited and fatal disease, his disintegrating body, acknowledges, as the stage darkens, how the sorrowful is inescapable in life. Dr. Rank's declaration of love for her had been an unwelcome intrusion into the romantic script she had written of her liebestod - she and Torvald each willing to sacrifice for the other, followed by her poignant suicide. This is melodrama, not tragic sorrow. It is only in Act III. When Nora knows what Dr. Rank is about to do, what will happen to him, and establishes this knowledge as an unspoken bond between them (in the gesture of lighting his cigar) that Nora takes in the sorrow of the tragic vision. In Ghosts, too, 'tragedy' will be the condition the drama evolves to out of the condition of melodrama: 'training' for the characters in the play and the audience that observes their evolution. In the past, Torvald had constructed a kind of aesthetic playpen for his doll wife, the pretty home and doll children, in the infantile belief that he can quarantine all this from social evil. Torvald divides the world between a 'them' and an 'us.' Evil and rime are what other people do, and men like Krogstad are even to be welcomed because they make the respectable doll home seem, by contrast, so beautiful and pure. This is one of the primary functions of the 'villain' to conventional thinkers. It confirms their own complacent and unexamined idea of the world. (It informs the popular American idea of its own culture). We are a predatory and violent species, and the very virtues we congratulate ourselves upon are the luxuries our past crimes permitted. Torvald, however, affirms men like Krogstad make him feel actually sick: as if he belongs to other classes from them. This delusion is a lethal moral blindness only encouraging further cruelties and crimes. Krogstad, the loathed criminal and rudely interrupted into this play and opened Nora's judgments to a realism she shared with him. He forced her, and later Torvald, to see the futility of living in a moral plastic bubble uncontaminated by the world: that they share in its corruption. For Torvald, Dr. Rank had been a similarly flattering presence: "His loneliness - his suffering - was like a cloudy background to our sunlit happiness. Rank's tragedy, therefore, was a charming aesthetic effect in a scene of bourgeois bliss and virtue. But just as Nora takes in the terror threatened by Krogstad, so, she takes in a deeper sorrow from Rank and his dying. Both Krogstad and Rank force Nora out of the playpen or doll's house Torvald sought to share with her, and into tragic consciousness. The play is not just about Nora, therefore nor about Nora and Torvald, but about a world-view made up by all the characters in the play: the communal consciousness of the theatre audience. Like a fine symphony the play is 'scored' to bring out, not an indictment of male chauvinism, but a rich exploration of a condition of mind, or spirit, shared by a whole culture. It is for this reason that the play is not about Nora, only, but all the characters that make up the cast. For this reason, the characters that appear in Act One re-appear in each of the other acts, and no new main characters will appear. The 'ensemble' drama is Ibsen's habitual method, as it is Chekhov's method. But there is a telling difference. In Chekhov, the reappearance of the same group in the act after act emphasizes their unchanging quality through the passage of time - usually a much longer time (at least a whole summer) than the Ibsen action. The three sisters, and their companions, or the owners of the cherry orchard, maybe older, sadder, dispossessed, but they are essentially the same characters pondering the same condition, in every act. In A Doll House and Ibsen's other plays, all the characters and the world they inhabit are radically undergoing change, even, as we saw, with the very language they use. (It is this which demarcates Ibsen's art from the melodrama of the well-made-play). So, too, the set and the visual imagery change (the Xmas tree; the darkness and light images, the changing costumes). These sets, themes, and visual and verbal images will not re-appear in a later play: there is a Do!! House world and its imagery utterly different from that of Ghosts and the other plays. Each play that is, establishes its overall controlling metaphor, with its own unique pattern of visual and verbal imagery. In Act III, as in the last act of Hedda Gabler, the emphasis is on the tragic color black, and on the darkness of the night. Rank, Torvald, and Nora all wear black colors. There is the grave formal action of Rank asking Nora for a light for his last cigar as he goes off into the dark. When Nora and Torvald first descend his sophisticated evening clothes are more 'functional' and therefore, influential than her extravagant fancy dress, which is an immature fantasy. However, when she changes into 'everyday' dress it is now Torvald's formal evening dress that is artificial and incongruous to the grave situation. He suddenly is at a sartorial disadvantage, one might say. Characters undergo such violent

reversals that they transform into the opposite of what they started out as, which, along with the other violent dialectical reversals, creates in the theater audience, a distinct feeling of reality being radically 're-organized' into something new. Continually, the play seems to be setting up situations that cry out for conventional, sentimental resolutions and then perversely flouting them. Even if audiences were willing to accept that all the possible theatrically conventional escapes were closed off: - Rank supplying the money; Krogstad repenting in time; Nora attempting suicide and rescued by a heroic Torvald - even if all these and other possibilities were rejected and the audience agreed to the final showdown between husband and wife, this, too, is a violent subversion of nineteenth-century tradition in which, conventionally, it is the guilty wife who collapses before the morally outraged husband. In the famous discussion scene. It is Nora who now leads and instructs the now humiliated master of the house, Torvald, and it is Torvald who is the pupil needing instruction. When Nora remarks that this is the first time she and Torvald have sat down and seriously talked together, she might, as George Bernard Shaw observed, be describing all married couples in the theater, and most literature, up to that moment. For this is the first time the nature of marriage itself, as an institution has been seriously questioned and then rejected by the usually 'weaker' partner... (The next play, *Ghosts* will question the reality of the family itself, its generation, the cultural shaping of our biological natures, with or without marriage)

V. AN OBSERVATION ON THE 'GAME' OF REALIST DRAMA

This approach does not contradict the actor's and actress's conviction that they inhabit a 'real' human being driven by emotions and compulsions: not, of course, spontaneously as in real life, or they would have to go off script: but sufficiently to render a performance convincing and compelling. In these, cases, however, actors are not given sufficient credit for their own creativity. The 'reality' of the character is what the actor/actress assembles into life from the opportunities the role encourages. In interviews, they often seem ashamed of this fact and insist on the reality they have brilliantly simulated is 'there' in the role as in real life. Critics and interpreters who treat dramatic personae as 'real' and therefore, vulnerable to the judgments we pass on actual humans, usually are a good deal more naïve than theater practitioners who are well aware of the artificiality of all arts: how much rehearsal is required, for instance, to bring off a scene between, say, Nora and Krogstad: and how, under the new inspiration that whole rehearsed sequence may be radically altered, or scrapped as not functioning aesthetically. Performers in interviews might tell us how real the characters and situations they are impersonating are, but we know, they talk like this because they are psyching themselves up to put on a more effective impersonation. And audiences, too, though willing to suspend disbelief for a couple of hours, really are aware that the characters that cause them to bring out the Kleenex still exist in the aesthetically delimited arena of stage space and could not survive transplanting into our medium of existence. We know we cannot take them home with us nor enter and influence their situations. The world of the drama inhabits a fundamentally different space, strictly demarcated from the space of everyday reality.

VI. CONCLUSION

The play "A Doll's House" has plunged a bomb within the male-dominated culture everywhere around the globe. Social life within the cities began to change very quickly ever since the publication of this play. Women have earned equal social rights with men altogether field of life.

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