

Discuss the sacrificial roles of a woman in 'A Doll's House'

A Dolls House is the indictment of the patriarchal system that seized the 19th Century, the oppressive norms of the this century made particular roles of women a form of voluntary imprisonment. A common theme throughout the play is one of the exploitation of women in their roles, Ibsen himself argues that 'a woman cannot be herself in modern society' which is evident as women were considered as 'prizes' that represented the amount of power and money the husband made, this was also reflected in the house and the way the children were raised and dressed. When looking at this play from a feminist perspective, the play reveals the main character Nora to have conformed to the societal expectations of marriage, this is reinforced by Torvald dominant nature and his tendency to dehumanise Nora for his own power needs. Nora instinctively acts in a childlike way in order to manipulate Torvald into giving her what she desires, Nora claims that '[she] wouldn't dream of doing anything [Torvald] disapproves of', however this is just an act of subversion, but a dismissive version, in reference to the macaroons, she deliberately acted in a way that made Torvald feel powerful and in control so that he would believe her. The macaroons however, function as a symbol of libidinal desire that has been repressed, which is linked to the rudimental desire for chocolate, something that Torvald has banned due to the possibility of his 'trophy' wife losing her looks. This demonstrates one of the key mechanism of the play, dramatic irony, as the audience know that Nora is keeping the truth from Torvald they can develop a perspective on the situation that would be otherwise compromised if the play was set from just one perspective. Torvald is simply doing what he was raised with, therefore all the derogatory terms and suppressive acts towards Nora have arguably, society to blame, and Torvald has merely just conformed to the ideologies of the era. **This opening paragraph is too long and does not flow properly. In your introduction, make your thesis or claim, possibly use a quotation and state the various literary/dramatic devices used by the writer. There is some really good work here but you need to develop these points in a later paragraph not an introduction.**

However looking at this play from a Freudian perspective we can depict Torvald as being a father figure in Nora's life, Nora references her father frequently throughout the play, and the representation of her Father is in a idol way, therefore the idea of her childhood vision of a male figure affected her choice in man. Nora learnt to get her way by pouting or as Torvald says 'has my skylarks wings drooped?' this could be directly related to the relationship she had with her father, when she was young she was taught to project her emotions outwardly, instead of talking through problems she was to act in a rash way and make a scene of it. Therefore as Torvald is in control, for example with the money and expenses, she feels capable of manipulating him into giving her what she wants, so she is comfortable. This approach to getting her way was a catharsis process, however the outcomes have positively affect on her future, therefore in her childhood she was foreshadowing her future relationships. Through this relationship she has surcome to Torvalds power like a daughter to her father, which means that Nora is sacrificing herself to please Torvald and receive acceptance and appreciation. The notion that Nora cannot get her own money, or have a joint account like modern couples do shows how she must acquire Torvald acceptance to do anything independently. This play examines the difficulties of

independence for women, Nora is made to sacrifice her own independence in exchange for a status, this sacrifice obliged Nora to conform to the idea of the patriarchal society.

Torvald is prone to using possessive words when referring to Nora, such as 'my' and 'skylark', this incurs Torvalds power over Nora, which Torvald takes pleasure in. The use of the animal terminology is referring to the state of arrested development that Nora is stuck in, as this relates to the attitude that she had as a child, the obliviousness of a lark in referring to how Torvald views Nora and the world of business, he considers her to be a frivolous woman who is incapable of understanding the concepts of business, hence the nickname of a 'spendthrift'. This could be as Nora can be affiliated as a symptom of Torvalds dehumanising nature, or perhaps society is the cause? However in the play everyone can be viewed as a victim in some respect, the play explores the fact that within a capitalist system there are more losers than winners. It has been said 'that capitalism is based on the exploitation of workers by the owners of capital.' this approach of money is everything is perverting all those who lust for it, debatably unrealised desire is far more powerful than realised desire, this is apparent when Torvald exclaims 'i wish you were in great danger so I could save you', this cynical approach to becoming a hero has manifested in the minds of the public as an offshoot of capitalism, as many yearn to be a hero figure Nora has subvertly rejected this idea when she produced the money to save Torvald, she has in an unwilling created an independent alter ego for herself that she isn't yet sure over, this develops throughout the play, and it eventually breaks through in the end. However this is undermined by Torvald decreeing that the "most sacred duties were to her husband and her children," this concept is at the center of this novel, how society is degrading women to the stature of caring for the children only. Nora is sacrificing herself for the roles of a mother and a wife to retain the visage of a perfect household, to bring forth jealous amongst other families, the ideology of the 'perfect house' was ingrained in women of that era, however it is obvious that Nora oscillates between agreeing and disagreeing with this idea.

A woman is suppose to be solely to her husband and his house, J.R.R Tolkien from The Return of the King says 'All your words are but to say ;you are a woman, and your part is in the house', this quote clearly states where are woman should be based, this entails raising children and entertaining your husband. However this novel explores Nora's epiphany that her life with torvald has conformed to the societal expectation about how husbands and wives should live, it is far from ideal. Torvald is keen on relighting the original spark that they once had, Torvald is seeking to disinter some past dynamic between himself and Nora, her wants to revive the idealised initial stage of their relationship, but this is an unfeasible idea as Nora has grown from her state of arrest after confiding in Mrs.Linde and realising her potential and self confidence. The alter ego that Nora was once kindling has taken a stand and is now more prominent than before. Nora's exuberant idea to start fresh and seek a new life was provoked when Torvald informs Nora that "no man would ever forsake his honor for the one he loves," however with the new confidence Nora has she replies that "millions of women have done just that". This is a significant turning point in the play, this is the part when Nora succeeds in confronting Torvald, this explores the tension between two dominant figures, this is Nora portraying the first notion of feminism which is significant as this had never been conceived.

Throughout the play many themes have been explored, Ibsens confrontation on the conventional story plot has brought light to topics such as the sacrificial roles of women, particularly through the way Torvald addresses Nora and he natural demeanour to her. It is clear that during the 19th century women were regarded as inferior to men on all levels apart from womens ability to nurture children and furnish a house to flaunt the money of the husband.

Level: 5.5

Some excellent analysis here but you have to fix your general sentence structure before you can move forward. I really like how you have used some new analytical phrases and have employed critical theory to get into the text.

To improve:

- Read your writing back and see where there are necessary stops, pauses and gaps and then add full stops or commas accordingly.
- Make your introductions shorter and more clinical.