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**THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE IN CHEKHOV'S *A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL*, WILDE'S *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*, AND IBSEN'S *A DOLL'S HOUSE***

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MA THESIS

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**T. C.  
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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ  
BATI DİLLERİ VE EDEBİYATI ANABİLİM DALI  
İNGİLİZ DİLİ VE EDEBİYATI**

**IBSEN'İN *BİR BEBEK EVİ*, WILDE'NİN *CİDDİ OLMANIN ÖNEMİ*  
VE CHEKHOV'UN *EVLİLİK TEKLİFİ*'NDE EVLİLİK KAVRAMI**

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**YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZİ**

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**ISPARTA, 2016**



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SOSYAL BİLİMLER ENSTİTÜSÜ



YÜKSEK LİSANS TEZ SAVUNMA SINAV TUTANAĞI

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Tez Başlığı	Treatment of the Theme of Marriage in "A Marriage Proposal" by Anton Chekhov, "The Importance of Being Earnest" by Oscar Wilde and " A Doll's House" by Henrik Ibsen	
Yeni Tez Başlığı <sup>1</sup> (Eğer değişmesi önerildi ise)	THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE IN CHEKHOV'S A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL, WILDE'S THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST, AND IBSEN'S A DOLL'S HOUSE	
<p>Süleyman Demirel Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü Lisansüstü Eğitim-Öğretim ve Sınav Yönetmeliği hükümleri uyarınca yapılan Yüksek Lisans Tez Savunma Sınavında Jürimiz 25/07/2016 tarihinde toplanmış ve yukarıda adı geçen öğrencinin Yüksek Lisans tezi için;</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OY BİRLİĞİ      <input type="checkbox"/> OY ÇOKLUĞU<sup>2</sup></p> <p>ile aşağıdaki kararı almıştır.</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda aday başarılı bulunmuş ve tez <b>KABUL</b> edilmiştir. <input type="checkbox"/> Yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda tezin <b>DÜZELTİLMESİ</b><sup>3</sup> kararlaştırılmıştır. <input type="checkbox"/> Yapılan savunma sınavı sonucunda aday başarısız bulunmuş ve tezinin <b>REDDEDİLMESİ</b><sup>4</sup> kararlaştırılmıştır.</p>		
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<sup>1</sup> Tez başlığının DEĞİŞTİRİLMESİ ÖNERİLDİ ise yeni tez başlığı ilgili alana yazılacaktır. Değişme yoksa çizgi (-) konacaktır.

<sup>2</sup> OY ÇOKLUĞU ile alınan karar için muhalefet gerekçesi raporu eklenmelidir.

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LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM-ÖĞRETİM VE SINAV YÖNETMELİĞİ Madde 28-(4) Tezi hakkında DÜZELTME kararı verilen öğrenci sınav tarihinden itibaren en geç üç ay içinde gereğini yaparak tezini aynı jüri önünde yeniden savunur.

<sup>4</sup> Tezi REDDEDİLEN öğrenciler için gerekçeli jüri raporu eklenmeli ve raporu tüm üyeler imzalamalıdır. Tezi reddedilen öğrenci, yeni tez konusu belirler.



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### **YEMİN METNİ**

Yüksek lisans olarak sunduğum “THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE IN CHEKHOV’S *A MARRIAGE PROPOSAL*, WILDE’S *THE IMPORTANCE OF BEING EARNEST*, AND IBSEN’S *A DOLL’S HOUSE*” adlı çalışmanın, tezin proje safhasından sonuçlanmasına kadar ki bütün süreçler de bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere aykırı düşecek bir yardıma başvurmaksızın yazıldığını ve yararlandığım eserlerin Bibliyografya’da gösterilenlerden oluştuğunu, bunlara atıf yapılarak yararlanılmış olduğunu belirtir ve onurumla beyan ederim.

**Suzan TANRIKULU**

**25.07.2016**

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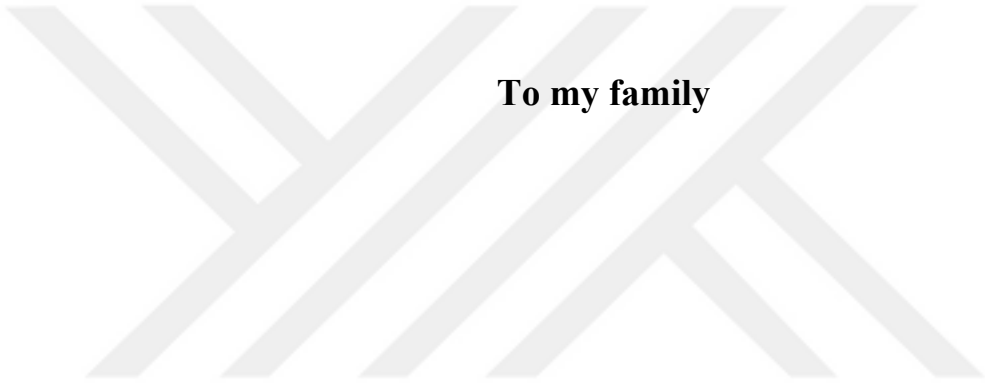
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**To my family**

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**Suzan TANRIKULU**

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(TANRIKULU, Suzan, *The Concept of Marriage in Chekhov's A Marriage Proposal, Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest, and Ibsen's A Doll's House*, MA Thesis, ISPARTA, 2016)

## ABSTRACT

This thesis aims to deal with the theme of marriage in *A Marriage Proposal* by Anton Chekhov, *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde and *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. The concept of marriage has also been dealt with as in line with that period's not only social and cultural conceptions but also gender and class discrimination. Furthermore, the aim of the thesis is to gain a deeper insight into British, Norwegian and Russian cultures during that period, especially in terms of the issues which are related to society and family, as well. It emphasizes on how that period's playwrights reflect a transformation in literary ideology that is from modernism approach to realism and aestheticism. On the other hand, by means of the Qualitative Method and Textual Analysis Methodology, three dramas are examined in terms of marriages and European societies in the nineteenth century. This thesis starts with the first chapter including introduction, and then the second chapter involves the historical and social backgrounds and general point of view of those societies to marriages. The third chapter includes the emergency of the British, Norwegian and Russian families and their marriages through the eyes of the leading playwrights of the nineteenth century: Ibsen (1828-1910), Wilde (1854-1900), and Chekhov (1860-1904). The point of this study is likewise to demonstrate the progression in thoughts among these playwrights with regards to family life and marriage and to investigate what sort of solutions they imagined for the eventual fate of the European marriages.

**Keywords:** Marriage, Modernism, Realism, Aestheticism, Textual Analysis Methodology



(TANRIKULU, Suzan, *Ibsen'in Bir Bebek Evi, Wilde'in Ciddi Olmanın Önemi ve Chekhov'un Evlilik Teklifi'nde Evlilik Kavramı*, Yüksek Lisans Tezi, ISPARTA, 2016)

## ÖZET

Bu tez, Henrik İbsen'in *Bir Bebek Evi*, Oscar Wilde'nin *Ciddi Olmanın Önemi*, Anton Chekhov'un *Bir Evlilik Teklifi*'nde evlilik temasına değinmeyi amaçlamaktadır. Evlilik kavramı, o dönemin sadece cinsiyet ve sınıf ayrımı değil, aynı zamanda sosyal ve kültürel anlayışları doğrultusunda olduğu gibi ele alınmıştır. Dahası, tezin amacı, özellikle aile ve toplumu ilgilendiren konular açısından o dönem boyunca Rus, Norveç ve İngiliz kültürlerine daha derin bir fikir edinmektir. O dönemin oyun yazarlarının gerçekçi ve estetik yaklaşımından modernizeme kadar olan edebi ideolojisindeki bir dönüşümü nasıl yansıttığını vurgulamaktadır. Öte yandan Nitel Araştırma Metodu ve Metin Analizi Metodolojisi yardımıyla on dokuzuncu yüzyılda Avrupa toplumları ve evlilikleri açısından 3 oyun incelenmektedir. Bu tez, tanıtım bölümünü içeren birinci bölümle başlar ve sonra ikinci bölüm, tarihsel ve toplumsal geçmişi ve evliliklere söz konusu toplumların bakış açısını içerir. 3. bölüm on dokuzuncu yüzyılın önde gelen oyun yazarları: Ibsen (1828-1910), Wilde (1854-1900) ve Chekhov (1860-1904)' un gözüyle Rus, Norveç ve İngiliz ailelerinin oluşumunu ve evliliklerini analiz etmektedir. Ayrıca bu çalışmada anlatılmak istenen, yazarların Avrupa evlilikleri için ne tür çözümler düşlediklerini araştırmak ve evlilik ve aile hayatı ile ilgili bu oyunlar arasında düşüncelerdeki devamlılığı göstermektir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Evlilik, Modernizm, Estetizm, Realizm, Metin Analizi Metodolojisi

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The aim of this thesis is to present treatment of the theme of marriage in 19th-century drama through the analogous and differing representations in *A Marriage Proposal* (1890) by Anton Chekhov, *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895) by Oscar Wilde and *A Doll's House* (1879) by Henrik Ibsen according to issues such as their circumstances in a male dominated society, their expectations from marital life, their disillusionments and their reactions to those disillusionments. Our purpose is to find out whether there are differences in the attitudes of marriage among the English (Victorian), Russian and Scandinavian cultures in terms of their gender, social, psychological and class discrimination as well as the similarities among those cultures.

Henrik Ibsen, Oscar Wilde, and Anton Chekhov were not only the foremost figures in drama but also all of them have made an enormous contribution to the development of drama in their literature. They were also the leading representatives of the movements appearing in the nineteenth century; Modernism, Realism, and Aestheticism. What made us study these leading playwrights are their treatment of marriage and also the movements of realism, modernism, and aestheticism led by these dramatists to whom we paid our attention. For this reason, the first thing that we did was to research whether any study had been done about these dramatists or not. Especially we preferred choosing not only the same time period but also the playwrights leading the outstanding movements. After our search on that, we found out that there was no study in that sense on these works by doing the comparative analysis of these three dramas.

These three dramas are original in themselves since they examine the treatment of marriage from different perspectives. Before dealing with our thesis we have collected all necessary literature on that, we have classified those pieces of literatures as books, articles and thesis. The main sources we have used in our study as following: *A Marriage Proposal by Chekhov, The Importance of Being Earnest by Wilde and A Doll's House by Ibsen; 'Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism' by Toril Moi, "Interpreting Chekhov" by Geoffrey Borny, A Companion to Nineteenth-century Britain by Chris Williams, Henrik Ibsen: Critical Heritage by Michael Egan, The Quintessence of Ibsenism by George Bernard Shaw, Thematic Guide to Modern Drama by Susan C. W., A Glossary of Literary Terms by M. H. Abrams Abbotson, History of Modern Drama by David Krasner, Checking Out Chekhov by Sharon Marie Carnicke and Oscar Wilde by Richard, Ellmann.*

Besides, the aim of this thesis is to compare the concept of marriage in Victorian age\* and the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> The historical development of marriage and its effects

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\*The **Victorian era** of British history (and that of the British Empire) was the period of Queen Victoria's reign from 20 June 1837 until her death, on 22 January 1901. It was a long period of peace, prosperity, refined sensibilities and national self-confidence for Britain.<sup>[1]</sup> Some scholars date the beginning of the period in terms of sensibilities and political concerns to the passage of the Reform Act 1832.

on English (Victorian), Russian and Scandinavian cultures and also the reflections of the marriage in *A Marriage Proposal*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *A Doll's House* have been covered to a certain extent.

The thesis consists of three chapters. The first chapter consists of the introduction part covering the Scope of the Study, the Aim of the Study, the Limitations of the Study, and the Method of the Study. Next, the second part mainly covers the following subtitles: Marriage in England, Norway and Russia, Therefore in this chapter we have generally dealt with an overview of marriages in English, Irish, Scandinavian and Russian Cultures in the 19th century. The aim of this chapter is to spot the light on the circumstances of that period in which the dramas are produced. Many significant historical events happened all through the period, which impacted the family structure and marriage such as Industrialization and Reformation. The third chapter is mainly devoted to the following: Reading Marriage in *A Doll's House*, *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *A Marriage Proposal*. At the same time, the third chapter mainly covers the following subjects: Modernism, Realism and Aestheticism. The reason for this chapter is to raise awareness that the masterpieces of these writers are dramas about marriages, as well as illustrative of the societal circumstances in Europe at the time.

While reviewing the literature on this issue in hand, we have not come across any study done on it in Turkey. We have also had difficulties to get appropriate sources and literature to be used in our study. In other words, the available literature on this topic is few. Especially there are not enough sources for Chekhov's *A Marriage Proposal*. Fortunately, we had enough materials to study for Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House*. At the same time, while searching for Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, we could not reach a lot of sources.

All in all, this thesis mainly aims to exhibit the matters of social status and the attitudes of the marriages, family and family relations concerning not only the meaning of marriage, but also gender roles, social life, economic situations and class differences from the point of view of the playwrights and their masterpieces in the 19th century England, Ireland, Norway and Russia. The marriage theme is primarily explored in *A Marriage Proposal* by Anton Chekhov, *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde and *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen.

### **1.1. The Scope of the Study**

This study is differentiating and comparing the idea of marriage in the nineteenth century in England, Norway and Russia. The historical improvement of marriage and its effects on English, Scandinavian and Russian individuals and in the meantime, the impressions of the marriage in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* and in Anton Chekhov's *A Marriage Proposal* have been secured to a certain extent. We have attempted to compare three dramas by the main representatives of their period and literature. The issue under control is overwhelming

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“Victorian Era”, Web.14.Nov.2014, ([http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian\\_era](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Victorian_era))

so we have contracted our study to cover marriage as a rule and investigated three plays by Ibsen, Wilde and Chekhov.

## **1.2. The Aim of the Study**

This study aims to display the concept and treatment of marriage in English, Irish, Scandinavian and Russian literature by comparing the three plays in hand. It depicts how the concept of marriage was in England, Russia and Norway in the nineteenth century, thanks to these three masterpieces of foremost playwrights of that period. The purpose of this thesis is to analyze the historical and social backgrounds of the drama under study so as to take a gander at the routes in which these might have affected the content and form of the drama. Additionally, its aim is to provide an insight into the period and society in which the writers lived as well as its people and their way of living, traditions and laws so as to comprehend the playwrights' world view. It also examines the role of gender in the formation of all classes, especially the middle and working classes. Throughout this thesis, the political, financial and social factors that set the stage for transition in family and marriage will also be examined.

## **1.3. The Limitations of the Study**

Marriage in itself is larger than life, so we tried to narrow its content to the three plays mentioned above which are the representatives of their cultures. At the same time, we limited the plays in terms of the theme, marriage. We also touched on concerned subjects such as gender, family and social conditions of the nineteenth-century people in relation of the theme, marriage. Furthermore, we included nothing more than the societies where the foremost three playwrights lived in the nineteenth century: English, Russian and Norwegian societies. On the other hand, we merely mentioned the movements of modernism, realism and aestheticism which were put forward by Ibsen, Chekhov and Wilde in the nineteenth-century theatre.

## **1.4. The Method of the Study**

In this study, we have used the Qualitative Method and Textual Analysis by comparing three plays by the leading dramatists of their time. The parts on marriage and gender have also been dealt with as in line with textual analysis. The textual analysis seems us to be the right methodology to cover this study. We have used Textual Analysis Methodology, “- a data-gathering process - for those researchers who want to understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and of how they fit into the world in which they live”<sup>6</sup>, in order to

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<sup>6</sup> “Textual Analysis Methodology”, Web.10.Oct.2014, p. 1, ([http://www1.cs.columbia.edu/~sbenus/Teaching/APTD/McKee\\_Ch1.pdf](http://www1.cs.columbia.edu/~sbenus/Teaching/APTD/McKee_Ch1.pdf))

analyze the texts of the plays in terms of the concepts of marriage. When we perform text-based analysis in light of a context, we make an educated interpretation at indisputably the probably explanations that may be made of that context. We interpret texts so as to obtain a sense of the ways in which people make sense of the world around them, particularly cultures in the nineteenth century.



## CHAPTER II

### THE CONCEPT OF MARRIAGE IN EUROPE IN 19TH CENTURY

The word 'marriage' has different meanings with regard to different people, cultures, and societies. It generally refers to “the alliance of a man and a woman, of them and the state, and of two sets of kin in a socially and legally legitimized union”<sup>7</sup> or, more rarely, “the contract made by two people”<sup>8</sup> to love or fall in love each other. Anderson defines marriage as “the union of a man and a woman who make a permanent and exclusive commitment to each other of the type that is naturally (inherently) fulfilled by bearing and rearing children together.”<sup>9</sup>

In addition to this, the meaning of ‘marriage’ dates back to “the Middle Ages, mid-14c.”<sup>10</sup> And also marriage means “obsolete, a corruption of the name of the Virgin Mary”.<sup>11</sup> At the same time, Marriage is defined as;

Marriage, also called matrimony or wedlock, is a socially or ritually recognized union or legal contract between spouses that establishes rights and obligations between them, between them and their children, and between them and their in-laws. The definition of marriage varies according to different cultures, but it is principally an institution in which interpersonal relationships, usually sexual, are acknowledged. In some cultures, marriage is recommended or considered to be compulsory before pursuing any sexual activity. When defined broadly, marriage is considered a cultural universal.<sup>12</sup>

As stated by Carolien Huijgen, “In many societies marriage was an agreement between the heads of two families, with mostly women leaving the household of their family to move in with the family of their husbands (patrilocality).”<sup>13</sup> Huijgen also

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<sup>7</sup> "Courtship, Marriage, Separation, and Divorce." *Encyclopedia of American Social History*. Ed. Mary Kupiec Cayton, Elliott J. Gorn, and Peter W. Williams. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1993. *U.S. History in Context*. Web. 13 Feb. 2015.

<sup>8</sup> “Marriage”, Web.12.Nov..2014, (<http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/marriage>)

<sup>9</sup> Anderson, R.T., George, R.P., Girgis, S. (2010). What is marriage. *Harvard Journal of Law and Public Policy*, Vol: 34(1) (pp. 245-287).

<sup>10</sup> “Marry”, Web.13.Nov.2014, (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=marry>)

<sup>11</sup> Ibid.

<sup>12</sup> “Marriage”, Web.14.Nov.2014, (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=marriage>)

<sup>13</sup> Carolien Huijgen, “Family Formation and Marriage Patterns: A comparison between Sri Lanka and Europe”, *Master Thesis Comparative History*, University of Utrecht, 2010, p. 5.

expressed that in European countries “ages of marriage could go up to an average of twenty-five years for women, and for men even higher, and percentages of men and women not marrying at all could have increased from fifteen to twenty-five percent”, by analyzing John Hajnal’s theory in 1965 on Western Europe’s marriage pattern.<sup>14</sup> As explained by Huijgen, it is understood in Michael W. Finn’s study, *The European demographic system 1500-1820*, that “the mean age of marriage was high and also gradually increased over the years (in all countries except England).”<sup>15</sup>

In the 17th and 18th centuries, when Enlightenment thinkers pioneered the idea that life was about the pursuit of happiness, they advocated marrying for love rather than wealth or status.<sup>16</sup> It was specified in the discussion paper, “Up until the nineteenth century, under the common law women lost their legal identity upon marriage: they could not hold property or land in their own name, write wills or contracts, nor did they have legal control over their own children.”<sup>17</sup> “With a new respect for the individual pursuit of happiness” people took more control of their love lives.<sup>18</sup>

In the nineteenth century, people generally had to marry for their social positions, due to their families’ choices.<sup>19</sup> So while making the choices of their spouses, a woman or a man had no rights not to marry somebody who was chosen by their family and because of their financial situations and no freedom to say their ideas or opinions, they had got to marry somebody whom they had not loved each other.<sup>20</sup> Especially women did not have any rights to share their ideas with their parents about their choices or rights about anything until women’s political and legal status at the start of the 19th Century.<sup>21</sup> Moreover, the married partners had to be equal as a social,

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<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>16</sup> Michaela Dobošiová “Marriage and Human Relationships in the Eighteenth-century Britain”. *Faculty of Arts*, Masaryk University, Brno, 2006, pp. 8-9.

<sup>17</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich-Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts’ Advice To Women*, Second Anchor Books Edition, January 2005, pp. 20-30.

<sup>18</sup> Michaela Dobošiová, “Marriage and Human Relationships in the Eighteenth-century Britain”, *Faculty of Arts*, Masaryk University in Brno, 2006, pp. 8-9.

<sup>19</sup> John de Waal, “A Brief History of Marriage”, *Family Education Trust*, 2013, pp. 37-47.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid., pp. 37-47.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid., pp. 37-47.

religious and class. Unsuitable spouses were rare in terms of the economic, social and religious situation in the nineteenth century.<sup>22</sup>

These three brief proverbs serve as a window to an understanding of the marriage process in different cultures.

*Never marry for money. You'll borrow it cheaper. ~Scottish Proverb*

*Marriage halves our griefs, doubles our joys, and quadruples our expenses.*

*~English Proverb*

*Not all who make love make marriages. ~Russian Proverb*

As it is understood in these proverbs in different cultures, the marriage process in Scottish, English, and Russian cultures was full of troubles and did not go well as well as it was complicated because of the effects of financial situations, class and, social inequality.

The following quotes by Wilde, Chekhov and, Ibsen further the meaning of marriage.

*How can a woman be expected to be happy with a man who insists on treating her as if she were a perfectly normal human being. ~Oscar Wilde*

*If you are afraid of loneliness, don't marry. ~Anton Chekhov*

*Marriage! Nothing else demands so much of a man. ~Henrik Ibsen*

Marriage is one of the most prominent of these social problems which should be raised as to that period's playwrights.<sup>23</sup> Although the benefits of marriage are undeniable, in most of the cases the restrictions and bindings imposed on married women are also inevitable.<sup>24</sup> Marriage was regarded as a site for female subordination,

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid., pp. 37-47.

<sup>23</sup> Shehrin Nazrul, "The Portrayal of Marriage and Feminine Sexuality in Some Women's Writings", *Department of English and Humanities*, 2009, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., p. 1.



which binding women to household labour and also being suppressed by the nineteenth-society.<sup>25</sup>

## 2.1. Marriage in England

The nineteenth century is known as Victorian age and it is also described as peace, success and social change.<sup>26</sup>In the nineteenth century, marriage was evaluated as a standout amongst the most vital social foundations, yet social associations were particularly or by suggestion related to patriarchy which was in perspective of a dynamic system, keeping men on top and women at the bottom, in terms of sociological, physiological, moral and financial.<sup>27</sup>In other words, just as the feminists, marriage was additionally seen as financial alliance in social orders.<sup>28</sup> Married women had a tendency to end up reliant on their spouses and they essentially needed to distinguish their own survival with the thriving of the men who sustain them.<sup>29</sup> Carmen Diana Deere and Cheryl R. Doss stated that Under British common law, a married woman was an extension of her husband.<sup>30</sup>

In Victorian age, there were a lot of social changes including the women's rights about their social status.<sup>31</sup> Despite these changes, patriarchal frameworks were still going on, because women and men were not equal in terms of social, economic and political conditions.<sup>32</sup>Undoubtedly, the change did not take care of the issues of wedded

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<sup>25</sup> Ibid., p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> Chris Williams, *A Companion to 19th century Britain*, Great Britain, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004, p. 262.

<sup>27</sup> Shehrin Nazrul "The Portrayal of Marriage and Feminine Sexuality in Some Women's Writings", *Department of English and Humanities*, 2009, pp. 1-5.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-5.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-5.

<sup>30</sup> Carmen Diana Deere-Cheryl R. Doss, "The Gender Asset Gap: What Do We Know and Why does it Matter?" *Feminist Economics* 12(1 – 2), January/April 2006, 1 – 50

<sup>31</sup> Gro Hagemann, "Citizenship and Social Order: Gender Politics in Twentieth-Century Norway and Sweden", *Women's History Review*, 11: 3, 417-429, 2007, pp. 418-419.

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., pp. 418-419.

ladies' financial status.<sup>33</sup>Most of the married women had no money and no their own property.<sup>34</sup>

Besides, in the beginning of 1800s, as to known as the 'Woman Question' the following, ladies started to make known their disappointment with the social, legal and political constraints that restricted women's opportunities and to agitate for women's full citizenship.<sup>35</sup>Those the following are women's political and legal status at the start of the 19th Century;

- In the eyes of the law, women did not exist as legal beings in their own right. Their persons were "merged" or under the direction of first their fathers, and on marriage, their husbands [if unmarried, their brothers also]. They were termed to be under *couverture*, literally translated as "covered".
- No married woman could sue or be sued in a court of law; she had no power to sign a contract, could not legally make a gift of any kind without prior consent of her husband.
- When married, all her property, down to the petticoats she wore, passed into the hands of her husband (could be wasters); anything she earned or inherited was his, and her earnings were paid directly to him
- She could make a will only with her husband's consent and even then he could revoke the will, even after her death.
- She could not sue for divorce nor remove their children from his home without his consent
- Her husband could gain a separation from her on the grounds of her adultery, she could not when he was the adulterer
- Husbands legally entitled to beat their wives, provided the stick was not thicker than his thumb
- Children were understood to be the possession of her husbands.<sup>36</sup>

In spite of the fact that British ladies were as a rule step by step liberated from numerous patriarchal restrictions amid the nineteenth century through the death of specific laws, for example, "the Child Custody Act (1839), the Matrimonial Causes Act (1857), the First Married Woman's Property Act (1870) and the Second Woman's Property Act (1882)",<sup>37</sup> the nineteenth century in Britain, as a period was truly mind-

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<sup>33</sup> Ibid., pp. 418-419.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid., pp. 418-419.

<sup>35</sup> Barbara Ehrenreich-Deirdre English, *For Her Own Good: Two Centuries of the Experts' Advice To Women*, Second Anchor Books Edition, January 2005, pp. 20-30.

<sup>36</sup> "Separate Spheres and Women's Status in 19th Century England", Lecture 9, Week 11, p. 2, (<http://www.colorado.edu/AmStudies/lewis>)

<sup>37</sup> Matthias Doepke-Michèle Tertilt and Alessandra Voena, "The Economics and Politics of Women's Rights", *IZA Discussion Paper*, No. 6215, December 2011, p. 16.

boggling and troublesome for British ladies overall.<sup>38</sup> Clearly, ladies' subordination and control of an auxiliary position in the public eye was not new to this century.<sup>39</sup> On the other hand, it was a period when numerous standards and thoughts acquired from the earlier hundreds of years were still substantial and mindfulness expanded as a consequence of certain social and monetary changes in the nation.<sup>40</sup> As Carmen Diana Deere and Cheryl R. Doss explained, women gained some legal rights and equalities thanks to Married Women's Property Acts in the nineteenth century. Carmen Diana Deere and Cheryl R. Doss also stated on the married women's poor conditions under British law until they obtained the legal rights in that era that;

Under British common, law married women could not inherit property in their own names; a wife's inheritance became her husband's property. Women also could not make out a will. If a married woman had children, her real property passed to them upon her death, but her husband enjoyed a life interest, known as the "curtesy," in her real property. If she did not have children, her real property passed to her parents. In addition, her husband kept her personal property, since this property was legally his. The property rights of widows were stronger than those of married women; upon her husband's death, her real property reverted to her control. She also enjoyed dower rights in her husband's real property, consisting of the right to use or claim the income from one-third of the real property.<sup>41</sup>

It was embarked in the discussion paper, *The Economics and Politics of Women's Rights*, that "Up until the nineteenth century, under the common law women lost their legal identity upon marriage: they could not hold property or land in their own name, write wills or contracts, nor did they have legal control over their own children."<sup>42</sup> Until the nineteenth century, women had had difficult times at their work, home and outside and the property rights of married women were much weaker in England.<sup>43</sup> As emphasized in the discussion paper, *The Economics and Politics of Women's Rights*, "During the second half of the nineteenth century, women gained

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<sup>38</sup> Çiçek Sünbül, "Nineteenth-Century Women's Place in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* and *Tess of the D'urbervilles*", *Thesis, Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University*, January 2011, p. 2.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>41</sup> Carmen Diana Deere-Cheryl R. Doss, "The Gender Asset Gap: What Do We Know and Why does it Matter?" *Feminist Economics* 12(1 – 2), January/April 2006, 1 – 50

<sup>42</sup> Matthias Doepke-Michèle Tertilt and Alessandra Voena, "The Economics and Politics of Women's Rights", *IZA Discussion Paper, No: 6215*, December 2011, p. 12.

<sup>43</sup> Carmen Diana Deere-Cheryl R. Doss, "The Gender Asset Gap: What Do We Know and Why does it Matter?" *Feminist Economics* 12(1 – 2), January/April 2006, 1 – 50

economic rights related to property, child custody, and divorce. During the early twentieth century, political rights were extended to women. Finally, women gained full equality in the labour market and improved rights over their own body.”<sup>44</sup> Therefore, the conditions they had lived and the desire of breathing again prompted them to gain the rights such as the Child Custody Act (1839), the Matrimonial Causes Act (1857), the First Married Woman’s Property Act (1870) and the Second Woman’s Property Act (1882).<sup>45</sup> Those acts above were a turning point in the pathway to women’s equality and the victory to have their own rights.<sup>46</sup> The legal position of wedded ladies until the nineteenth century was little or nothing.<sup>47</sup> Especially married women’ property acts provided them good position in their marriages by giving them possession of their own earnings and giving women control of the property acquired during their marriages like an inheritance.<sup>48</sup> Finally, those acts stated clearly that a woman’s social position at marriages was not equal with a man in the nineteenth century.<sup>49</sup> As stated below, “married women enjoyed considerable success in obtaining judicial separations and protection orders from the mid-Victorian Divorce Court” thanks to the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857<sup>50</sup>, as well as 1882 Married Women's Property Act provided the legal equalities between men and women such as having property, as against the previous centuries.<sup>51</sup> Those acts clearly explain the following:

As to 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act;

The 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act allowed divorce through the law courts, instead of the slow and expensive business of a Private Act of Parliament. Under the terms of the act, the husband had only to prove his wife's adultery,

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<sup>44</sup> Matthias Doepke- Michèle Tertilt and Alessandra Voena, “The Economics and Politics of Women’s Rights”, *IZA Discussion Paper, No: 6215*, December 2011, p. 10.

<sup>45</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 16.

<sup>46</sup> Çiçek Sünbül, “Nineteenth-Century Women’s Place in George Eliot’s Middle March and Thomas Hardy’s the Return of the Native And Tess of the D’urbervillesa”’, *Thesis, Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University*, January 2011, p. 7.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>48</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 7.

<sup>50</sup> Margot Finn (1996), Women, consumption and Coverture in England, c. 1760–1860, *The Historical Journal*, 39, pp 703-722 doi:10.1017/S0018246X0002450X

<sup>51</sup> Evan Roberts, “Women's Rights and Women's Labor: Married Women’s Property Laws and Labor Force Participation, 1860-1900,” *Economic History Association Annual Meeting*, Pittsburgh (PA), 14-16 September 2006, pp. 5-9.

but the wife had to prove her husband had committed not just adultery but also incest, bigamy, cruelty or desertion.<sup>52</sup>

As to 1882 Married Women's Property Act;

After the 1880 General Election William Gladstone became Prime Minister of a government that promised legislation that would reduce the legal inequalities between men and women. One example of this was the passing of the 1882 Married Women's Property Act. Under the terms of the act married women had the same rights over their property as unmarried women. This act therefore allowed a married woman to retain ownership of property which she might have received as a gift from a parent. Before the 1882 Married Women's Property Act was passed this property would have automatically have become the property of the husband. The passing of the 1893 Married Women's Property Act completed this process. Married women now had full legal control of all the property of every kind which they owned at marriage or which they acquired after marriage either by inheritance or by their own earnings.<sup>53</sup>

By emphasizing those acts the nineteenth-century women managed to acquire, Bryson reported that “By 1945, women in most western democracies had won a high degree of political and legal equality with men. No longer were they excluded from political participation, education and employment and no longer did they lose all autonomy upon marriage”,<sup>54</sup>

The significance of marriage in the nineteenth century may be troublesome for current readers to get it. Young ladies today have much more opportunities in regards to their future. For instance; they can obviously wed, however, they can likewise head off to college, take after any profession way that may engage them, and live all alone, free of relatives. In the contrary, young ladies in Victorian period did not have these points of interest. Besides, Merizig’s comments on the place of women in the society and their positions at their marriages as the following:

Merizig’s comments on the issue as the following:

Society did not consider that women needed formal education and consequently it was generally reserved only for men. As a result, it was rare to find women in skilled jobs that required higher or intermediate education. Women then were

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<sup>52</sup> “1857 Matrimonial Causes Act”, Web.01.Dec.2014,  
(<http://spartacus-educational.com/Wmatrimonial.htm>)

<sup>53</sup>“1882 Married Women's Property Act”, Web.25.Nov.2014,  
(<http://spartacus-educational.com/Wproperty.htm>)

<sup>54</sup> Valerie Bryson, *Feminist Political Theory: An Introduction*, Second Edition, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, p. 126.

generally expected to be housekeepers or housewives. The role of women did not generally go beyond that of a wife or mother who took care of her children and maintained her house of her husband in proper order. Furthermore, the status of women (,) their rights and duties cannot be generalized since they varied according to the social class a woman came from. That means social class determines the traditional of women's life in which they live and work depending on. They have distinct position related to the class that women come from.<sup>55</sup>

We have a general idea that education was seen as unimportant and was underrated in the society, as is also understood from Chris Williams' embarks on the education that "At the start of the nineteenth century, Britain was far from being an unschooled or illiterate society."<sup>56</sup> As stated by Williams "literacy rates, especially among women and girls, declined significantly at those moments and in those areas where industrial development was at its most rapid and extensive."<sup>57</sup> In addition to these, his comment on women's education is that "The struggle for the establishment of girls' high schools, for the systematic training of women teachers and for access to higher education, as well as the progressive feminization of the elementary teaching profession following the Revised Code provisions of 1862, all announced education in the second half of the nineteenth century as a unique site where women's personal, social and Professional ambitions and aspirations could draw upon the experience of an established and functioning sphere of genuine professional status and authority."<sup>58</sup> Teislerová claimed that women were just educated for their marriage, not for their necessary real education by saying these;

"Women were educated very differently from men with regard that they were supposed to get married one day. Because "their 'trade' was marriage" There were only two options, marriage and spinsterhood, and the second one was miserable. Hence, young ladies were taught "how to attract a marriage proposal from a man with a title, wealth or, at very least good prospects".<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>55</sup> Fatima, Merizig, "the Status of Women in the Nineteenth Century Victorian England, Case Study: Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre", *Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University*, 2013, p. 17.

<sup>56</sup> Chris Williams, *A Companion To Nineteenth-century Britain*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004, p. 360.

<sup>57</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 355.

<sup>58</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 366.

<sup>59</sup> Martina, Teislerová, "Women, Family, Marriage and Social Life of the 19th Century Middle-Class Society in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women and Good Wives*", *Bachelor Thesis*, Prague, 2013, p. 3.

In the nineteenth century in English society ladies were disengaged in the home.<sup>60</sup> The public life was just for men, ladies' domain was their home and family.<sup>61</sup> The only one person who has to do all the errands is the woman.<sup>62</sup> Not only has she all the responsibilities at home, she has to look after their children.<sup>63</sup> Marriage is the highest and also the only achievement. Motherhood is the only thing she succeeds in the life of women.<sup>64</sup> Women use marriage to get what they want – taking their place in society.<sup>65</sup>

What John Stuart Mill wanted to point out with his own expressions below was to women's not having their own living place;

All men, except the most brutish, desire to have, in the woman most nearly connected with them, not a forced slave but a willing one, not a slave merely, but a favourite. They have therefore put everything in practice to enslave their minds. The masters of all other slaves rely, for maintaining obedience, on fear; either fear of themselves, or religious fears. The masters of women wanted more than simple obedience, and they turned the whole force of education to effect their purpose. All women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men; not self-will, and government by self-control, but submission, and yielding to the control of other. All the moralities tell them that it is the duty of women, and all the current sentimentalities that it is their nature, to live for others; to make complete abnegation of themselves, and to have no life but in their affections. And by their affections are meant the only ones they are allowed to have — those to the men with whom they are connected, or to the children who constitute an additional and indefeasible tie between them and a man.<sup>66</sup>

As Mill pointed out, the nineteenth-century women lived for all the members of their family, except for themselves. In addition, the traditional opinion was that marriage is a commercial enterprise between families.<sup>67</sup> Anthony Giddens in *Sociology* says that until the end of the 18th century romantic feelings and attraction were not

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<sup>60</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>61</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>63</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>64</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>65</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>66</sup> John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women (1869)*, Global Grey, 2015, p. 10.

<sup>67</sup> Martina, Teislerová, “Women, Family, Marriage and Social Life of the 19th Century Middle-Class Society in Jane Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice* and Louisa May Alcott’s *Little Women* and *Good Wives*”, *Bachelor Thesis*, Prague, 2013, p. 6.

important for marriage for most of the Victorian people.<sup>68</sup> However, the idea of marrying for love appeared in many societies at the turn of the 18th and 19th century.<sup>69</sup>

Moreover, the women in the nineteenth century were not free to work for the reason that their working rights were constrained.<sup>70</sup> Society could not think about a lady applying for a job, for example, medicine or the law and in this manner did not offer her the opportunity to do as such.<sup>71</sup> Actually, middle- and upper-class women had few opportunities open to them for a protected future.<sup>72</sup> On the off chance that unmarried, they would stay needy upon their relatives, living with or getting a little wage from their fathers, siblings, or different relations who could stand to bolster them.<sup>73</sup> Therefore, thanks to the Married Women's Property Act, the middle-class women's right to paid work, higher education and the vote on the same terms as men were reformed.<sup>74</sup>

According to Teachman, there was generally a patriarchal society in England.<sup>75</sup> The societal position of an unmarried lady was dictated by her dad and by her spouse after she got hitched.<sup>76</sup> She had no status she could call her own.<sup>77</sup> An unmarried lady was dependent upon her dad.<sup>78</sup> When he passed on the obligation regarding her ignored to her siblings or possibly uncles on the off chance that she had some.<sup>79</sup> Her further life relied on upon ability and money related method for her male relatives to bolster her.<sup>80</sup>

The nineteenth-century women were expected to prefer a secure marriage, especially a wealthy man.<sup>81</sup> If you are married, the society in that period supposes that

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<sup>68</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>69</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>70</sup> "Separate Spheres and Women's Status in 19th Century England", *Lecture 9, Week 11*, p. 2, (<http://www.colorado.edu/AmStudies/lewis>)

<sup>71</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>72</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>73</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>74</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>75</sup> Debra, Teachman, *Understanding Pride & Prejudice: A Student Casebook to Issues, Sources & Historical Documents*, Westport: Greenwood press, 1997, pp. 90-110.

<sup>76</sup> Ibid., pp. 90-110.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., pp. 90-110.

<sup>78</sup> Ibid., pp. 90-110.

<sup>79</sup> Ibid., pp. 90-110.

<sup>80</sup> Ibid., pp. 90-110.

<sup>81</sup> Martina, Teislerová, 'Women, Family, Marriage and Social Life of the 19th century Middle-Class Society in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* and *Good Wives*', *Bachelor Thesis*, Prague, 2013, p. 2.



you are happy.<sup>82</sup> Most women at that time were happy just to get any marriage, because being an unmarried woman was a very undesirable position.<sup>83</sup> As said by Emma Ivarsson, “To emphasize even more that spinsterhood was considered to be an unsuitable state for a woman in society, it was looked upon as something unnatural...”<sup>84</sup> At the point when a woman flees with a man, on the other hand, her notoriety and social standing are destroyed by the way that she lived with only him and unwed for weeks.<sup>85</sup> Nothing but marriage can spare her from being rejected by her social circle and nothing but marriage can spare her family's notoriety for being great unless they repudiated her.<sup>86</sup>

Moreover, in his work named *The Subjection of Women*, John Stuart Mill criticized that nineteenth century's conditions in terms of women's life standards by his expressions the following;

It arose simply from the fact that from the very earliest twilight of human society, every woman owing to the value attached to her by men, combined with her inferiority in muscular strength, was found in a state of bondage to some man. Laws and systems of polity always begin by recognising the relations they find already existing between individuals. They convert what was a mere physical fact into a legal right, give it the sanction of society, and principally aim at the substitution of public and organised means of asserting and protecting these rights, instead of the irregular and lawless conflict of physical strength.<sup>87</sup>

In addition, we would like to express that most of the women, whichever class belonged to, had similar problems.<sup>88</sup> Upper-class women also desired the gender equality in terms of all areas of their lives such as politically, socially and financially.<sup>89</sup> Neither could they decide on their own about their families nor could they

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<sup>82</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>84</sup> Emma Ivarsson, “Thorny Reading: A Didactic and Literary Approach to Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*”, *School of Humanities, English Section*, Växjö University, ENC 162/GIX 112, Spring 2006.

<sup>85</sup> Martina, Teislerová, “Women, Family, Marriage and Social Life of the 19th century Middle-Class Society in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Louisa May Alcott's *Little Women* and *Good Wives*”, *Bachelor Thesis*, Prague, 2013, p. 2.

<sup>86</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>87</sup> John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women (1869)*, Global Grey, 2015, p. 3.

<sup>88</sup> Çiçek Sünbül, “Nineteenth-Century Women's Place in George Eliot's *Middlemarch* and Thomas Hardy's *The Return of the Native* and *Tess of the D'urbervilles*”, *Thesis, Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University*, January 2011, p. 7.

<sup>89</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

do anything without their husbands.<sup>90</sup> Lilian emphasizes on the aristocracy' similar living conditions like the women of the middle-classes by defining women of upper classes as "members of a collective household with many familial supports."<sup>91</sup> Sünbül claims that "In marriage, they were not completely dependent on their husbands as they had their own dowry and the laws protected their properties in case of divorce."<sup>92</sup> In the book, *The Northern Utopia: British Perceptions of Norway in the Nineteenth Century*, Peter Fjågesund, and Ruth A. Symes underscored that;

The British women at all levels of society, but perhaps most obviously in the middle and upper classes, were by no means equal to British men. Women's legal status together with their opportunities in terms of education, employment and political representation were all limited... And yet the British middle-class woman was seen as a model to be emulated, a woman in the happy economic position of being free from the necessity of earning a living herself and therefore able to focus her attention on the supervision and organisation of the domestic sphere...<sup>93</sup>

Furthermore, not only middle-class women but also upper-class women had gone through a rough period. In the article, 'Women in the Middle Class in the 19th Century' it is emphasised that;

As the only daughter of an upper class Anglo-Irish family, Frances Power Cobbe, 1822-1904, worked to eliminate the constant problem of husbands beating their wives. In an 1878 article entitled "*Wife-Torture in England*," Frances documented the horrors working class wives especially were subjected to. Observing that wife-beating was exacerbated by alcohol, prostitution, and appalling living conditions, she clearly recognized that the fundamental cause of wife abuse was the conventional attitudes towards females. Beating one's wife or wives was acceptable and legal throughout recorded history until the late nineteenth and twentieth centuries in Europe and America. As a result of Cobbe's endeavors, Parliament amended the Matrimonial Causes Act, giving wives the opportunity to separate from their husbands for aggravated assault, the first law of its kind.<sup>94</sup>

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>91</sup> Lilian Lewis Shiman, *Women and Leadership in Nineteenth-Century England*, London: Macmillan, 1992, p. 65.

<sup>92</sup> Çiçek Sünbül, "Nineteenth-Century Women's Place in George Eliot's Middlemarch and Thomas Hardy's the Return of the Native and Tess of the D'urbervillesa", *Thesis, Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University*, January 2011, p. 7.

<sup>93</sup> Peter Fjågesund, Ruth A. Symes, *The Northern Utopia: British Perceptions of Norway in the Nineteenth Century*, Rodopi B.V., Amsterdam- Newyork, 2003, p. 221.

<sup>94</sup> "Women in the Middle Class in the 19th Century", Web.22.Dec.2014, p. 6. ([http://web.clark.edu/afisher/HIST253/lecture\\_text](http://web.clark.edu/afisher/HIST253/lecture_text))

Furthermore, working-class marriage was an agreement that was principally about equal material commitment rather than about emotional commitment.<sup>95</sup> Relationships amongst married couples were organized by the standardized benefits of patriarchy and strengthened by women's absence of financial autonomy.<sup>96</sup> Additionally, they were constrained into industrial facilities and got to be wage-workers.<sup>97</sup> The reasons of that they were expected to work were lower standards of living and lack of cash.<sup>98</sup> As Whitelegg stated, "The poor, the illiterate, the economically and politically powerless of the past operated according to values which fully justified the employment of women outside the home"<sup>99</sup>

Moreover, growing of middle class, it was the new emerging class, which consisted of bankers, large shopkeepers, businessmen, doctors, lawyers and the clergy, which was separated from the working class.<sup>100</sup> Thus with the change of commercial and industrial society, the middle class grew larger with the rise of Industrialists and factory owners.<sup>101</sup> It becomes more important politically following the Reform Bill 1832 that extended the right to vote to all males owning property.<sup>102</sup> They became central to the Bourgeois identity of the nineteenth century<sup>103</sup>, absorbed by government policy-makers and social commentators that mean the middle classes had become more important politically after 1832.<sup>104</sup> They depended very heavily on family property to secure not only their own material comfort but also their social standing.<sup>105</sup> In addition to these, middle-class women might act as housekeepers or general servants in the

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<sup>95</sup> Chris Williams, *A Companion to Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004, p. 260.

<sup>96</sup> Ibid., p. 260.

<sup>97</sup> Çiçek Sünbül, "Nineteenth-Century Women's Place in George Eliot's Middlemarch and Thomas Hardy's the Return of the Native and Tess of the D'urbervillesa", *Thesis, Social Sciences of Middle East Technical University*, January 2011, p. 7.

<sup>98</sup> Ibid, p. 7.

<sup>99</sup> Elizabeth Whitelegg, *The Changing Experience of Women*, Oxford: Martin Roberts and Co., 1989, p. 49.

<sup>100</sup> Fatima Merizig, "The Status of Women in the Nineteenth Century Victorian England", Case Study: Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, *Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University*, 2013, p. 16.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>102</sup> Sally Mitchell, *Daily Life of Victorian England*, Second Edition, Great Britain, 2009, p. 1

<sup>103</sup> Chris Williams, *A Companion to 19th century Britain*, Great Britain, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004, p. 174.

<sup>104</sup> Fatima, Merizig, "The Status of Women in the Nineteenth Century Victorian England", Case Study: Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, *Kasdi Merbah Ouargla University*, 2013, p.16.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

households of their kin.<sup>106</sup>It was a strategy for middle-class families to maintain adult women outside commercial or professional activities.<sup>107</sup>

Finally, as is also mentioned above, economic inequality had increased in those years because of the class discrimination in Europe. In marriages, spouse choice could be affected by social status, because the inequalities in society decreased the standards of their life with regard to working conditions and economic and social status. Especially women in that society had harder working conditions and had much less working opportunities than men. The equalities like class and gender discrimination affected marriages and family life negatively. That's why; the partners were compulsory to continue their marriages even if they were unhappy.

In conclusion, the pressure of the patriarchal society brought the women under control. Because of their family responsibilities after their marriages, they could not do what they want. Even if a woman wants to divorce, she had no any rights to take any property and also she had no money and work so as to maintain her life. Therefore, society tried to keep the woman by leaving her vulnerable.

## 2.2. Marriage in Norway

Industrialization was the most outstanding issue in Norway in the nineteenth century in terms of the family unit.<sup>108</sup>Industrialization changed the family unit from a unit of generation into a unit of consumption.<sup>109</sup>This brought about an expanding limit of women's areas of power and responsibility until they were at last left with reproduction as their just genuine region of obligation.<sup>110</sup> As to Sjögren,

Little by little the *pater familias* lost his legal and financial power over his wife and children during the nineteenth century, due to economic and societal changes. Not only did new scientific and philosophical discourses make

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 16.

<sup>107</sup> Chris Williams, *A Companion to 19th century Britain*, Great Britain, Blackwell Publishing Ltd, 2004, p. 262.

<sup>108</sup> Kristina Sjögren, "Transgressive Femininity: Gender in the Scandinavian Modern Breakthrough", *UCL Ph.D. in Gender Studies*, 2009, p. 20-21.

<sup>109</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>110</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-21.

religious discourses on the necessity of women's subjugation void, the industrial revolution required a legally independent and mobile workforce of both sexes. Great economic structural changes with industrialisation, urbanisation and emigration led to changed family structures. Marriage rates went down at the same time as birth-rates went up. At this time there were considerable numbers of unmarried women in the Scandinavian cities.<sup>111</sup>

On the other hand, in the nineteenth-century economic recession appeared in Norway.<sup>112</sup> Because of people's financial problems, fewer individuals wedded in light of the fact that they could not bear the cost of it.<sup>113</sup> In his article, Ruggles stated that the divorces were uncommon and nearly all kids (95%) belonged to wedded couples and he added the separation rates kept on increasing all through the eighties.<sup>114</sup> Besides, the percentage of unmarried people was high in nineteenth-century Scandinavian countries.<sup>115</sup> He also claimed that the marriage age was especially late in nineteenth-century Norway and Sweden.<sup>116</sup> Besides, the percentage of unmarried people was high in nineteenth-century Scandinavian countries.<sup>117</sup>

By the time Norway got independence from Denmark in 1814, women were not seen as a member of the society.<sup>118</sup> The new constitution did not give women legal status like political, financial or educational rights.<sup>119</sup> As of 1840 women acquired progressively more rights, beginning with those concerning private property, for example, business exercises and legacy, and proceeding with access to proficient and instructive occupations and rights for wedded ladies to discard their own particular property; however, political rights for ladies were not conceded until the mid-twentieth century.<sup>120</sup>

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<sup>111</sup> Ibid., pp. 20-21.

<sup>112</sup> Christin Knudsen Sture, "The Family in the Norwegian Society", *NOVA, Norwegian Social Research*, 2006, pp. 1-16.

<sup>113</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-16.

<sup>114</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-16.

<sup>115</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-16.

<sup>116</sup> Steven Ruggles, "Reconsidering the Northwest European Family System: Living Arrangements of the Aged in Comparative Historical Perspective", *Population and Development Review*, 35(2): 249-273, JUNE 2009, p. 269.

<sup>117</sup> Ibid., p. 269.

<sup>118</sup> Trine Rogg Korsvik, Gender equality policies in Norway: "Everybody's job, Nobody's Responsibility?", *Centre for Gender Research*, University of Oslo, Jagiellonian University of Krakow, 2014, p. 9.

<sup>119</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>120</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

On the other hand, assumptions about being upper-middle class were likewise shaping amid that period in Norway.<sup>121</sup> With regard to bourgeois respectability, desires of the upper middle-class involved financial accomplishment, great morality, and a steady, patriarchal family.<sup>122</sup> A lady's principle obligation based on being a housewife and also her most significant duty was to serve her husband and kids.<sup>123</sup>

By the time “The Norwegian Women's Rights Association (Norsk kvinnesaksforening)” was set up in 1884, the association demanded women’s rights including education, professions, equality in marriage and women’s suffrage.<sup>124</sup> Once after equality in marriage was presented in 1888, and the next year, women were permitted to take part in education. From the late 1880s, women demanded the right to their suffrage.<sup>125</sup>

Married women obtained “the status of legal citizens in 1888.”<sup>126</sup> In 1918, divorce turned out to be more open; however, the most critical change with respect to the matrimonial law came in 1927, as in other Nordic nations.<sup>127</sup> With reference to budgetary fairness between mates, the law expressed that “women’s housework became equated with men’s paid work, and both spouses were required to take an equal share of responsibility for the household and children.”<sup>128</sup> In the book, *Gender Equality and Welfare Politics in Scandinavia: The Limits of Political Ambition?* the expressions on equality in Norway were that;

Gender equality- in sense of formal equal rights- had already achieved increasing political support in the Nordic countries during the last decades of the 19th century, and around 1920 women had obtained formal equal rights with men in terms of education and government post, voting and political positions. Between 1909 and 1929 the marriage legislation in all Nordic countries was also thoroughly reformed, modernising the institution of marriage, enhancing women’s individual rights and ending the husband’s legal power over his wife.

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<sup>121</sup> Gro Hagemann, “Citizenship and Social Order: Gender Politics in Twentieth-Century Norway and Sweden.” *Women’s History Review* 11.3 (2002): 417-429.

<sup>122</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 417-429.

<sup>123</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 417-429.

<sup>124</sup> Trine Rogg Korsvik, “Gender equality policies in Norway: Everybody’s job, Nobody’s Responsibility?”, *Centre for Gender Research*, University of Oslo, Jagiellonian University of Krakow, 2014, p. 11.

<sup>125</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 11.

<sup>126</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>127</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

<sup>128</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 14.

The reformed legislation also gave married women the obligation to provide for the family, which was unique, as seen in a European perspective, and questions the application of a male-breadwinner model to this formative period of the Scandinavian welfare states.<sup>129</sup>

In Scandinavia the concept of equality was with effect from the 1910s.<sup>130</sup> Until that time married did not entirely obtain legitimate rights freely from their spouses until 1920.<sup>131</sup> Women had to take responsibilities for home and youngsters. They expected to behave as “the chancellors of the domestic exchequer.”<sup>132</sup>

In the article, “To Become a Political Subject: Enfranchisement of Women in Norway”, Hagemann asserted that “Married Women’s Property Act was passed by the Storting in 1888.”<sup>133</sup> Municipal councils and the parliamentary farmers’ support not only “aspired to value women as equals within the family”, but also “condemned the present society and its legislation as outdated in their attitude to women’s position in society.”<sup>134</sup> As to Hagemann, “until the 1880s, Norwegian women had no political voice, neither inside nor outside Parliament.”<sup>135</sup> The members of those institutions strongly condemned the present society and its legislation as outdated in their attitude to women’s position in society.<sup>136</sup> As to Norwegian National Commission report related to Norwegian community life;

The household and the family have had a central role in Norwegian culture. For this reason, women have assumed a central role in the development of our own distinctive culture. Even though women have not had equal rights nor have participated in society as equally as men, they have, however, fulfilled a role which has been more or less indispensable for that sense of fellowship and equality which is seen to be so typically Norwegian. Women have been the keystone in the local communities in a sparsely populated and spacious country. On the basis of the same reasoning, the question can be raised as to whether women have been the caretakers of that pressure for conformity and

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<sup>129</sup> Kari Melby-Anna-Birte Ravn and Christina Carlsson Wetterberg, *Gender Equality and Welfare Politics in Scandinavia: The Limits of Political Ambition?*, The policy Press, Bristol, UK, 2009, p. 1.

<sup>130</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>131</sup> Gisela Bock-Pat Thane, *Maternity and Gender Policies: Women and the Rise of the European Welfare States 1880s-1950s*, Routledge, 1991, p. 65.

<sup>132</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 78.

<sup>133</sup> Gro Hagemann, “To Become A Political Subject: Enfranchisement of Women in Norway”, *Suffrage, Gender and Citizenship: International Perspectives on Parliamentary Reforms*, Edt. Irma Sulkunen and Seija-Leena Nevala-Nurmi and Pirjo Markkola, Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2009, p. 124.

<sup>134</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 124.

<sup>135</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 126.

<sup>136</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 127.

conventionality that are seen as more negative features of the nation's culture and religion.<sup>137</sup>

The institutions of marriage and family were the piles of the Norwegian society like the other countries in Europe.<sup>138</sup>The problems at marriages and family affected the Norwegian society in a negative way.<sup>139</sup>Due to problems in these institutions such as male privileges, gender apartheid, class discrimination, women's heavy responsibilities, the reforms about the family life and marriages became compulsory.<sup>140</sup>Therefore, the reform was carried out at a time when marriage was considered to be in crisis.<sup>141</sup>In 1884, the following statement was addressed to the Norwegian Parliament, *Stortinget*.<sup>142</sup>

“Do we dare, in such a serious matter, to remind [you] of the multifarious character of love; as a basis of enduring economic order it is not well suited indeed. Nor is the proposal at hand sufficient, allowing the married woman to establish separate property if she likes. Then the claim easily would look like an offending exception, which the Woman most often wants to avoid.”<sup>143</sup>

Having been signed the statement by four authors, Bjørnson, Ibsen, Lie and Kielland, they made a serious matter a current issue; A New Marriage Act.<sup>144</sup>In the nineteenth century, under the name of “a new marriage act”, there were a lot of social changes, which include the women's rights about their social status admitted “property and income rights for married women.”<sup>145</sup> They talked for discrete property and pay rights as the ordinary request of marriage.<sup>146</sup> Despite these changes, patriarchal frameworks were still going on, because women and men were not equal in terms of

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<sup>137</sup> “Women's Role in Cultural Life in Norway”, Web.25.Dec.2014, Norwegian National Commission, (<http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images>)

<sup>138</sup> Christina Carlsson Wetterberg, “Gender Equality and the Welfare state. Debates on Marriage Law Reform in Sweden at the Beginning of the 20th Century”, *Family Law in Early Women's Rights Debates*, Böhlau Verlag, Köln/Weimar/Wien 2013, pp. 1-24.

<sup>139</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-24.

<sup>140</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-24.

<sup>141</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-24.

<sup>142</sup> Gro Hagemann, “Citizenship and Social Order: Gender Politics in Twentieth-Century Norway and Sweden”, *Women's History Review*, Volume 11, Number 3, 2002, p. 417.

<sup>143</sup> Letter from the poets Bjørnson, Ibsen, Lie and Kielland on the subject of separate property for married women, 1884, qtd Gro Hagemann, “Citizenship and Social Order: Gender Politics in Twentieth-Century Norway and Sweden”, *Women's History Review*, Volume 11, Number 3, 2002, p. 417.

<sup>144</sup> Gro Hagemann, “Citizenship and Social Order: Gender Politics in Twentieth-Century Norway and Sweden”, *Women's History Review*, Volume 11, Number 3, 2002, p. 417.

<sup>145</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 418-419.

<sup>146</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 418-419.



social, economic and politic conditions.<sup>147</sup>Undoubtedly, the change did not take care of the issues of wedded ladies' financial status.<sup>148</sup>Most of the married women had no money and no their own property.<sup>149</sup>

Furthermore, since the spouse was still viewed as the primary supplier of the family, this disparity was continually recreated in the next decades, through enactment, arranged pay settlements, state strategies identifying with the dispersion of pay and different practices of working life.<sup>150</sup>

Additionally, the disparity in the middle of unmarried and wedded ladies remained, leaving wedded ladies with few benefits in their own particular perfectly fine.<sup>151</sup> Their powerless financial position was most obviously shown when a marriage finished, whether through death or separation. The financial status of wedded ladies was to bring about a few quarrels amid the following century, and it shows up as one of the fundamental inquiries inside of twentieth-century women's liberation.<sup>152</sup>

As to Wetterberg, the patriarchal society always oppressed and marginalized the nineteenth-century Scandinavian women.<sup>153</sup>They were bound to a male-focused society where they were denied of fundamental right and suffrage as people in its full-force.<sup>154</sup>Wetterberg claimed that because of the fact that society depended on the patriarchal structures and overwhelmed by the patriarchal tenets, the individual was only evaluated “in terms of the male gaze.”<sup>155</sup>His claim about the nineteenth-century Scandinavian women is that;

A female individual is assigned with all her duties and obligations directed by the patriarchy. Men dominate over the “male-centric” world, while women have to be obedient and subservient. They are usually bound in matrimony, functioning as either toys or tools to serve others. In serving this, obligation is embedded in their social and female identity while their identity as human being

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<sup>147</sup> A. Hossain, “Ibsen’s Treatment of Women”, *J Socialomics* 5: 153, 2016, pp. 1-9.

<sup>148</sup> Gro Hagemann, “Citizenship and Social Order: Gender Politics in Twentieth-Century Norway And Sweden”, *Women’s History Review*, 11:3, 417-429, 2007, pp. 418-419.

<sup>149</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 418-419.

<sup>150</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 418-419.

<sup>151</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 418-419.

<sup>152</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 418-419.

<sup>153</sup> A. Hossain, “Ibsen’s Treatment of Women”, *J Socialomics* 5: 153, 2016, pp. 1-9.

<sup>154</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-9.

<sup>155</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-9.

with the right to happiness, and freedom is almost completely sacrificed. In such a patriarchal social framework, they are represented by a set of self-sacrificing and subservient attributes; those who break away from this norm are labeled with such tags as “deviant,” “rebellious,” or even “demonic.” Most of his women suffer from this labeling as victims of the male dominated society for their rebellious spirit. Ibsen insightfully describes a range of rebellious characters, and unveiled the spiritual pilgrimage; they have gone through their persistent pursuit of emancipation, freedom, and bitter struggle to regain their identity and power as human beings.<sup>156</sup>

While the pressure had been turning up the heat on the Norwegian women until the nineteenth century, not only did they win some legal and political rights such as voting and having property but also had educational and career opportunities.<sup>157</sup> Kristina in her thesis makes mention of these changes. As to Sjögren,

For Scandinavian women, much changed between the middle of the nineteenth century, when they had practically no legal or civil rights, and 1919, when Swedish women gained the vote as the last in the Nordic countries. The economic, intellectual and political developments of this period brought important changes in the status, educational and career opportunities and legal and political rights of women, but also in their roles and behavioural norms.<sup>158</sup>

Hossain’s holistic view of the Norwegian society was that a traditional society was usual to seeing ladies from the male perspective.<sup>159</sup> The genuine position of a lady was restricted to her family.<sup>160</sup> While the leader of a family chose about the vital issues in the male-ruled society, a housewife’s duty was to assume her responsibilities towards her husband and children unequivocally.<sup>161</sup> Additionally, with reference to Norwegian women’s education and the possibility of getting a job in that era, he stated that they did not have enough opportunities to have a good education and a job.<sup>162</sup> As to Hossain, Ann Marie Stanton and Ibsen were two writers who confirmed his thoughts.<sup>163</sup> As was also understood by his expressions, Ann Marie Stanton identified the women “as a social being who is obliged to give herself completely up to man and child.”<sup>164</sup>

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<sup>156</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-9.

<sup>157</sup> Kristina Sjögren, “Transgressive Femininity: Gender in the Scandinavian Modern Breakthrough”, *UCL PhD in Gender Studies*, 2009, p. 20.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>159</sup> A. Hossain, “Ibsen’s Treatment of Women”, *J Socialomics* 5: 153, 2016, pp. 1-9.

<sup>160</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-9.

<sup>161</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-9.

<sup>162</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-9.

<sup>163</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-9.

<sup>164</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-9.

There were lots of differences between men and women in Norway in 19<sup>th</sup> century. In order to resolve gender inequality and for the liberation of women in society, at a meeting of the Norwegian Association for Women's Rights on 26 May 1898, Ibsen explained that;

I have been more poet and less social philosopher than people generally seem inclined to believe ... I am not even quite clear as to just what this women's rights movement really is. To me it has seemed a problem of mankind in general ... my task has been the description of humanity. <sup>165</sup>

On the other hand, Hossain claimed that the women characters created by Ibsen were the reasons of ordinarily and customarily judgment and dissent in his contemporary Norway, as well as in the mainland Europe, in the traditionalist society in general.<sup>166</sup> Ibsen treated women under the influence of the 19th century Scandinavian women's rights and movements including "legal equality, financial independence and economic solvency, and above all, suffrage."<sup>167</sup> In the article, "Women's Right in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*", Ghafourinia and Jamili claimed that Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House* was a focus not only "on the society when people are under the pressure of public opinion about masculine society" but also "women considered as victims and society as a victimizer."<sup>168</sup>

With regard to *A Doll's House* in 1878, Ibsen noted down: "A woman cannot be herself in contemporary society; it is an exclusively male society with laws drafted by men, and with counsels and judges who judge feminine conduct from the male point of view."<sup>169</sup>

As well as Behnam examined about Ibsen and his plays, Behnam emphasized on that period's conditions by explaining "[i]n *A Doll's House* human beings are depicted as the victim of outside forces as conventions and social rules".<sup>170</sup> Furthermore,

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<sup>165</sup>C. Innes, *A Routledge Literary Sourcebook on Henrik Ibsen's Hedda Gabler*, Routledge, London, 2003, p. 26.

<sup>166</sup> A. Hossain, "Ibsen's Treatment of Women", *J Socialomics* 5: 153, 2016, pp. 1-9.

<sup>167</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-9.

<sup>168</sup>Fatemeh Ghafourinia-Leila Baradaran Jamili, "The Women's Right in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*", *Journal of Novel Applied Sciences*, J Nov. Appl Sci., 3 (4): 424-429, 2014.

<sup>169</sup> Henrik Ibsen, Ed. James Walter McFarlane, *Henrik Ibsen: A Critical Anthology*, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1970, p. 90.

<sup>170</sup> L. Behnam, *A Note on Ibsen and Nora's Doll Life*, Jahan-e-Ketab, Tehran, 2007, p. 63.

Fatemeh Ghafourinia and Leila Baradaran Jamili's thoughts about that era's society were that "In Ibsen's point of view the individual is sustaining element in society; thus, his status in the family stands as an illustration of his position in the whole society. The power structure within the domestic home reflects the hierarchical power structures which prevail in the outside world."<sup>171</sup>

As stated by Hossain, "Ibsen created woman's protesting mood, their destructive forces through creating powerful female characters, including Nora, Mrs. Alving, and Hedda. Ibsen, during 19<sup>th</sup>-century Scandinavian women's liberation movement, was eager to prove himself as a prime figure of orator in that movement...Ibsen's women were portrayed without moral bias as figures striving for authenticity against the unconscious hypocrisy of males in their patriarchal society..."<sup>172</sup> In 1884 in his appeal about married women's separate property rights he supported the Norwegian women by clarifying "to consult men in such a matter is like asking wolves if they desire better protection of the sheep".<sup>173</sup>

John Stuart Mill, who is an influential philosopher, wrote an essay on women and said in his essay, *The Subjection of Women*; those women were "wholly under the rule of men and each in private being under the legal obligation of obedience to the man with whom she has associated her destiny..."<sup>174</sup> Similarly, Hossain emphasis on the rights women was that "male guardianship of an unmarried woman was abolished in Norway in 1863", as well as women had the privilege to acquire a free living after 1866.<sup>175</sup>

In summary, taking a glance at the Norwegian society, in the nineteenth century, there were lots of changes in terms of marriages, family lives and women. Especially the Norwegian women devoted themselves so as to achieve their identity,

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<sup>171</sup> Fatemeh Ghafourinia-Leila Baradaran Jamili, "The Women's Right in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*", *Journal of Novel Applied Sciences*, J Nov. Appl Sci., 3 (4): 424-429, 2014.

<sup>172</sup> A. Hossain, "Ibsen's Treatment of Women", *J Socialomics* 5: 153, 2016, pp. 1-9.

<sup>173</sup> F. Gail-J McFarlane, *Ibsen and Feminism*, the Cambridge Companion to Ibsen, Cambridge University Press, New York, USA, 2004, 89-105.

<sup>174</sup> John Stuart Mill, *The Subjection of Women (1869)*, Global Grey, 2015, p. 3.

<sup>175</sup> A. Hossain, "Ibsen's Treatment of Women", *J Socialomics* 5: 153, 2016, pp. 1-9.

freedom, self-presence, rights, and suffragettes in that era. Industrialization provided women new opportunities in Norway like in other European countries.

### 2.3. Marriage in Russia

In the nineteenth century, Russia got changed in terms of social and financial transformations.<sup>176</sup> Thanks to these transformations, urban population increased.<sup>177</sup> In his work, *Women and Urban Culture*, Barbara Alpern Engel claimed that cultural advancements connected with urban life reflected and strengthened the social alteration. The new and more individualistic estimations of the industrialist marketplace and commercial culture challenged more established methods for being in the world and added to the creating of new social identities.<sup>178</sup> As to Engel, while some historian argued that urbanization affected women in a negative way in terms of women's sexual vulnerability, others claimed that urban culture increased women's freedom and ability to shape their own particular lives.<sup>179</sup> Beginning with a general evaluation of the situation of Russian society;

- Russia was a population of more than 130 million people with great diversity of ethnicity, language and culture.
- The dominant classes were royalty, aristocracy and land-owners, who wielded significant political influence.
- Russia's middle class was small in comparison to other nations but was growing by the early 1900s.
- The peasantry made up by far the largest section, most living in small communities scattered across the empire.
- Russian society was intensely patriarchal, with men dominant in most spheres of decision-making and women denied many legal and civil rights.<sup>180</sup>

In addition, Russia had a hierarchical structure of society in the nineteenth century. This nation's social hierarchy was strengthened by Tsarist political structures, religious and social qualities, principles administering area possession and Russia's

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<sup>176</sup> Barbara Alpern Engel, "Women and Urban Culture", *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture*, Wendy Rosslyn and Alessandra Tosi (eds.), Open Book Publishers CIC Ltd., February 2012, p. 19.

<sup>177</sup> Ibid., p. 20.

<sup>178</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>179</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>180</sup> "Russian society", Web.20.Oct.2015, (<http://alphahistory.com/russianrevolution/russian-society/>)

lawful code, by defining status and restricting social movement between the classes.<sup>181</sup> According to historian Michael Lynch, the 1897 census categorised the population of Russia in these broad class groups:

Upper classes: Royalty, nobility, higher clergy: 12.5 per cent.  
Middle classes: Merchants, bureaucrats, professionals: 1.5 per cent.  
Working classes: Factory workers, artisans, soldiers, sailors: 4 per cent.  
Peasants: Landed and landless farmers: 82 per cent.<sup>182</sup>

The Russian family was a piece of a particular institutional and social structure that changed drastically amidst the nineteenth century.<sup>183</sup> The requirements encompassing and shaping family development were altogether different from those seen in Western Europe, and some parts of them vanished abruptly in 1861 with the abrogation of serfdom.<sup>184</sup>

Moreover, most of the Russian society contributing to economy consisted of serfs, so landowners were occupied with keeping the majority of their serfs and not losing specialists to relational unions on different domains.<sup>185</sup> According to Avdeev, Blum, and Troitskaia, before 1812 serfs were not permitted to wed serfs from different homes.<sup>186</sup> These researchers stated that prior to the abolition of serfdom, the self-enclosed nature of the estate conditioned marriages; they were likewise patriarchal in an unexceptional way.<sup>187</sup> They also emphasized that wedding a person from outside the estate was liable to strict tenets forced by the serf's proprietor.<sup>188</sup> As to their comments, the restriction on outside marriage was particularly strict for men, as ladies joining the spouse's family unit added to the estate's riches, though the individuals who stayed unmarried in their estate's home constituted a burden.<sup>189</sup> That's why, as indicated in the article named Peasant Marriage in Nineteenth-Century Russia, far beyond the confinements connected with serfdom, the patriarchal structure of peasant families was

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<sup>181</sup> Ibid.

<sup>182</sup> Ibid.

<sup>183</sup> Alexandre Avdeev-Alain Blum and Irina Troitskaia, "Peasant Marriage In Nineteenth-Century Russia", *Population-E 2004*, 59(6), 721-764

<sup>184</sup> Ibid., p. 721-764.

<sup>185</sup> "Serfdom in Russia", Web.19.Sep.2015, ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serfdom\\_in\\_Russia](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Serfdom_in_Russia))

<sup>186</sup> Ibid.

<sup>187</sup> Alexandre Avdeev-Alain Blum and Irina Troitskaia, "Peasant Marriage in Nineteenth-Century Russia", *Population-E 2004*, 59(6), 721-764

<sup>188</sup> Ibid., p. 721-764.

<sup>189</sup> Ibid., p. 721-764.

established in strong cultural qualities.<sup>190</sup>Conversely, the enlistment of spouses inside the estate basically considered external constraints, because of the fact that matrimonial mobility expanded as long as these limitations were casual.<sup>191</sup>

As indicated by Engel, among townspeople, family patterns stayed patriarchal in the customary feeling of the word, that is, they laid on the power of the old over the youthful and in addition to men over ladies.<sup>192</sup>Due to the subjection to the wills of the parents, sons and daughters wedded as indicated by parental wishes.<sup>193</sup>Male heads of family units controlled all family unit assets.<sup>194</sup>Wife-beating was typical and was endured by individuals of the family.<sup>195</sup> As was also clarified by Engel, “religious values shaped people’s worldview, while sexual conduct, and especially the conduct of women, remained subject to stringent community scrutiny and control.”<sup>196</sup>

Notwithstanding class or status, Russian culture was profoundly patriarchal.<sup>197</sup>Men were overwhelming in the group, the work environment and the administration.<sup>198</sup>This was not only a result of social qualities but also it was classified in law.<sup>199</sup>The Russian legitimate law gave husbands verging on boundless energy to settle on choices about their family.<sup>200</sup>Wives were relied upon to yield to and comply with their husbands.<sup>201</sup>As explained by Muravyeva, the 1833 Code of Laws stated that “A husband is obliged to love his wife, live with her in concord, protect her, excuse her defects and comfort her in sickness. He is obliged to provide for her according to his state and capacity. The wife is obliged to obey her husband as he is the head of the family, should stay in love with him, in deep respect and absolute obedience, please him

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<sup>190</sup> Ibid., p. 721-764.

<sup>191</sup> Ibid., p. 721-764.

<sup>192</sup> Barbara Alpern Engel, “Women and Urban Culture”, *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture*, Wendy Rosslyn and Alessandra Tosi (eds.), Open Book Publishers CIC Ltd., February 2012, p. 26.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>194</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>195</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>196</sup> Ibid., p. 26.

<sup>197</sup> Marianna G. Muravyeva, “Between Law and Morality: Violence against Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia”, *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture* , Wendy Rosslyn and Alessandra Tosi (eds.), Open Book Publishers CIC Ltd., February 2012, pp. 225-238.

<sup>198</sup> Ibid., pp. 225-238.

<sup>199</sup> Ibid., pp. 225-238.

<sup>200</sup> Ibid., pp. 225-238.

<sup>201</sup> Ibid., pp. 225-238.

and confide in him as a mistress of the house.”<sup>202</sup> So, Muravyeva added that “a wife had an obligatory to obey her husbands’ orders but to combine it with duties towards her parents.”<sup>203</sup> She clarified that “While the obligations of the husbands towards his wife essentially, those of a wife were made more difficult, especially with regard to obedience and respect. The husband was explicitly named the head of the family...”<sup>204</sup>

From this point of view, until the nineteenth century, there was a gender equality problem that required being solved. The gender equality, an axe to grind for the Russian society, started in the second part of the nineteenth century because of the general social modernisation. In the nineteenth century, Russian women had to conflict against the patriarchal structure of the family.<sup>205</sup> As stated in the book, *Between Law and Morality: Violence against Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia*, “this system strengthened the inequality between genders, placing women in a position of obedience and subjugation to their husbands’ and fathers’ decisions.”<sup>206</sup> Be that as it may, the nineteenth-century Russian women kept on grumbling to courts; they held out appeals in spite of the disheartening case of other people who fizzled.<sup>207</sup>

In addition to this, Vasily Pukirev’s painting, *Unequal Marriage*, took the lid off inequality in marriages.<sup>208</sup> He depicted his art in order to criticize the society in Russia in the nineteenth century.<sup>209</sup> We understood that parents obliged his daughters to get married to healthy men.<sup>210</sup> The reason for this was to their financial and social situation.<sup>211</sup> In terms of the painter, Vasily Pukirev, we see that marriages were not equal and also gender was trouble in marriages.<sup>212</sup> As mentioned in Hutton’s book, *Remarkable Russian Women in Pictures, Prose and Poetry*, Russian women requested

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<sup>202</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>203</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>204</sup> Ibid., p. 228.

<sup>205</sup> Marianna G. Muravyeva, “Between Law and Morality: Violence against Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia”, *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture*, Wendy Rosslyn and Alessandra Tosi (eds.), Open Book Publishers CIC Ltd., February 2012, p. 238.

<sup>206</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>207</sup> Ibid., p. 238.

<sup>208</sup> Marcelline Hutton, *Remarkable Russian Women in Pictures, Prose and Poetry*, Zea E-Books. Book 21, 2013, p. 71.

<sup>209</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>210</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>211</sup> Ibid., p. 71.

<sup>212</sup> Ibid., p. 71.



happy marriages.<sup>213</sup> Those expressions below showed the women's searching of happy lives that;

Many Russian women of the late 19th and early 20th centuries tried to find happy marriages, authentic religious life, liberal education, and fulfilling work as artists, doctors, teachers, and political activists. Some very remarkable ones found these things in varying degrees, while others sought unsuccessfully but no less desperately to transcend the generations-old restrictions imposed by church, state, village, class, and gender.<sup>214</sup>

As was also understood from Hutton's expressions, some women in Russia terribly experienced nothingness, divergence and also the extravagance of their fortunes by unfair husbands.<sup>215</sup> Husson added that the women criticized their society's tradition of arranged marriage.<sup>216</sup> To illustrate, in Tolstoy's book, *Anna Kareninaw*, Russian women were unhappy and suffered from their unhappy marriages.<sup>217</sup> Muravyeva's explanations on the family structure the following took the lid off the Russian women's unhappiness against discrimination between men and woman in their marriages and social lives;

As Russian women moved to their husbands' homes after marriage, and marriage law didn't support joint marital property, women didn't have any right to claim the house. Separate marital property was advantageous to noble and rich women, but played a reverse negative role among the poorer strata of society. Peasant women could claim their dowry and marital support, but not the house or any other immovable property. Moreover, the husband's earnings belonged to him rather than to the family, and women who took money or other things from the husband's property were prosecuted on theft charges.<sup>218</sup>

Joe Andrew claimed that such lawful imbalance sprang from the Russian perfect of ladies held up to amid this time.<sup>219</sup> As to Andrew, goodness was the catchphrase: ladies were seen as either pure or sullied and debased ladies were useless.<sup>220</sup> He also added that Russian culture directed that men decently carried on virgins.<sup>221</sup> When

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<sup>213</sup> Marcelline Hutton, *Remarkable Russian Women in Pictures, Prose and Poetry*, Zea E-Books. Book 21, 2013, pp. 3-4.

<sup>214</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 1.

<sup>215</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>216</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>217</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 128.

<sup>218</sup> Marianna G. Muravyeva, "Between Law and Morality: Violence against Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia", *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture*, Wendy Rosslyn and Alessandra Tosi (eds.), Open Book Publishers CIC Ltd., February 2012, p. 232.

<sup>219</sup> Joe Andrew, *Russian Women's Shorter Fiction: An Anthology, 1835-1860*, Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 22.

<sup>220</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>221</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

hitched, ladies were seen as kid bearers living under patriarchal society; dutifulness supplanted chastity as the most extreme necessity.<sup>222</sup> On the other hand, in Muravyeva's opinion, women often depended on their families in looking for equity; however families neglected to give safe environments to them as misuse could and frequently did at home.<sup>223</sup> She also expressed that the crimes committed against married women were accepted by silent husbands and their husbands could not protest against the patriarch of the family, their husbands' fathers.<sup>224</sup> The individuals who strayed outside the standards were seen as unnatural and were dealt with brutally, whether with brutality or social throwing out.<sup>225</sup> This mentality won in most European social orders and had a few roots in composed religion.<sup>226</sup>

Marianna G. Muravyeva claimed in her article, *Between Law and Morality: Violence against Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia* that in the nineteenth century, Russian peasant women came up against violence which was "employed by men to keep their wives and daughters in absolute subjection."<sup>227</sup> Muravyeva's statement was that many Russian historians believed that the enormous scale of abuse was due to the low status of Russian women and patriarchal attitudes towards the family.<sup>228</sup> As to her comments, many Russian historians stated that Russian women's low status encouraged Russian men to misbehave their wives and daughters.<sup>229</sup> As stated below, Elizabeth Brainerd informed on Russian women's lives and social rights against patriarchal attitudes and that;

At the turn of the century the typical woman in Russia had little freedom or individual rights. Expected to marry and bound to a husband upon marriage, Russian women's subordinate status was embedded in the legal code and enforced by both Church and state. Despite the limited changes in women's legal status in Russia in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, however, social

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<sup>222</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>223</sup> Marianna G. Muravyeva, "Between Law and Morality: Violence against Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia", *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture*, Wendy Rosslyn and Alessandra Tosi (eds.), Open Book Publishers CIC Ltd., February 2012, p. 225.

<sup>224</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>225</sup> Joe Andrew, *Russian Women's Shorter Fiction: An Anthology, 1835-1860*, Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 22.

<sup>226</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>227</sup> Marianna G. Muravyeva, "Between Law and Morality: Violence against Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia", *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture*, Wendy Rosslyn and Alessandra Tosi (eds.), Open Book Publishers CIC Ltd, February 2012, pp. 209-210.

<sup>228</sup> Ibid., pp. 209-210.

<sup>229</sup> Ibid., pp. 209-210.

and economic changes were underway which facilitated increased opportunities for women in the pre-revolutionary period. The Industrial Revolution spread to Russia in the late 19th century, leading to the development of cottage industries employing women in craft and needle work, as well as new opportunities in factory work in the growing cities. Women's educational opportunities also expanded, at first primarily benefitting noble women but gradually spreading to the merchant and middle classes. Social change for peasants, however, came much more gradually and most peasant women continued to lead lives as agricultural workers with little opportunity for education or mobility<sup>230</sup>

Additionally, as to Marianna G. Muravyeva, not only peasant women but also Russian noblewomen suffered from domestic abuse.<sup>231</sup> "Russian noblewomen were probably less abused than serfs in the nineteenth century."<sup>232</sup> She claimed that "domestic violence in noble families was carefully kept inside the family and rarely became visible."<sup>233</sup> However, while there was no need to explain for peasants' cruelty to his wife, the behaviour of nobleman required the explanation.<sup>234</sup>

Moreover, in 1861, the serfs of Russia (by most accounts 80 percent of the populace) were liberated, and at about this time Russian intelligent people got to be more intrigued by the situation of ladies in the public arena, or what they called the lady question.<sup>235</sup> In Russia, the quest for an answer was taken up generally by scholars, the greater parts of whom were male; most ladies stayed uneducated.<sup>236</sup>

Russia gave the husband complete lawful force in a marriage in the nineteenth century.<sup>237</sup> By law, a wife had to comply with her husband as the leader of the family, to behave him lovely, respectfully, faithfully and obediently. Divorce was hard to acquire for a woman even though she did not love her.<sup>238</sup>

In peasant families, wives working with their husbands in the fields performed family unit errands. A privileged lady, other than regulating family workers, was in

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<sup>230</sup> Elizabeth Brainerd, "Marriage and Divorce in Revolutionary Russia: A Demographic Analysis", *Brandeis University*, p. 6.

<sup>231</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>232</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 231.

<sup>233</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>234</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 232.

<sup>235</sup> Joe Andrew, *Russian Women's Shorter Fiction: An Anthology, 1835-1860*, Clarendon Press, 1996, p. 22.

<sup>236</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

<sup>237</sup> Alexandre Avdeev et al., "Peasant Marriage in Nineteenth-Century Russia", *Population (English Edition, 2002-)*, Vol. 59, No. 6 (Nov. - Dec. 2004), pp. 721-764.

<sup>238</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 721-764.

charge of keeping up her family's social position through suppers, parties, and different get-togethers.<sup>239</sup>

Russian women, like their European fellows, were controlled by their husbands and fathers throughout their life. Indeed, even aristocrats, as depicted by Anna Karenina, did not share properties, advantages, or commitments equally among members of women and men.<sup>240</sup> That is to say, women were not equal to men legally and economically such as voting and having property.<sup>241</sup>

Discretionary was involved to women until the 1850s, and advanced education was difficult to reach until the 1870s.<sup>242</sup> They had also taken lower education than men.<sup>243</sup> Generally, they had to be interested in their marriages, housekeeping, and parenthood.<sup>244</sup>

The 1836 Code of Russian Laws communicated, “The woman must obey her husband, reside with him in love, respect, and unlimited obedience, and offer him every pleasantness and affection as the ruler of the household.”<sup>245</sup> In the book named *Women’s Activism in Contemporary Russia*, the writers attracted attention to the Russian marriages with their expressions below;

Turgenev’s play *A Month in the Country*, (1840-50) also depicts two scheming women who marry to avoid poverty. One gentry class character Natalia marries to make a good match, not for love, and enjoys admirers fluttering around her. Her ward, Vera, initially rejects an arranged marriage to an elderly neighbour, but decides to wed him out of spite after her romance with a young tutor fails. Turgenev doesn’t depict happy marriages in this drama. With few exceptions, Russian literature lacks portraits of happily married life.<sup>246</sup>

On the other hand, having had some research about family life and marriages in Russia, we learned that males and females had gotten married earlier because of

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<sup>239</sup> Ibid. , pp. 721-764.

<sup>240</sup> Ibid. , pp. 721-764.

<sup>241</sup> Ibid. , pp. 721-764.

<sup>242</sup> Ibid. , pp. 721-764.

<sup>243</sup> Ibid. , pp. 721-764.

<sup>244</sup> Ibid. , pp. 721-764.

<sup>245</sup> Linda Racippi-Katherine O’Sullivan See, *Women’s Activism in Contemporary Russia*, Temple University Press, Philadelphia, 1997, p. 239.

<sup>246</sup> Marcelline Hutton, *Remarkable Russian Women in Pictures, Prose and Poetry*, Zea E-Books. Book 21, 2013, p. 90.

families' choices.<sup>247</sup> Avdeev, Blum, and Troitskaia presented the data of marriage age. With reference to their data, "the first restrictions on age at marriage are those imposed by canon law. Until 1830, the minimum age at marriage was fixed at 13 years for women and 15 years for men; after 1830, it was raised to 16 and 18 years respectively). Russian marriage legislation also applied restrictions to marriage at an old age."<sup>248</sup> In consideration of Avdeev, Blum, and Troitskaia's study, it is indicated that "According to the 1897 census, among the rural population, the average age at first marriage was 21.5 years for women and 23.3 years for men. A century later, in 1989, it amounted to 20.6 and 22.2 years respectively."<sup>249</sup> Kryukova explained that as to church and state law prescribed the following obligatory marriage norms for all citizens irrespective of estate:

- Limits on the age of marriage (the age of consent to marry was set for girls at 16 and for boys at 18; the maximum marriage age was set at 80);
- Absence of blood relationship between the bride and groom (they should be at least four times removed);
- Consent of parents for marriage;
- Consent of bride and groom for marriage;
- A ban on marrying the mentally disabled;
- A ban on marrying for the fourth time.<sup>250</sup>

As to these researchers, while in western European societies wives were younger than husbands, the wife in Russia was older than her husband.<sup>251</sup> Additionally, they claimed that "Remarriage was a common event, particularly among men... Not a single divorce was observed in the study population during the entire century."<sup>252</sup> At that point, Elizabeth Brainerd claims that;

Within this institutional setting, women and men married at relatively young ages, and marriage was near-universal. For example, according to 1897 census data, the average age at first marriage was 21.4 years for women and 24.2 years for men, which was more than two years younger than the average age at first

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<sup>247</sup> Alexandre Avdeev-Alain Blum and Irina Troitskaia, "Peasant Marriage in Nineteenth-Century Russia", *Population-E 2004*, 59(6), 721-764

<sup>248</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 721-764.

<sup>249</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 721-764.

<sup>250</sup> S.S. Kryukova, "Custom and Law in Marriage and Family Relations among Russian Peasants during the Second Half of the Nineteenth Century", *Journal of Legal Pluralism 2001*- Nr. 46, 2001, pp. 137-138.

<sup>251</sup> Alexandre Avdeev-Alain Blum and Irina Troitskaia, "Peasant Marriage in Nineteenth-Century Russia", *Population-E 2004*, 59(6), 721-764

<sup>252</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 721-764.

marriage in France at the time, as well as in the United States where the average age at first marriage was 23.7 for women and 27.4 for men in 1900. Few women remained unmarried; for example only 5.1 percent of women in the 40-49 age group(s) were single at the time of the 1897 Census. In comparison, in the United States in 1900 nearly 8 percent of women aged 45-54 had never been married. Fertility rates were relatively high at an estimated 47.8 births per 1,000 population(s) in 1913.<sup>253</sup>

In addition to these, Like others countries' marriages, the Russian marriages were arranged in terms of considering economic situation of Russian families in all classes in Russia.<sup>254</sup> Especially gentry-class families would prefer to get their daughters to marry rich men so as to get financial opportunities.<sup>255</sup> In contrast, peasant families most like wondered their daughters' decision. Moreover, seeing that marriages were very significant with regards to Russian Orthodox belief, divorces could hardly ever been seen in Russian families.<sup>256</sup> According to Mr. /Mrs. Hutton;

Russia had the lowest divorce rates in Europe in 1900s. One result of arranged marriages was that many women adjusted to loveless marriages. Of course, some did not. While not all husbands were drunkards, gamblers, or abusers, many were, and in all strata of society. Regardless of social rank, some women also sought love and romance outside of marriage. Educated women writers like Evdokia Rostopchina, Karolina Pavlova, and Avdotya Panaeva took lovers in middle age in order to find romance and happiness. It seems few experienced the romance and joy in marriage that the series *Downton Abbey* portrays among the English, or if they did, few wrote about it. Russian society sometimes supported women's careers, and sometimes criticized them. Upper class Russian women could combine marriage and career because servants freed them from childcare and housework. Moreover, writing, journalism, teaching, medicine, and the religious life often helped single women survive in the mid and late 19th century.<sup>257</sup>

Finally, a Russian woman had never had any options to choose, because she could not decide anything to ask her husband after her marriage or do anything without permitting her father. Neither church nor state laws took side with women, so there were lots of obligatory rules to be obeyed by them. Furthermore, the misuse of Russian women and unequal laws took the lid off the place of women in the nineteenth-century

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<sup>253</sup> Elizabeth Brainerd, "Marriage and Divorce in Revolutionary Russia: A Demographic Analysis", *Brandeis University*, p. 5.

<sup>254</sup> Marcelline Hutton, *Remarkable Russian Women in Pictures, Prose and Poetry*, Zea E-Books. Book 21, 2013, pp. 156-157.

<sup>255</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

<sup>256</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

<sup>257</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 156-157.

Russian society.<sup>258</sup> Marianna G. Muravyeva claimed that “patriarchal families led by men used every accessible tool to discipline, control and subjugate women to the family and community need, often to the harm of their own interests. Women responded by using all available strategies to cope with the violence and to resist it through the judiciary and extra-legal activities.”<sup>259</sup> While some women fled or killed their husbands due to their self-defence, many had to conform because of the fact that their prosperity and livelihood often frequently relied on upon the male leader of the family unit.<sup>260</sup> To sum up, marriage in nineteenth-century rural Russia seems to have a different meaning and function from those of rural French or English society amid the eighteenth or nineteenth periods.<sup>261</sup> The Russian marriage model's first need was to guarantee early and widespread marriage, leaving social procedures directed marital decision.

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<sup>258</sup> Marianna G. Muravyeva, “Between Law and Morality: Violence against Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia”, *Women in Nineteenth-Century Russia: Lives and Culture*, Wendy Rosslyn and Alessandra Tosi (eds.), Open Book Publishers CIC Ltd., February 2012, p. 237.

<sup>259</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>260</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 237.

<sup>261</sup> Alexandre Avdeev-Alain Blum and Irina Troitskaia, “Peasant Marriage In Nineteenth-Century Russia”, *Population-E 2004*, 59(6), 721-764

## CHAPTER III

### 3. READING MARRIAGE IN THREE DRAMAS

#### 3.1. Reading Marriage in *A Doll's House*

Modernism has been named by various names. Renato Poggioli indicated modernism as those terms like “fin de siècle”, “modernism”, and “avant-gardism”<sup>262</sup> used in Latin and Anglo-Saxon countries, while words like “Secession”, “Jugendstil”, “Neu-Romantik”, and “expressionism”<sup>263</sup> are favoured within German and central European contexts.

Similarly as with verifiable transnational social developments, for example, the Renaissance or Romanticism, it is not by any stretch of the imagination conceivable to bind exactly an end or a starting to what is currently known as modernism.<sup>264</sup> Some critics would put the beginning stage in the later nineteenth century, with the work of Impressionist painters in France, the compelling dramatization of Ibsen in Norway, the fiction of James and Conrad in England and the verse of Whitman in America.<sup>265</sup> Others thought that modernism started the advancements of the mid-century, with expanding industrialisation and its disturbance of customary social examples; with the loss of religious confidence realized, at any rate to a limited extent, by Darwin’s evolutionary theories, and by geological discoveries.<sup>266</sup>

As to Richard Ellmann, Modernism means "a distinct kind of imagination"<sup>267</sup> rather than a particular aesthetic style. He also explains that "What comes to mind is rather something broadly imaginative, a large spiritual enterprise involving philosophic,

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<sup>262</sup> Renato Poggioli, *The Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Cambridge, Mass., 1968, p. 6

<sup>263</sup> Peter Burger, in *Theory of the Avant-Garde*, Minneapolis, 1984

<sup>264</sup> Palmer McCulloch, Margery, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts 1918-1959*, Edinburgh, GB: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, p. 2.

<sup>265</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>266</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 2.

<sup>267</sup> Richard Ellmann, *Introduction to The Modern Tradition*, ed. Richard Ellmann and Charles Feidelson, New York, 1965, p. VI.



social, and scientific thought, and aesthetic and literary theories and manifestoes as well as poems, novels, dramas."<sup>268</sup>

David Krasner also explained in his book named *History of Modern Drama*, that modernism imaged massive social, economic, philosophical, and artistic changes as well as it came into existence by a rejection of Classical Formalism (seventeenth century) and Enlightenment Rationalism (eighteenth century). Further, it was affected by revolutions such as the nineteenth-century Industrial Revolution and the French Revolution (1789).<sup>269</sup>

Pretty much as new political and social practices tried to cope with the human and social fact of this evolving world, new fine arts made sense of the new world as well as new philosophical and intellectual methodologies tried to be developed.<sup>270</sup> A percentage of the authors and masterminds who essentially affected the workmanship and thoughts of the early years of the twentieth century, for example, Nietzsche and Dostoevsky, originated from this mid-nineteenth-century period by going into the later and more extensive open recognition through interpretation of their work.<sup>271</sup>

In addition, Virginia Woolf, one of the most important writers of the nineteenth century, laid emphasis on modernism in her article in 1924.<sup>272</sup> She declared that human nature changed. She added that due to that change, human relations were affected, such as "those between masters and servants, husbands and wives, parents and children. And when human relations change, there is at the same time, a change in religion, conduct, politics, and literature."<sup>273</sup>

As far as modernism in literature is concerned, modernist writers' works do not dismiss outside reality completely; rather, they worry about the relationship between the

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<sup>268</sup> Ibid., p. VI.

<sup>269</sup> David Krasner, *History of Modern Drama* (1), Hoboken, GB: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp. 3-4.

<sup>270</sup> Margery Palmer McCulloch, *Scottish Modernism and its Contexts 1918-1959*, Edinburgh, GB: Edinburgh University Press, 2009, p. 2.

<sup>271</sup> Ibid., p. 2.

<sup>272</sup> Mary Gluck, "Toward a Historical Definition of Modernism: Georg Lukacs and the Avant-Garde." *The Journal of Modern History* 58.4 (1986): 845-82.

<sup>273</sup> Virginia Woolf, "Mr. Bennett and Mrs. Brown," in *Collected Essays* (New York, 1967), pp. 320-21

individual cognizance and the outer reality that it stands up to.<sup>274</sup> Writers are aware of the gap between the significant internal existence of the individual awareness and an external world that shapes that inward life yet appears in itself without otherworldly importance.<sup>275</sup> Therefore, the modernists looked for a way to fill the void so as to gather significance from that obviously silly external world.<sup>276</sup> Broadly, they found in art itself the method for changing the possibilities of ordinary life into an important formal structure.<sup>277</sup>

In addition to his expressing that modernism was “in the period leading up to the First World War that they began to coalesce in the forms that, after the war, would characterize “high modernism.”<sup>278</sup> Lewis Pericles claimed that;

The modernists differed from earlier novelists not in recognizing the fact that our perceptions of reality are always mediated by language and by consciousness – that recognition was at the root of the very form of the novel in general. Rather, the modernists were remarkable for investigating in a concerted way the possibility that the mediated nature of our consciousness might preclude our ever arriving, by rational means, at a consensus as to the nature of external reality. Modernist experiments implied that our perceptions of the outside world and of each other are so tainted by culturally specific or individually idiosyncratic values that there might be no way of arbitrating fairly between the competing claims of various individuals or groups – no eternal facts, no absolute truth, hence no absolute justice.<sup>279</sup>

In Lewis’ book, *Modernism, Nationalism, and the Novel*, he mentions about the linkage between modernism and nationalism, especially by identifying the individual.<sup>280</sup> As mentioned above, Lewis discusses by presenting good evidence that modernist examinations concerning the individual inward experience do not run counter to such social issues as governmental issues and nationality but the nation itself, since people not only shape but also are formed by the nation.<sup>281</sup>

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<sup>274</sup>Pericles Lewis, *Modernism, Nationalism, and the Novel*, Cambridge, GB: Cambridge University Press, 2000, p. 4.

<sup>275</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>276</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>277</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>278</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>279</sup> Ibid., p. 5.

<sup>280</sup>John G Peters, *Studies in the Novel* 33. 4, 2001, 478–480.

<sup>281</sup> Ibid. pp. 478-480.

While Kant explains it “a reasonable faith in the existence of a shared external world, the autonomy and equality of all rational beings”, the other modernists touch on the individual’s consciousness and inner-world.<sup>282</sup>

In English literature and theatre, Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen, the founder of the Norwegian drama<sup>283</sup>, has been characterized as a pioneer of the modern drama.<sup>284</sup>It was accepted that he revolutionized in modern drama.<sup>285</sup>Dr. Azher Suleiman clearly mentions in his work, *Henrik Ibsen: The Father of Modern Drama* about Ibsen’s reputation and his works. He clarifies that Henrik Johan Ibsen (1828-1906) was “an important Norwegian dramatist, social critic and agitator for women’s rights”.<sup>286</sup>He was not only “the father of realism and has been a pioneer in the transformation and revolution of modern drama”<sup>287</sup> but also “a leader in the campaign for a modern radical and realistic literature in the cultural life of Scandinavia of this age”.<sup>288</sup>Ibsen struggled against the issues “the values of middle-class society and formulated the basic rights and liberties of the individual”.<sup>289</sup>

In the book titled *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism*, Toril Moi, a teacher of Literature at Duke University, USA and initially from Norway is viewed as one of the world's leading researchers in gender studies, says that Ibsen is arguably the most significant playwright writing after Shakespeare.<sup>290</sup>She furthermore starts a topic that Ibsen has become shockingly insignificant fundamental thought from the specialists of Modernism and Postmodernism.<sup>291</sup> Claudia Horntvedt claims that;

Ibsen’s modernism, Moi explains, draws the attention to his profound understanding of his time, for example the situation of women’s individuality, as well as the arduousness of human relationships during his time. With the death of idealism that is with Ibsen’s break with it, the immediate consequence was the advent of scepticism. When he gave free reins to what we call today

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<sup>282</sup> Ibid., p. 214

<sup>283</sup> Michael Egan, *Henrik Ibsen: Critical Heritage*, London, US: Routledge, 1972, p. 43.

<sup>284</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and The Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 17.

<sup>285</sup> Dr. Azher Suleiman, *Henrik Ibsen: The father of Modern Drama*, Nobel Press (Jan. 1 1901), p. 4.

<sup>286</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>287</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>288</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>289</sup> Ibid., p. 4.

<sup>290</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and The Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 17.

<sup>291</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

modern scepticism, Ibsen made his audience doubt the power of words. When the characters lose the power and trust in the meaning of language, the individual is plunged in absolute despair.<sup>292</sup>

As stated in the book, Moi expresses that there are key features of Ibsen's modernism. These are;

- There is a turn to realism and prose
- idealism is ironized or shown to be destructive
- scepticism is a central theme
- the everyday is represented as a possible alternative to scepticism
- theater as an art form is embraced and acknowledged
- antitheatricity is rejected
- theatricality is criticized
- self-theatricalization in everyday life is a central theme
- love is shown to be destroyed by theatricality and scepticism
- the situation of women is seen as the key social question of modernity
- marriage is a central theme, often used as a figure for the everyday<sup>293</sup>

As to Moi, this skeletal list conveys the characteristic themes of Ibsen's modernism: the situations of women; the relationship between idealism and scepticism; and the use of marriage as a figure for the ordinary and the everyday; and, not at least, the fate of love in an age of scepticism.<sup>294</sup>

As to Claudia Horntvedt, Norway experienced these dramatic changes at a time where the new power consciousness of the old traditions was replaced by the modern more evolved version of it. The building of a nation-state, as Giddens' explained, as a result of the modernising process was a complex and at times turbulent and dramatic alternative. The reason for that came as a symptom of the acute need for a social transformation. The conflict had to a certain extent connection with the process of social change that Norway experienced for decades. At a certain point it became drastically radicalised due to society's growing self-awareness, so much so that it created auspicious conditions for new *social* and more importantly political constellations.<sup>295</sup>

In the November 2004 issue of *Theatre Survey*, Toril Moi initiated a brief polemic about the way Ibsen has been misconceived by American researchers, who

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<sup>292</sup> Claudia Horntvedt, "Modernity and Ibsen's Tragic Muse", *Master thesis in Ibsen Studies*, University of Oslo, Spring 2008, p. 23.

<sup>293</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and The Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 9-10.

<sup>294</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 9-10.

<sup>295</sup> Claudia Horntvedt, "Modernity and Ibsen's Tragic Muse", *Master Thesis in Ibsen Studies*, University of Oslo, Spring 2008, p. 32.

have, she, seen him as “a fuddy-duddy old realist who never truly became modern.”<sup>296</sup> She accuses this “widespread blindness to Ibsen’s modernity”<sup>297</sup> in transit we have conceptualized contemporary theatre history, and she requires no not as much as a complete re-examination of the historical backdrop of the European theatre.<sup>298</sup> Along with this better approach for pondering the theatre is a requirement another method for comprehending modernism.<sup>299</sup> Both, she infers, must be cleaned off and re-imagined.<sup>300</sup>

"*A Doll's House* is the first full-blown example of Ibsen's modernism."<sup>301</sup> Moi has chosen a series of plays to outline the advancement of Ibsen's idea and his theatre. She states that Ibsen images Nora as an individual against her parts as a doll or as a wife and a mother.<sup>302</sup> Moi depicts and examines the scene in which Nora moves the tarantella, which she says is the lady's self-theatricalisation as a method for keeping away from but conceding her blame towards her spouse.<sup>303</sup> As stated by Toril Moi, Ibsen tells us that only the audience is capable of seeing the whole picture: seeing both the temptation to theatricalise others and the possibility of understanding and acknowledging Nora’s suffering.<sup>304</sup> In this setting, Moi cites Wittgenstein: "The human body is the best photo of the human soul"<sup>305</sup>, and recommends that Nora has appropriated her own particular body, which was prepared to be a lovely doll for her spouse to have a great time, to show the torment of her spirit.<sup>306</sup> In the seminar which William Patrick held, he emphasized that;

Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* allows a further move away from woman as aesthetic fantasy and through a drastic rebellion allows a woman to become much more than a wife and mother. An examination of these texts using theorists as varied as Penelope Prentice, Froma Zeitlin, Toril Moi, and finally

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<sup>296</sup> Toril Moi, “Ibsen, Theatre, and Ideology of Modernism,” *Theatre Survey* 45. 2 (November 2004), p. 247.

<sup>297</sup> Ibid., p. 249.

<sup>298</sup> Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, “Modernism and Theatrical Performance”, *Modernist Culture*, Vol. 1 (1), p. 59

<sup>299</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>300</sup> Ibid., p. 59.

<sup>301</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and The Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 225.

<sup>302</sup> Ibid., pp. 243-244.

<sup>303</sup> Ibid., pp. 236-242.

<sup>304</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>305</sup> Ibid., pp. 238-239.

<sup>306</sup> Ibid., pp. 238-239.

Rubin herself will allow for the ways in which patriarchal authority is subverted and the power of women is accentuated in these plays to come to life.<sup>307</sup>

In *A Doll's House*, the protagonist Nora has her own particular type of a homecoming. Nora, toward the end of the play, claims her own humanity through the acknowledgment that she is “first and foremost a human being”.<sup>308</sup>

Nora's claim about "first and foremost a human being"<sup>309</sup> stands as an alternative to two refusals.<sup>310</sup> We have already seen that she refuses to be a doll.<sup>311</sup> But she also refuses to define herself as a wife and mother<sup>312</sup>:

**HELMER:** It's shocking. This is how you would neglect your most sacred duties.

**NORA:** What do you consider my most sacred duties?

**HELMER:** Do I need to tell you that? Are they not your duties to your husband and your children?

**NORA:** I have other duties just as sacred.

**HELMER:** That you have not. What duties could those be?

**NORA:** Duties to myself.

**HELMER:** Before all else, you are a wife and a mother.

**NORA:** Before all else, you are a wife and a mother. or, at all events, that I must try and become one...<sup>313</sup>

As indicated by Moi in her book *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism*, *A Doll's House* involves “a devastating critique of idealism”<sup>314</sup> After Nora totally rejects two other identities as “a doll” and “a mother and wife”<sup>315</sup>, she leaves her family so as to find her own realities and self-consciousness by seeing her family life as a fiction.<sup>316</sup> Nora denies the part as her spouse, Torvald's doll; she declines to characterize herself as either a wife or mother.<sup>317</sup> Keeping in mind the end goal to attempt to help her

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<sup>307</sup>William Patrick, “Patriarchal Authority and “Coming Home” In Tragedy”, Web.03.Jun.2015, (<http://static1.squarespace.com/static/>)

<sup>308</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and The Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 236.

<sup>309</sup> Ibid., p. 225.

<sup>310</sup> Ibid., pp. 225-226.

<sup>311</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>312</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>313</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. III. pp. 240-241.

<sup>314</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and The Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 225.

<sup>315</sup> Ibid., p. 226.

<sup>316</sup> George Bernard Shaw, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, London: Walter Scott 24 Warwick Lane, 1891, pp. 81-82.

<sup>317</sup> Ibid., pp. 81-82.

wife, Nora needs to reject his aesthetic ideal and start to assert her independence, regardless of the fact that it implies illegal activities and forgery!<sup>318</sup>Moi contends that her dismissal of these roles transforms her from Torvald's wife to Nora."<sup>319</sup>

When we took a glance at the expression below, we easily understood the drift above;

**NORA:** That is just it; you have never understood me. I have been greatly wronged, Torvald--first by papa and then by you.<sup>320</sup>

At this point, as well as John H. Dietrich emphasizes their home has been a doll's house, he clarifies Nora's feelings: "The foundations of the doll's house are being shaken, and they fall as Nora utters her sterling truths about her own marriage—statements true about too many other marriages. When she remarks that she has been treated unjustly, both by her father and her husband, her remarks reveal the hitherto unsounded depths of a woman's soul."<sup>321</sup> Toril Moi noted down about Henrik Ibsen and gave a lecture. In her lecture and her book, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism*, she expressed that Ibsen's work is one of a kind in light of his just male writer of 1800s who realized the situation of women to be in any event as interesting as that of men, in both philosophical and dramatic sense.<sup>322</sup> In Turid Ovrebo's essay, Moi's thoughts about women are stated that;

"A woman should not have to choose between being a woman and being a human being, but women must often make this choice in literature and in the culture at large. In the works of Ibsen, uniquely, women are not presented with this choice"<sup>323</sup>

As far as Nora's life and her marriage are concerned, you can be aware of her feelings about her marriage. Ibsen and her protagonist, Nora uses the doll figure so as to describe Nora's former self.<sup>324</sup> She expresses that her father "He used to call me his

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<sup>318</sup> Ibid., pp. 81-82.

<sup>319</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 226.

<sup>320</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. III. p. 233.

<sup>321</sup> John H. Dietrich, "A Doll's House: Shall Women Be Free?" First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, *The Humanist Pulpit*, Series XII. No: 4, 1928, p. 52.

<sup>322</sup> Turid Ovrebo, "First and Foremost a human being", NKK Magasin, *Nordic Institute for Women's Studies and Gender Research*, No.3-2005, p. 8.

<sup>323</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

<sup>324</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 235.

doll-child, and played with me as I played with my dolls”<sup>325</sup>At the same time she had the tradition kept on; “And the children in turn have been my dolls.”<sup>326</sup> So she leaves her home, husband since she does not want to live the life of a doll.<sup>327</sup> At last, Ibsen’s Nora finds her own voice and asserts her own humanity; “I believe that before all else I am a human being, just as much as you are.”<sup>328</sup> In the magazine article, NKK, Unni Langas discussed the subject in terms of woman and she asks;

Why then is Nora a strong character in European drama and why is she still important for feminists? The impact at a personal and political level is that audience can identify with and sympathize with Nora, who is so obviously trapped in gender hierarchy, which calls for a painful decision. Despite progress in formal regulations of gender equality, this is still a highly relevant question for women today. The impact at a theoretical level is that Nora’s way of performing exposes how she struggles to define herself and her female identity in opposition to legal and cultural norms. By disclosing how gender is produced through a materializing of bodily and verbal acts. *A Doll’s House* gives us a deeper understanding of the effects and operations of gender as such.<sup>329</sup>

According to Moi’s point of view, Nora's tarantella is a realistic presentation of a lady's battle to make her presence listened, to make the most of it.<sup>330</sup> She likewise clarified that tarantella scene indicates more than Nora as a dance lover.<sup>331</sup> Here Ibsen demonstrates the power of the theatre to convey a person’s inner suffering<sup>332</sup>

In *A Doll’s House*, rather than concentrating on society, Ibsen displays and dissects the relationship between a husband and wife.<sup>333</sup> McFarlane mentioned about the play’s concept that the micro-society in the play images the macro-society: “the power structure within the walls of the domestic home reflects the hierarchal power which prevail in the wider world”.<sup>334</sup> As stated by Brajne Markussen, the play focuses on not only Nora’s emancipation but also the ideological conditions of nineteenth-century family

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<sup>325</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll’s House*, ed Willian Archer, Samuel French, 1926, Act III, p. 114.

<sup>326</sup> Ibid., Act III, p. 115.

<sup>327</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 235.

<sup>328</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll’s House*, ed Willian Archer, Samuel French, 1926, Act III, p. 117.

<sup>329</sup> Unni Langas, “Ibsen’s Nora Revisited”, NKK Magasin, Nordic Institute for Women’s Studies and Gender Research, No.3-2005, p.6

<sup>330</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 238.

<sup>331</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>332</sup> Ibid., p. 241.

<sup>333</sup> F.L. Lucas, *The Drama of Ibsen and Strindberg*. London: Cassell, 1962, p. 131.

<sup>334</sup> J. McFarlane, *the Cambridge Companion to Ibsen*. Cambridge, England: Cambridge University Press, 1994, p. 70.



law.<sup>335</sup> Joan Templeton emphasizes on the themes of the play that “The conflict between love and law, between heart and head, between feminine and masculine, is the moral center of *A Doll House*.”<sup>336</sup> Ibsen's *A Doll's House* pictures the issues of Norwegian society from the viewpoint of a bourgeois family.<sup>337</sup> In addition, Yang Lianfen clarifies that “*A Doll's House* discloses woman's status as a puppet in the family through its narration of gender relations.”<sup>338</sup> In 1878 Ibsen composed:

There are two kinds of moral laws, two kinds of conscience, one for men and the other one, quite different, for women. They don't understand each other; but in practical life, woman is judged by masculine law, as though she weren't a woman but a man. The wife in the play ends by having no idea what is right and what is wrong; natural feelings on the one hand and belief in authority on the other lead her to utter distraction. A woman cannot be herself in modern society. It as an exclusively male society, with laws made by men and with prosecutors and judges who assess feminine conduct from a masculine standpoint.<sup>339</sup>

A comparative perspective is displayed three decades later by G. B. Shaw:

The sum of the matter is that unless Woman repudiates her womanliness, her duty to her husband, to her children, to society, to the law, and to everyone but herself, she cannot emancipate herself. But her duty to herself is no duty at all, since a debt is canceled when the debtor and creditor are the same person. Its payment is simply a fulfillment of the individual will, upon which all duty is a restriction, founded on the conception of the will as naturally malign and devilish. Therefore Woman has to repudiate duty altogether. In that, repudiation lies her freedom.<sup>340</sup>

The 19<sup>th</sup>-century family was composed along traditional patriarchal lines.<sup>341</sup> The patriarchy was bolstered and strengthened by a social structure wherein ladies had minimal plain political or financial power, wherein they were financially, socially, and psychologically reliant on men and particularly on the institutions of marriage and

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<sup>335</sup> Karen- Margrethe Simonsen., *Law and Justice in Literature, Film and Theater*, BerlinBoston, DE De Gruyter, 2013, p. 106.

<sup>336</sup> Joan Templeton, “Criticism, Feminism and Ibsen”, *Modern Language Association, PMLA*, Vol: 104, No. 1 (Jan., 1989), pp. 28-40.

<sup>337</sup> Dr. Senem Üstün Kaya, “Correlation between symbols and themes in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*”, *International Journal of English Language, Literature and Humanities(IJELLH)*, Volume III, Issue VIII, October 2015, pp. 18-25.

<sup>338</sup> Yang Lianfen, “The Absence of Gender in May Fourth Narratives of Woman's Emancipation: A Case Study On Hu Shi's *The Greatest Event in Life*”, *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 12, 1 (June 2010), pp. 6-13.

<sup>339</sup> Ibsen, *From Ibsen's Workshop*, 1878, p. 91.

<sup>340</sup> George Bernard Shaw, *The Quintessence of Ibsenism*, London: Walter Scott 24 Warwick Lane, 1891 , p. 43

<sup>341</sup> Ibsen, *From Ibsen's Workshop*, 1878, p. 91.

parenthood.<sup>342</sup> The perfect of middle-class respectability won in the nineteenth century; however, it never went unchallenged, and when Ibsen composed his own challenge to it towards the end of the century, new era of crisis and uncertainty with respect to all things conventional had already started.<sup>343</sup>

Shaw mentioned the ideal of marriage that "In the famous *Doll's House*, the pillar of society who owns the doll is a model husband, father, and citizen. In his little household, with the three darling children and the affectionate little wife, all on most loving terms with one another, we have the sweet home, the womanly woman, and the happy family life of the idealist's dream."<sup>344</sup>

Susan C. W. Abbotson in her book named *Thematic Guide to Modern Drama* generally clarified that *A Doll's House* depicted of a lady attempting to break free of the prohibitive, paternalistic relationship she came to remember she had with her spouse.<sup>345</sup> By all accounts, in 1879 Nora's revolt had been viewed as absolute indecent in terms of exemplifying that a lady might leave both her spouse and her youngsters.<sup>346</sup> Ibsen blasted that period's traditional beliefs of the "little woman" and the "angel in the house", by demonstrating Torvald's romanticized marriage to be a vacant dream.<sup>347</sup> Nora's leaving to seek after self-satisfaction tested society's belief of the sacredness of marriage.<sup>348</sup> The way that the law really had precluded a lady from getting cash without a male relative's agree was imperative to perceive.<sup>349</sup> She added that Nora lived in a patriarchal society that would not be anything but difficult to battle alone.<sup>350</sup> She also explained that leaving at the end was an amazingly challenge for Nora.<sup>351</sup>

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<sup>342</sup> "Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*", *UK Touring Theatre*, Education Pack, Autumn Tour 2014, p. 15. (<https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/events/files>)

<sup>343</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 15.

<sup>344</sup> George Bernard Shaw, *The Quintessence Of Ibsenism*, 1891, p. 43

<sup>345</sup> Susan C. W., Abbotson, *Thematic Guide to Modern Drama*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2003, pp. 259-260.

<sup>346</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>347</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>348</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>349</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>350</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

<sup>351</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 259-260.

*A Doll's House* deals with the process in the marriage of Nora and Torvald Helmer, from the ordinary Norwegian family headed by the protective male to the new lady that Nora ends up being the point at which she abandons her family in order to look for her own personality.<sup>352</sup>

Nora and Torvald's relationship, on the outside, looks as if a bed of roses.<sup>353</sup> Torvald evaluates Nora's position as a subservient and loving spouse at home.<sup>354</sup> As to Torvald, she is just an ownership, a doll of his own decision.<sup>355</sup> According to John H. Dietrich, "His wife must be his toy, his utter slave, pander to all his whims, live only for him, think only what he thinks, believe only what he believes."<sup>356</sup> John H. Dietrich added that:

...she has no individuality apart from her husband, having been accustomed, both in her father's house and in her own to regard the man as the responsible party. She does not even ask to be herself; she has the unlimited instinct for self-sacrifice. She does not attempt an individual life. Her will, her very conscience, are in her husband's keeping. She looks like a woman, but she acts like a child, she thinks like a child, she is content to be treated like a child; she is the doll-wife of a strong man who she feels would protect her life and sacred honor to the last drop of his blood. She has been trained to flatter her husband by her devotion, and she considers him always before herself.<sup>357</sup>

Torvald calls Nora by pet-names and talks down to her since he imagines that she is not sufficiently wise and that she cannot think all alone literately and adultly.<sup>358</sup> Namely, he presents her with pet names (such as lark, squirrel...etc) that frequently start with the personal pronoun "my"<sup>359</sup> and his speeches regularly contain the diminutive words "little"<sup>360</sup>

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<sup>352</sup> Silvia Pellicer Ortín, "A Doll's House: a Victorian or a Present-day Toy?" *Odisea*, no: 10, 2009, pp. 131-141.

<sup>353</sup> Azmi Azam, "Hester Prynne and Nora Helmer: Two extraordinary women representatives in English Literature", *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Volume 19, Issue 4, Ver. I (Apr. 2014), pp. 94-97.

<sup>354</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94-97.

<sup>355</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 94-97.

<sup>356</sup> John H. Dietrich, "A Doll's House: Shall Women Be Free?" First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, *The Humanist Pulpit*, Series XII. No: 4, 1928, p. 52.

<sup>357</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 53.

<sup>358</sup> Azmi Azam, "Hester Prynne and Nora Helmer: Two extraordinary women representatives in English Literature", *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Volume 19, Issue 4, Ver. I (Apr. 2014), pp. 94-97.

<sup>359</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. I, pp. 11-12.

<sup>360</sup> *Ibid.*, Act. I, pp. 11-12.

**HELMER** (calls out from his room): Is that my little lark twittering out there?  
**NORA** (busy opening some of the parcels): Yes, it is!  
**HELMER**: Is it my little squirrel bustling about?  
**NORA**: Yes!  
**HELMER**: When did my squirrel come home?<sup>361</sup>

Joan Templeton mentioned that “Ibsen uses Torvald's famous pet names for Nora “lark, squirrel” to give her a "strong animal identity" and to underscore her inability to understand the ethical issues faced by human being.”<sup>362</sup>

**HELMER**: Not even taken a bite at a macaroon or two?  
**NORA**: No, Torvald, I assure you really—  
**HELMER**: There, there, of course I was only joking.  
**NORA**: (going to the table on the right) I should not think of going against your wishes.<sup>363</sup>

By complying with her husband desires about her not eating sweets and macaroon, she obeys his rules.<sup>364</sup> Namely, as stated by John H. Dietrich, “The interests of the man whom she loves dominates all else”.<sup>365</sup> Furthermore, when Torvald addresses Nora, he puts down her by always teasing not to have any responsibility with money.<sup>366</sup>

**HELMER**: Don't interrupt me. [A little later he opens the door and looks in, pen in hand.] Buying, did you say? What! All that? Has my little spendthrift been making the money fly again?<sup>367</sup>

As usual, Torvald uses the expressions which he tried to take Nora under his control. He tries to interfere in everything she did. He denied Nora the privilege to think and act what she wants.<sup>368</sup> As understood from his expressions, she cannot decide how much she will spend or whether she can spend her money or not. So she cannot decide

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<sup>361</sup> Ibid., Act. I, pp. 11-12.

<sup>362</sup> Joan Templeton, “Criticism, Feminism, and Ibsen” *Modern Language Association PMLA*, Vol. 104, No. 1 (Jan., 1989), pp. 28-40

<sup>363</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. I, pp. 21-22.

<sup>364</sup> John H. Dietrich, “*A Doll's House: Shall Women Be Free?*” First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, *The Humanist Pulpit*, Series XII. NO: 4, 1928, p. 52.

<sup>365</sup> Ibid., p. 52.

<sup>366</sup> Gale Cengage, “*A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen*”, eNotes, Copyright Notice©2002, p. 7.

<sup>367</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. I, p. 12.

<sup>368</sup> Azmi Azam, “Hester Prynne and Nora Helmer: Two extraordinary women representatives in English Literature”, *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Volume 19, Issue 4, Ver. I (Apr. 2014), pp. 94-97.

about anything in her life on her own.<sup>369</sup> He demanded the rightness of his perspective in all matters.<sup>370</sup>

**HELMER:** What are little people called that are always wasting money?

**NORA:** Spendthrifts—I know. Let us do as you suggest, Torvald, and then I shall have time to think what I am most in want of. That is a very sensible plan, isn't it?

**HELMER:** (smiling) Indeed it is—that is to say, if you spend it all on the housekeeping and any number of unnecessary things, then I merely have to pay up again.

**NORA:** Oh but, Torvald--371

In other words, As Brajne Markussen stated, the dollhouse represents a typical bourgeois marriage in the nineteenth period.<sup>372</sup> In those times, the wife did not have the legal status of financial issues and the husband had a protective role.<sup>373</sup> In the play the conversations between Nora and Helmer above and below highlighted that Nora could not do anything or spend money without Hermer's permission.<sup>374</sup>

**HELMER:** You can't deny it, my dear little Nora. (*Puts his arm round her waist.*) It's a sweet little spendthrift, but she uses up a deal of money. One would hardly believe how expensive such little persons are!<sup>375</sup>

In all time, he would like to decide about his family, wife and his children. His speeches include patriarchy dominance because he always obliges to her to do or not to do things about their life, so all decisions belong to Torvald.<sup>376</sup>

**HELMER:** Yes, but you must. Tell me something reasonable that you would particularly like to have.<sup>377</sup>

As it is evident from the expressions which he uses in the text, the dialogue between Nora and Torvald is characteristic of a relationship taking into account force

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<sup>369</sup> Ibid., pp. 94-97.

<sup>370</sup> Ibid., pp. 94-97.

<sup>371</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. I, p. 18.

<sup>372</sup> Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, ed. *Law and Justice in Literature, Film and Theater*, Berlin Boston, DE De Gruyter, 2013, pp. 105-106.

<sup>373</sup> Ibid., pp. 105-106.

<sup>374</sup> Ibid., pp. 105-106.

<sup>375</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. I, p. 19.

<sup>376</sup> Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, ed. *Law and Justice in Literature, Film and Theater*, Berlin Boston, DE De Gruyter, 2013, p. 106.

<sup>377</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. I, p. 17.

and mistreatment that proceeds all through the work.<sup>378</sup>To Torvald, Nora is similar to a pet that ought to comply with his guidelines. The dialogue is not taking into account an equivalent organization, but instead is a sample of a patriarch endeavouring to make his wife comply with his optimal of what a wife ought to be.<sup>379</sup> All of these expressions used by Torvald below are the examples of his repressive attitude. These are;

**HELMER:** Don't disturb me. (A little later, he opens the door and looks into the room, pen in hand.) Bought, did you say? All these things? Has my little spendthrift been wasting money again?<sup>380</sup>

**NORA:** No, I really can't think of anything—unless, Torvald...<sup>381</sup>

**HELMER:** You can't deny it, my dear little Nora. (Puts his arm round her waist) It's a sweet little spendthrift, but she uses up a deal of money. One would hardly believe how expensive such little persons are!<sup>382</sup>

**NORA:** (going to the table on the right) I should not think of going against your wishes.<sup>383</sup>

**NORA:** ...how painful and humiliating it would be for Torvald [...] to know that he owed me anything! It would upset our mutual relations altogether...<sup>384</sup>

As it is understood, The Helmers' marriage is in view of keeping up a veneer of male dominance.<sup>385</sup>“Helmer is clearly depicted as the spokesman for the bourgeois values. He strongly believes in woman's vocation as wife and mother.”<sup>386</sup> Therefore, Nora is “a victim of the male chauvinist society.”<sup>387</sup>

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<sup>378</sup> Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, ed. *Law and Justice in Literature, Film and Theater*, Berlin Boston, DE De Gruyter, 2013, p. 106.

<sup>379</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 108.

<sup>380</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. I, p. 12.

<sup>381</sup> *Ibid.*, Act. I, p. 17.

<sup>382</sup> *Ibid.*, Act. I, p. 19.

<sup>383</sup> *Ibid.*, Act. I, p. 22.

<sup>384</sup> *Ibid.*, Act. I, p. 48.

<sup>385</sup> Azmi Azam, “Hester Prynne and Nora Helmer: Two extraordinary women representatives in English Literature”, *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Volume 19, Issue 4, Ver. I (Apr. 2014), pp. 94-97.

<sup>386</sup> Hanna Katarzyna Zmewska-Emerson, “The Construction of Social Imagery in *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll House* and *Ghosts*: A Study of the Roots of Ibsen's Modernity”, *University of Minnesota*, 1996, p. 111.

<sup>387</sup> Azmi Azam, “Hester Prynne and Nora Helmer: Two extraordinary women representatives in English Literature”, *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Volume 19, Issue 4, Ver. I (Apr. 2014), pp. 94-97.

**NORA:** Christine is [...] is frightfully anxious to work under some clever man, so as to perfect herself--<sup>388</sup>

Hanna Katarzyna Zmewska-Emerson expressed his opinion that “Helmer functions as a teacher of values and rules of conduct, telling Nora what is right and what is wrong...”<sup>389</sup> Related to the structure of family in nineteenth-century society, he emphasizes that “Helmer acts as a decision maker and apart from her use of money on sweets, no major decisions are made by Nora herself. The choice of furniture and household ornaments expresses his aesthetic taste, which is willingly adopted by his young wife. Even if Nora sneaks behind his back to buy macaroons or save some of the household money by buying her cheaper clothes, it is clear that Helmer functions as the head of the family and all decisions are his alone. Naturally enough, Helmer is the financial provider. The amount of the daily allowance given to Nora is set according to his judgment, just as in any other middle-class household.”<sup>390</sup>

Besides, Nora's association with her spouse is all in all based on watchful control of his personality. That's why; she has never any right about her own life such as choices, decisions and freedom before or after her marriage.<sup>391</sup>

**NORA:** I don't believe it. Is a daughter not to be allowed to spare her dying father anxiety and care? Is a wife not to be allowed to save her husband's life? I don't know much about law; but I am certain that there must be laws permitting such things as that. Have you no knowledge of such laws— you who are a lawyer? You must be a very poor lawyer, Mr. Krogstad.<sup>392</sup>

The conversation between Krogstad and Nora involves in the conflicts between the law of the community and Nora's sense of her ethical obligations as a wife and daughter, instead of as an individual.<sup>393</sup> “According to Hegel, the family is not a collection of individuals, but a kind of organic unit.”<sup>394</sup> That's why, in a family any

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<sup>388</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014, Act. I, p. 65.

<sup>389</sup> Hanna Katarzyna Zmewska-Emerson, “The Construction of Social Imagery in Pillars of Society, A Doll House and Ghosts: A Study of The Roots of Ibsen's Modernity”, *University of Minnesota*, 1996, p. 111.

<sup>390</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 111.

<sup>391</sup> Azmi Azam, “Hester Prynne and Nora Helmer: Two extraordinary women representatives in English Literature”, *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Volume 19, Issue 4, Ver. I (Apr. 2014), pp. 94-97.

<sup>392</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014, Act. I, p. 89.

<sup>393</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 244-247.

<sup>394</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 244-247.

woman cannot behave or think individually; in contrast “any woman can be Mrs. Torvald Helmer, but only Nora is Nora.”<sup>395</sup> In this conversation above, “Nora is the perfect incarnation of the Hegelian woman.”<sup>396</sup> But in the last act, all this has changed and she ends the sense of Hegelian woman by preferring individuality.<sup>397</sup>

A first blush, Helmers’ marriage is seen as a successful marriage, yet it is just the other side of the coin. Regardless of the level, deceitfulness is steady in the relationship.<sup>398</sup> The reason for the significant gap between reality and appearance, truth and deceitfulness is that the characters are making no attempt to pick up the trust and endorsement of others specifically and the public generally.<sup>399</sup> Nora lies about the credit, shrouds her own quality and even lies about insignificant matters.<sup>400</sup> “Their marriage is fake and mutually beneficial because of their social status”.<sup>401</sup> On the basis, as stated by Brajne Markussen, it is understood that they have no happy marriage:<sup>402</sup>

**NORA:** ...But don't you think it is nice of me, too, to do as you wish?

**HELMER:** Nice?--because you do as your husband wishes? Well, well, you little rogue, I am sure you did not mean it in that way...<sup>403</sup>

As understood from Nora’s most expressions, she was unhappy at her marriage. As mentioned by B. Markussen, the reason that she was in a negative feeling about her marriage is not to decide on her own about her life, to be free and to have her own living area; that is to say, to be not “an independent human being”.<sup>404</sup>

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<sup>395</sup> Ibid., pp. 244-247.

<sup>396</sup> Ibid., pp. 244-247.

<sup>397</sup> Ibid., pp. 244-247.

<sup>398</sup> Noorbakhsh Hooti, Pouria Torkamaneh, “Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*: A Postmodernist Study”, Academy Publisher, *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, Vol. 1, No. 9, pp. 1103-1110, September 2011, p. 1108.

<sup>399</sup> Ibid., p. 1108.

<sup>400</sup> Ibid., p. 1108.

<sup>401</sup> Azmi Azam, “Hester Prynne and Nora Helmer: Two extraordinary women representatives in English Literature”, *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*, Volume 19, Issue 4, Ver. I (Apr. 2014), pp. 94-97.

<sup>402</sup> Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, ed. *Law and Justice in Literature, Film and Theater*. BerlinBoston, DE De Gruyter, 2013, pp. 105-106.

<sup>403</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll’s House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. II, p. 120.

<sup>404</sup> Karen- Margrethe Simonsen, ed. *Law and Justice in Literature, Film and Theater*, BerlinBoston, DE De Gruyter, 2013, pp. 105-106.



On the other hand, as the play develops, Nora shows her humanity in opposition to her dollness by her dance, tarantella.<sup>405</sup> Her dance is a graphic representation of a woman's struggle to make her existence heard, to make it count.<sup>406</sup> While she is dancing the tarantella, her body figures her soul.<sup>407</sup> At the point, Ibsen asks his audience to make sense of her dance not only as "a genuine expression of the human soul" but also as "a Nora's suffering"<sup>408</sup>

**TORVALD:** Nora, darling, you're dancing as if your life depended on it!<sup>409</sup>

At the point Ibsen ask his audience to make sense of her dance not only as "a genuine expression of the human soul" but also as "a Nora's suffering"<sup>410</sup>

**NORA:** How should you understand it? A wonderful thing is going to happen!<sup>411</sup>

As Abbotson commented on Nora's realities, Nora speaks these prophetic-sounding words to Mrs. Linde toward the end of Act Two as she tells her about what will happen when Torvald learns Nora's secret loan and forgery in Krogstad's letter.<sup>412</sup> The meaning of Nora's statement does not come out as far as Nora reveals the nature of the wonderful thing that she anticipates.<sup>413</sup> When Torvald eventually indicates that he will not shoulder the blame for Nora, Nora's faith is shattered.<sup>414</sup> Once the illusion of Torvald's nobility is crushed, Nora's other illusions about her married life are crushed as well, and her disappointment with Torvald triggers her awakening.<sup>415</sup> Abbotson commented on Nora's awakening as follows:

Torvald's image of Nora is romantic fantasy: no human being could really be like that. Nora finally learns to reject Torvald's "doll-like" image of her, as she

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<sup>405</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 236-242.

<sup>406</sup> Ibid., pp. 236-242.

<sup>407</sup> Ibid., pp. 236-242.

<sup>408</sup> Ibid., pp. 236-242.

<sup>409</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. II, p. 173.

<sup>410</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, pp. 236-242.

<sup>411</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. II, p. 165.

<sup>412</sup> Susan C. W, Abbotson, *Thematic Guide to Modern Drama*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2003, p. 262.

<sup>413</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>414</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>415</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

comes to realize that this is the only way she can reclaim her humanity. Torvald helps her reach this decision by his reaction to her dealings with Krogstad: he completely condemns her, does not take into account her altruistic motives, and only considers how *he* will be affected. Nora realizes that she, too, has been the victim of a romantic dream—having expected her husband to stand by her and even nobly take the blame. She now realizes that such “a wonderful thing” is only fantasy (66). She needs to enter the real world so she can discover how it operates and forge an identity for herself. She admits her own fault in having allowed first her father and then Torvald to use her as a plaything, but feels theirs is the greater fault for expecting her to fulfill such a role and for not allowing her to be any more than that. Torvald does offer to change, but she rightly believes that that can only happen if she leaves.<sup>416</sup>

Some critics argued that “her forgery to obtain the money to save her husband's life proves her irresponsibility and egotism.”<sup>417</sup> Whereas, Simonds clarified the situation and said the exact opposite;

How strange it is that so many of critics fail to see that Nora's act is not selfishness after all! There is promise of a splendid womanliness in that “emancipated individuality” that Ibsen's enemies are ridiculing. There will be an ideal home after the mutual chastening is accomplished: an ideal home- not ideal people necessarily, but a home, a family, where there is a complete community, a perfect love.<sup>418</sup>

Finally, in the second act of the play, Ibsen starts to make feel to his audience a woman' awakening against the Norwegian society and her status of that society.

The last act represents Nora's self-consciousness.<sup>419</sup> Nora was a standout amongst the most complex characters of nineteenth-century dramatization, putting a brave face on her marriage in the first act, getting desperate in the second, and coming up against reality throughout the last act of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.<sup>420</sup>

**MRS. LINDE:** I want to be a mother to someone, and your children need a mother. We two need each other. Nils, I have faith in your real character--I can dare anything together with you.<sup>421</sup>

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<sup>416</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>417</sup> Joan Templeton, “Criticism, Feminism, and Ibsen”, *Modern Language Association, PMLA*, Vol. 104, No: 1 (Jan., 1989), pp. 28-40.

<sup>418</sup> Egan, Michael, ed. *Henrik Ibsen (1)*. London, US: Routledge, 2013, p. 147.

<sup>419</sup> Fatma Rosita, Dra. Indrawati, M.Hum, “Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*: Woman's Figure Representation in the Victorian Era”, *Rainbow: Journal of Literature, Linguistics and Cultural Studies*, 4 (1) (2015), pp. 44-57.

<sup>420</sup> Ibid., pp. 44-57.

<sup>421</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. III, p. 189.

Mrs. Linde can be seen as a mirror for Nora. Thus, she might be the pioneer Nora must figure out how to take after.<sup>422</sup> Abbotson acknowledges about the real relationships that “In an interesting gender reversal, Mrs. Linde proposes to Krogstad, as she persuades him that they need each other equally—and we cannot fault the honesty of this assertion. Indeed, they exhibit the qualities on which a true marriage should be based: mutual honesty and respect rather than concealment and falsehood.”<sup>423</sup> To the ending of the play, it appears that Christine and Krogstad will have the marriage of mutual responsibility that the Helmers are not able to succeed.

**HELMER:** ...Do you know, Nora, I have often wished that you might be threatened by some great danger, so that I might risk my life's blood, and everything, for your sake.<sup>424</sup>

Moi's statement about the disintegration of the marriage is that “By showing us their theatrical marriage, Ibsen did not mean to turn these two decent people into villains, but to make us think about the way we theatricalise ourselves and others in everyday life.”<sup>425</sup>

**NORA:** ...I have existed merely to perform tricks for you, Torvald. But you would have it so. You and papa have committed a great sin against me. It is your fault that I have made nothing of my life.<sup>426</sup>

Nora's expressions above show clearly that she has questioned about her marriage, Torvald's character, and her life toward the end of Act Three. As mentioned by Bjarne Morkussen, after the final argument between Nora and Torvald, she has been aware of the fact that “he is not the man she thought he was, and that their life together has been inauthentic one. She was supposed to be his ‘little skylark,’ not an independent human being.”<sup>427</sup> Nora states that she has not been happy, but merry;

**NORA:** No; only merry. And you have always been so kind to me. But our house has been nothing but a play-room. Here I have been your doll-

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<sup>422</sup> Susan C. W. Abbotson, *Thematic Guide to Modern Drama*, Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2003, pp. 261-262.

<sup>423</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 261-262.

<sup>424</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. III, p. 216.

<sup>425</sup> Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and The Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy*, Oxford University Press, 2006, p. 234.

<sup>426</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. III, p. 235.

<sup>427</sup> Karen- Margrethe Simonsen, *Law and Justice in Literature, Film and Theater*, Berlin/Boston, DE: De Gruyter, 2013, p. 105.

wife, just as at home I used to be papa's doll-child. And the children, in their turn, have been my dolls. I thought it fun when you played with me, just as the children did when I played with them. That has been our marriage, Torvald.<sup>428</sup>

On the ground that the play is realistic, the playwright, Ibsen uses every object which is symbolic or serves a particular purpose. All the symbols used by Henrik Ibsen below are:

**Symbols;**

Black hat and black cross - symbolize death

Fisher girl costume - symbolizes Nora's pretending to enjoy her life.

Italy - symbolizes the good false image of Nora's life.

Norway - symbolizes reality.

Doll House - symbolizes the tendency of the characters to play roles.

Toys - symbolizes the act of pushing the roles onto Nora's children.

Macaroons - symbolizes Nora's deceit to her husband.

Tarantella - symbolizes Nora's agitation at her struggle with Krogstad and with her husband.

Christmas tree - symbolizes the mood of the play.

Stockings - symbolizes Nora's attitude trying to please men and her flirting with Rank.

Letter box and letter - symbolize a trap for Nora and the cause of her demise.

Embroidery - symbolizes the stereotypes pressed on a woman.

Ring - symbolizes the marriage and the end of it.

Skylark - symbolizes the way that Torvald treats Nora like a child.<sup>429</sup>

At the point when Nora is struck by her significant other's mercilessness and narrow-mindedness and she makes up her mind to give up risking her own particular life to secure his notoriety, her self-consciousness changes from a profoundly implanted affection into a certification of the presence of her own self-image.<sup>430</sup>

**NORA:** That problem is beyond me. There is another to be solved first – I must try to educate myself. You are not the man to help me in that. I must set about it alone. And that is why I am leaving you.<sup>431</sup>

Nora's individualistic defiance stems from self-consciousness incited by her gender position- men's authoritative power upon women.<sup>432</sup> Yang Lianfen emphasizes

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<sup>428</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014, Act III, p. 233.

<sup>429</sup> "A Doll's House Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906)", Web.07.Jun.2015,

(<http://summarycentral.tripod.com/adollshouse.htm>)

<sup>430</sup>Yang Lianfen, "The Absence of Gender in May Fourth Narratives of Woman's Emancipation: A Case Study on Hu Shi's The Greatest Event in Life", *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 12, 1 (June 2010), pp. 6-13.

<sup>431</sup> Ibid.. pp. 6-13.

<sup>432</sup> Ibid.. pp. 6-13.

that “at the time, Nora was considered to be an iconic figure standing for the dual liberating forces of individualism and woman’s emancipation.”<sup>433</sup>

**HELMER:** It's shocking. This is how you would neglect your most sacred duties.

**NORA:** What do you consider my most sacred duties?

**HELMER:** Do I need to tell you that? Are they not your duties to your husband and your children?

**NORA:** I have other duties just as sacred. Helmer. That you have not. What duties could those be?

**NORA:** Duties to myself.

**HELMER:** Before all else, you are a wife and a mother.

**NORA:** I don't believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you are-- or, at all events, that I must try and become one. I know quite well, Torvald, that most people would think you right, and that views of that kind are to be found in books; but I can no longer content myself with what most people say, or with what is found in books. I must think over things for myself and get to understand them.<sup>434</sup>

This conversation including especially Nora’s expressions above is highlighted in Yang Lianfen’s essay.<sup>435</sup> It shows Nora's self-awareness in rejecting to loyalty to patriarchy as well as her struggle with customary ideas and social standards through independent qualities<sup>436</sup>Nora's revelation of her humanity is acknowledged by means of reflection on her gender position.<sup>437</sup>The hegemonic power Ibsen emphasized eradicates the illusion of adoration and flashes her anger against hierarchical patriarchy.<sup>438</sup>As John H. Dietrich stated;

In *A Doll's House* Ibsen first stated with clear voice the right of the woman to her individuality— the woman’s right as much as the man’s to freedom and truth— that woman has a duty to be an independent human being—not merely a wife and mother.<sup>439</sup>

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<sup>433</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-13.

<sup>434</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. III, pp. 240-241.

<sup>435</sup> Yang Lianfen, “The Absence of Gender in May Fourth Narratives of Woman’s Emancipation: A Case Study on Hu Shi’s *The Greatest Event in Life*”, *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 12, 1 (June 2010), pp. 6-13.

<sup>436</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-13.

<sup>437</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-13.

<sup>438</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-13.

<sup>439</sup> John H. Dietrich, “*A Doll's House: Shall Women Be Free?*” First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, *the Humanist Pulpit Series*, XII, No: 4, 1928, p. 50.

In result, it causes to Nora's rebellion.<sup>440</sup>The enlivening of Nora's self-awareness of her gender position co-occurs with the awakening of her individuality.<sup>441</sup>In the pamphlet delivered by John H. Dietrich, the explanation about the woman's status and Nora in society is that;

Here he tells us that the independence of die individual is everything— in marriage as well as in the other relations of life. And so the woman in this play— Nora Helmer— awakes to the fact that duty to husband and to children is not the most sacred duty— the most sacred duty is to herself. Thus in solitary grandeur she sets herself against society. Again we have the typical isolation—the inevitable struggle against the tyranny of society.<sup>442</sup>

In return for her husband's assertion that woman's holiest duty is her duty towards her husband and children, Nora alleges that the holiest duty is "my duty towards myself"<sup>443</sup>and "I believe that before all else I am a human being"<sup>444</sup> Susan C. W. Abbotson in her book named *Thematic Guide to Modern Drama* clearly mentions that:

Nora's marriage has no pretense of equality; Torvald simply cannot envisage such a relationship. He selfishly runs their lives according to his own whims and does not feel it necessary to consider his wife's feelings. Nora is aware that their marriage is based on appearances and realizes that she may need something to keep Torvald's interest once her looks have faded. What Ibsen is telling us is that a true marriage needs a deeper bond than Torvald and Nora have managed to create. Nora has invested a great deal in her marriage, far more than Torvald realizes, but she has invested unwisely and will be forced to recognize this sad fact.<sup>445</sup>

In conclusion, Nora is a person "who dares to stand against the patriarchy dominance of the society and even of the domestic life."<sup>446</sup> In other words, Ibsen provides an insight into that period's social problems such as gender inequality,

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<sup>440</sup> Yang Lianfen, "The Absence of Gender in May Fourth Narratives of Woman's Emancipation: A Case Study on Hu Shi's *The Greatest Event in Life*", *New Zealand Journal of Asian Studies* 12, 1 (June 2010), pp. 6-13. id., pp. 6-13.

<sup>441</sup> Ibid., pp. 6-13.

<sup>442</sup> John H. Dietrich, "A Doll's House: Shall Women Be Free?" First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, *The Humanist Pulpit*, Series XII. No: 4, 1928, p. 50.

<sup>443</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *Doll's House*, New York, NY, USA: Sheba Blake Publishing, 2014. Act. III, pp. 240-241.

<sup>444</sup> Ibid., Act. III, pp. 240-241.

<sup>445</sup> Susan C. W. Abbotson, *Thematic Guide to Modern Drama*. Westport, Conn: Greenwood Press, 2003, p. 261.

<sup>446</sup> Azmi Azam, "Hester Prynne and Nora Helmer: Two extraordinary women representatives in English Literature", *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* Volume 19, Issue 4, Ver. I (Apr. 2014), pp. 94-97.

hierarchical patriarchy and women's status.<sup>447</sup> Thanks to his drama, Ibsen reveals "how the institution of marriage may result in spiritual slavery to false ideals and conventions, and in hypocrisies and insincerities which stunt and deaden the soul."<sup>448</sup>

### 3.2. Reading Marriage in *A Marriage Proposal*

When we have a look at the word meanings of Realism, we can come across lots of meanings dealing with every field. In the nineteenth century, Realism is the whole shoot of the developments in all fields in the world. According to *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, realism is regarded as "naturalism, implying a desire to depict things accurately and objectively".<sup>449</sup> Realism "is applied to movement in 19th-century (particularly French) art characterized by a rebellion against the traditional historical, mythological, and religious subjects in favour of unidealized scenes of modern life."<sup>450</sup> It was a development that was created amidst the nineteenth century in France and afterward spread like out of control fire all through Europe, the distance to Russia, and afterward abroad to the US.<sup>451</sup> "Realism is a picture of life as it really is, and in life as it really is the element of grossness is only one of many elements."<sup>452</sup>

According to Abrams, Realism is a stylish mode which broke with the classical styles of art in order to show life as it seems to be.<sup>453</sup> These fields below are the most important meanings of Realism regarding with literature and theatre;

1. The rise of the Realist movement in nineteenth-century literature must be seen in the wider cultural context of nineteenth-century Europe. The intellectual climate of the progressive societies, like England or France, identified entirely with a realistic approach to the world; industrialization, the development of science, and the firmly-anchored power of the middle classes had led to the formation of a new system of beliefs and values. The emphasis which the sciences placed on empirical knowledge and observation had spread far beyond

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<sup>447</sup> Karen-Margrethe Simonsen, ed. *Law and Justice in Literature, Film and Theater*, Berlin/Boston, DE: De Gruyter, 2013, pp. 103-109.

<sup>448</sup> John H. Dietrich, "A Doll's House: Shall Women Be Free?" First Unitarian Society of Minneapolis, *The Humanist Pulpit Series*, XII. No: 4, 1928, p. 50.

<sup>449</sup> Ian Chilvers, *The Oxford Dictionary of Art*, Third Edition, Oxford University Press, 2004, p. 579.

<sup>450</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 579.

<sup>451</sup> "Literary Realism", Web.10.Nov.2015, ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary\\_realism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_realism))

<sup>452</sup> Michael Egan, ed. Henrik Ibsen (1). London, US: Routledge, 2013, p. 97.

<sup>453</sup> M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, Cornell University, 7th Edition, p. 260.

the confines of the laboratory. In fact, the whole world was turned into a great laboratory in which everything was to be observed with scientific precision and recorded objectively. The spirit of the times rejected interpretations based on “things as they ought to be” or as “they are thought to be”, and people wanted instead to see the “things as they really are”.<sup>454</sup>

2. Thematically, the majority of Realist texts which emerged from this world view concerned themselves with the “low” subject-matter of the ordinary, the everyday, and the unheroic. This led some critics of the genre (such as, for example, Flaubert’s prosecutors) to accuse their authors of corrupting their readers by dwelling excessively on the sordid aspects of human existence. For Realists, however, the objective representation of the socio-historical situation in which they and their contemporaries existed was seen as a means of reaching deeper truths about human life, and the use of scientific precision in the creation of this representation became a literary norm of the movement.<sup>455</sup>

As well as its developments in other fields such as art, science and philosophy, Realism shows the most important developments in two fields, literature, and theatre. Realism, as you may figure by its title, is about depicting genuine living.<sup>456</sup> Early Realists such as Frederic de Stendhal and Honoré de Balzac utilized cautious perceptions of observational reality in their endeavours in order to deliver truthful images of ordinary life.<sup>457</sup> In Paul Binnerts’ book, *Acting in Real Time* it is stated that;

Since its beginnings, theater has offered its audiences images of human reality and society. These images are based on the interpretation of that reality. What theater often gives us is not a representation of reality itself, but a representation of what we make of reality: an interpretation (in artistic terms) of an interpretation. A theatrical interpretation may be metaphorical, symbolical, allegorical, or naturalistic, but it will always be a rejection on the realities of the world, life in general, human existence, or what some philosophers call the “human condition”: a rejection of reality in the widest sense. Theater even aims to disclose what lies behind visible reality or what we take to be reality.<sup>458</sup>

Realist playwrights such as Turgenev, Chekhov, and Gorky are good at demonstrating to us how even customary lives are important. The characters in this manner delineated are ordinary to the foundation and treated with specific truth related to individual lives and personalities. Its general strategy is an endeavour to lessen

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<sup>454</sup> Soňa Šnircová, “Realism, Modernism, Postmodernism: Five Modern Literary Texts in Context”, PhD, Faculty of Arts, *Pavol Jozef Šafarik University in Košice*, 2015, p. 9.

<sup>455</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 9.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>457</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 10-11.

<sup>458</sup> Paul Binnerts, *Acting in Real Time*, University of Michigan Press, 2012, pp. 207-209



showy traditions to a base on stage.<sup>459</sup> As David Krasner expressed in his book, *History of Modern Drama* that;

The playwrights in this section valued words as synonymous with reality; they hardly hesitated to use the stage as a mirror of life, or at least aspects of life they wished to accentuate. For the dramatist here, words, content, and relationships are transparent; characters evolve, change, and grow, and their trajectory is visible, their transitions palpable, and their development, while unpredictable and even uncanny, occurs openly.<sup>460</sup>

As well as realistic playwrights represent individual against society, Anton Chekhov, the towering figure of Russian realism and the grand master in the field of Russian literature in the nineteenth century centered audience's attention upon internal rather than the external affair.<sup>461</sup> He also reflected the real life on the actual staging by "bringing both literary and theatrical aspects of his drama as close to "real life" as possible on stage."<sup>462</sup>

Chekhov also highlighted the ordinary lives of people which are full of drama and at the same time you can find something from your lives.<sup>463</sup> Harussi stated that "His dramatic technique is fully within the realm of theatre, not literature. His statements on social aspects of his time are a part of his understanding of theatre and its relation to life, not of any political standpoint."<sup>464</sup> Not only does he try to make the world that appears to be genuine but also wants to trust to us that we're observing ordinary or real life in his works.<sup>465</sup>

Class is one of the main themes in the playwrights' masterpieces. Especially realist playwrights like Chekhov focus on the middle class' real life.<sup>466</sup> "It is well

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<sup>459</sup> Yael, Harussi, "Realism in Drama: Turgenev, Chekhov, Gorky and their Summer Folk". *Ulbandus Review* 2.2, 1982, pp. 131–148.

<sup>460</sup> David Krasner, *History of Modern Drama* (1). Hoboken, GB: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, p. 169.

<sup>461</sup> Yael Harussi, "Realism in Drama: Turgenev, Chekhov, Gorky and their Summer Folk". *Ulbandus Review* 2.2, 1982, pp. 131–148.

<sup>462</sup> Yael Harussi, "Realism in Drama: Turgenev, Chekhov, Gorky and their Summer Folk". *Ulbandus Review* 2. 2, 1982, p. 139.

<sup>463</sup> Geoffrey Borny, *Interpreting Chekhov*, ANU E Press, The Australian National University, 2006, p. 65.

<sup>464</sup> Yael Harussi, "Realism in Drama: Turgenev, Chekhov, Gorky and their Summer Folk". *Ulbandus Review* 2. 2, 1982, pp. 144-145.

<sup>465</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 131–148.

<sup>466</sup> Geoffrey Borny, *Interpreting Chekhov*, ANU E Press, The Australian National University, 2006, p. 210.

known that Chekhov observed the social change that was taking place in Russia, of which the dominant feature was the emergence of the new commercial middle class...<sup>467</sup>

In theatre, Realism, being a general development in the nineteenth-century theatre from the time of 1870–1960, built up an arrangement of sensational and showy traditions with the point of bringing a more noteworthy constancy of ordinary life on stages.<sup>468</sup> The dramas put an emphasis on regular or middle class, customary discourse, and dull settings.<sup>469</sup> Anton Chekhov's play, *the Marriage Proposal* is one of the examples of realistic dramas. "In addition to the concept of acting "truly", the practical correlative to Chekhov's aim of depicting life as it really is"<sup>470</sup>, he tries to highlight the individuals' ordinary lives in his work.<sup>471</sup>

As mentioned in Geoffrey's book, Chekhov submitted himself as an artist to the traditions of realism since he trusted that literature is named as artistic when it delineates life as it seems to be.<sup>472</sup> Everything in his masterpieces such as *Uncle Vanya*, *Three Sisters*, *The Cherry Orchard* and *A Marriage Proposal* must be consistent with life. Subsequently, he could not try to demonstrate some putative idealistic future to his readers or audiences, because the present life he was delineating was a long way from idealistic.<sup>473</sup> Best case scenario, Chekhov could propose the likelihood of such an enhanced future.<sup>474</sup> Geoffrey Borny explained in his study, *Interpreting Chekhov*, that:

Chekhov's desire to employ the conventions of realism in which a supposedly 'unmediated reality' is presented on the stage in order to show his audience 'life as it is' created great difficulties for him as a dramatist. The difficulties arose because not only did he wish to convey life's surface appearance, but he also wanted each of his plays to embody a significant action. The conventions of realism enabled the first aim to be achieved, but these same conventions militated against the achievement of his second more important artistic goal. One of the central problems that face(s) any director of Chekhov is how to find the theatrical means to communicate the significant action of the plays and

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<sup>467</sup> Ibid, p. 210.

<sup>468</sup> "Literary realism", Web.10.Nov.2015, ([https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary\\_realism](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Literary_realism))

<sup>469</sup> Ibid.

<sup>470</sup> Christopher Innes, *A Sourcebook on Naturalist Theatre*, Florence, US: Routledge, 2002, p. 53.

<sup>471</sup> Ibid., p. 53.

<sup>472</sup> Geoffrey Borny, "Interpreting Chekhov", *ANU E Press*, The Australian National University, 2006, p. 28.

<sup>473</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>474</sup> Ibid., p. 28.

avoid merely presenting their trivial surface reality. We need to examine the nature of the expressive problems that arise with the adoption of the realistic dramatic form with its demand that art be literally true to life, before proceeding to show how Chekhov found ways of overcoming these problems. (A) Knowledge of Chekhov's solution to these problems provides directors of his plays with clues about how to create both significant action and trivial reality.<sup>475</sup>

Chekhov achieved to cope with a large number of problems faced by the dramatists devoted to realism.<sup>476</sup> For all intents and purposes, each character in a Chekhov play has real life stories.<sup>477</sup> Thus, points of interest of every character's lives are imparted to the group of audiences in dribs and drabs.<sup>478</sup> In this sense, "disguised soliloquy", the characters find themselves in that they feel the need to express their innermost thoughts, were used in Chekhov's realistic plays.<sup>479</sup> In the play characters talk about their life in front of a group of audiences and at the same time, the existence of an inner life occurs like the other realist plays.<sup>480</sup>

As the other Chekhov's plays, *A Marriage Proposal* is one of his most important realistic plays.<sup>481</sup> As is comprehended by the name, the theme of the play includes not only in marriage in the general sense but in timing and delay of the proposition, as well.<sup>482</sup> The play conveys the criticism of the Russian society in the nineteenth century to the audience with the fact of scenes and spontaneity of characters.<sup>483</sup> In *A Marriage Proposal*, Chekhov, telling about regular life, broke the sentimental thought of marriage or relationship in the middle of man and lady.<sup>484</sup> He uncovered the thought that wedded was not the most elevated motivation behind life.<sup>485</sup> He likewise clarified that affection

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<sup>475</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>476</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>477</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>478</sup> Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>479</sup> Ibid., p. 84.

<sup>480</sup> Tansu Biçer, "The Performance Process for the Role 'İvan Vasilyeviç Lomof' of the Play 'A Marriage Proposal' Written by Antone Chekov", *Progressive Acting Master's Program*, 2006, p. 6.

<sup>481</sup> Hüseyin Kaplan "Stanislavski Oyunculuk Sisteminde İllüzyon ve Anton Çehov'un "Evlenme Teklifi" Adlı Oyununda Çubukof Karakterini Oyun Üzerinden İncelenmesi ve Rol Üzerine Çalışmalar", *Advanced Acting Program*, Bahçeşehir University, İstanbul, 2009, p. 22.

<sup>482</sup> Ibid., p. iv.

<sup>483</sup> Ibid., p. iv.

<sup>484</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>485</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

was not by any means the only explanation behind individuals to get hitched as in sentimental period.<sup>486</sup>

The topic of Anton Chekhov's the play; *A Marriage Proposal* originates from the social routine of nineteenth-century Russia as financial steadiness for the upper class.<sup>487</sup> The upper-class people had to rest in the ownership of as much land as could be expected because the potential for the creation of agrarian items guaranteed fiscal benefit.<sup>488</sup> Subsequently, in this one-act farce, the topic was that financial security was more important than sentiment and love.<sup>489</sup>

It clearly stands out that Lomov is thirty-five years old and his neighbour, Natalia is twenty-five.<sup>490</sup> This fact means that Lomov's motivation is not romantic, yet rather rational.<sup>491</sup> For Lomov, marriage with Natalia is suitable for his financial situation. Laying emphasis on this idea is that Lomov is reluctant to say anything in this sentimental mood to Natalia; in contrast, his main reason for getting married to her was about that the possession of land was foremost in his mind in this one-act farce.<sup>492</sup> The character, Lomov in the Chekhov's play, *A Marriage Proposal* says;

I'll try to be brief. My dear Natalia Stepanovna, as you know, for many years, since my childhood, I have had the honor to know your family. My poor aunt and her husband, from whom, as you know, I inherited the estate, always had the greatest respect for your father and your poor mother. The Lomovs and the Tschubukovs have been for decades on the friendliest, indeed the closest, terms with each other, and furthermore my property, as you know, adjoins your own. If you will be so good as to remember, my meadows touch your birch woods.<sup>493</sup>

As he suggests his proposition of marriage, the character, Lomov talks about property quite a long time. It is understood that marriage is typical of financial contemplations and also his talk about the play strengthens the subject of marriage as a contract for financial security.

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<sup>486</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>487</sup> "What is the Theme of "The Proposal" by Anton Chekhov?," Web.17.Nov.2015, (<http://www.enotes.com>)

<sup>488</sup> Ibid.

<sup>489</sup> Ibid.

<sup>490</sup> Sharon Marie Carnicke, *Checking Out Chekhov*, Brighton, US Academic Studies Press, 2014, p. 141.

<sup>491</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>492</sup> Ibid., p. 141.

<sup>493</sup> Hilmar Baukhage - Barrett H. Clark, "*A Marriage Proposal by Anton Chekhov*", Samuel French, Canada, Inc., 1914, p. 501.

*In A Marriage Proposal* by Anton Chekov, the topic is that people do not prefer romantic marriage, because of their financial problems. In other words, marriage is not as sentimental as a few individuals accept.<sup>494</sup> The topic depends on two individuals who adore one another by battling.<sup>495</sup> Lomov and Natayla choose each other in terms of the conformability of the financial situation, marriage age and similarities of their life standards.<sup>496</sup>

Chubukov is delighted to learn that their neighbor seeks his daughter's hand. "This has been one of my fondest wishes for a long time now," he tells Lomov (trans. Carnicke, 20). Chekhov even does away with the usual financial obstacles that occur in standard vaudevilles. The match between Lomov and Natalya Stepanovna would unite two viable estates and thus create a lucrative life for both of them. In short, this is a good match. Finally, Chekhov does away with all the sentimental vagaries of love. Lomov is far from a standard leading man. At thirty-five years of age he swallows the notion of marriage as if it were a bitter tasting but efficacious medicine: "If you think about it too long, if you hesitate, if you talk too much and keep waiting for an ideal, a true love, then you'll never get married..." (trans. Carnicke, 21). He chooses his neighbor for eminently practical reasons: "Natalya Stepanovna is a wonderful housekeeper, not bad looking, educated... What more do I need?"<sup>497</sup>

That's exactly what it means that the drama emerges from these inconsistencies and their irony instead of the mistaken assumptions of a common vaudeville.<sup>498</sup> They are made for one another. The climax occurs the time on which Lomov and Natalya quit discussing in order to kiss each other and afterward come back to discuss again.<sup>499</sup> Genuinely, this couple is bound to wed despite the contradictions of their personalities and at the same time they reflect the battling part of wedded life.<sup>500</sup> Their fractious nature is inalienable. Finally, they are certainly a couple made for one another.<sup>501</sup>

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<sup>494</sup> Sharon Marie Carnicke, *Checking Out Chekhov*, Brighton, US Academic Studies Press, 2014, p. 141.

<sup>495</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>496</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 141.

<sup>497</sup> Sharon Marie Carnicke, *Checking Out Chekhov*, Brighton, US Academic Studies Press, 2014, p. 141.

<sup>498</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

<sup>499</sup> Tansu Biçer, "The Performance Process for the Role 'İvan Vasilyeviç Lomof' of the Play 'A Marriage Proposal' Written by Antone Chekov", *Progressive Acting Master's Program*, 2006, p. 5.

<sup>500</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

<sup>501</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 5.

In general, having a look at Chekhov's masterpiece, we can easily understand that Chekhov is an expert at creating comedy that is so realistic. Most likely, he has lived through the qualities of wedded life. I think that any couple aiming to wed ought to read immediately. The fact that this marriage will not be a cheerful one contains the irony and comedy within itself.

*A Marriage Proposal* was written in 1888~1889 by the prominent Russian writer, Anton Chekhov.<sup>502</sup> The play, one-act farce, was written in a realistic style.<sup>503</sup> It was about the marriage, as it was understood by its name.<sup>504</sup> The play worked on three characters. All members of characters belonged to privileged, upper-middle class known as the Russian gentry.<sup>505</sup> The characters lived in Russia in the 1890s. These were Stepan Stepanovitch Tschubukov (70 years old), a country farmer and landlord; Natalia Stepanova, Tschubukov's daughter, 25 years old; and Ivan Vassiliyitch Lomov, Tschubukov's neighbor (35 years old).<sup>506</sup> In the beginning of the play, these characters interact, talk, and fight with each other in the reception room in Tschubukov's country home in Russia.<sup>507</sup>

The plot of the play is around two companions who are neighbours, Stepan Stepanovitch Chubukov and Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov.<sup>508</sup> Stepan has a girl, Natalya Stepanovna, who is prepared for marriage.<sup>509</sup> Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov is a genuinely old man who is brimming with afflictions.<sup>510</sup> *A Marriage Proposal* is about the inclination of well-off families in order to look for other rich families, to expand their bequests by empowering relational unions that appeared well and good, and the issues

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<sup>502</sup> Hüseyin Kaplan, "Stanislavski Oyunculuk Sisteminde İllüzyon ve Anton Çehov'un "Evlenme Teklifi" Adlı Oyununda Çubukof Karakterini Oyun Üzerinden İncelenmesi ve Rol Üzerine Çalışmalar", *İleri Oyunculuk Programı*, Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, 2009, p. 22.

<sup>503</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>504</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>505</sup> "The Deep Meaning Inside 'A Marriage Proposal'", Web.21.Nov.2015, (<https://ysjung814kmla10a1.wordpress.com>)

<sup>506</sup> Hüseyin Kaplan, "Stanislavski Oyunculuk Sisteminde İllüzyon ve Anton Çehov'un "Evlenme Teklifi" Adlı Oyununda Çubukof Karakterini Oyun Üzerinden İncelenmesi ve Rol Üzerine Çalışmalar", *İleri Oyunculuk Programı*, Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, 2009, pp. 23-24

<sup>507</sup> Tansu Biçer, "The Performance Process for the Role 'İvan Vasilyeviç Lomof' of the Play 'A Marriage Proposal' Written by Antone Chekov", *Progressive Acting Master's Program*, 2006, p. 3.

<sup>508</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>509</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>510</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

that emerge in marriage.<sup>511</sup>In the play, Ivan Vassilevitch Lomov, long time well off neighbour of Stepan Stepanovitch Tschubukov, likewise affluent, has come to look for the marriage of Tschubukov's young girl, Natalya Stepanovna. Lomov and Stepanovna discuss all through the play until the end, when they get hitched, just, apparently, to contend a great many.<sup>512</sup>He needs to wed her, he in this way proposes to his companion Stepan who says that it will rely on upon his little girl consenting. He calls his girl yet rather the suitor changes story to an area question.<sup>513</sup>

Its theme was written to express that if the marriage was not carried out in time, people would be a laughing stock.<sup>514</sup>In addition to this, the marriage was not for the first aim for people in their life, because they preferred to get married in order to support their financial status.<sup>515</sup>

*In A Marriage Proposal*, Chekhov uses an ironic title. In fact, Lomov never proposes.<sup>516</sup>Tschubukov's remote behaving at first towards Lomov takes an extreme turn when he declares that he needs to wed Natalia, and even after the characters squabble, instantly after Lomov recaptures cognizance, Tschubukov quickly proceeds with the marriage.<sup>517</sup> The discussions show that the characters in the play are insignificant, and indicate not to be serious about marriage.<sup>518</sup>These elements all highlight that generally marriage was not as a matter of course sponsored by adoration or energy but rather had ulterior thought processes.<sup>519</sup>

To sum up, this drama showed up of man and society, on the grounds that in the play there are a few clashes among its characters. Moreover, The Proposal tells about marriage was a method for financial security for a great many people. In this play, the idea of marriage is being caricatured to demonstrate the genuine reason for marriage;

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<sup>511</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>512</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>513</sup> Ibid., pp. 4-5.

<sup>514</sup>Hüseyin Kaplan, "Stanislavski Oyunculuk Sisteminde İllüzyon ve Anton Çehov'un "Evlenme Teklifi" Adlı Oyununda Çubukof Karakterini Oyun Üzerinden İncelenmesi ve Rol Üzerine Çalışmalar", *İleri Oyunculuk Programı*, Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, 2009, p. 22.

<sup>515</sup> Ibid., p. 22.

<sup>516</sup> Sharon Marie Carnicke, *Checking Out Chekhov*, Brighton, US Academic Studies Press, 2014, pp. 142-143.

<sup>517</sup> Ibid., pp. 142-143.

<sup>518</sup> Ibid., pp. 142-143.

<sup>519</sup> Ibid., pp. 142-143.

materialistic gain. In the nineteenth-century people would prefer economic conformity to opposed real love.

As the name of the play implies, the main theme of Anton Chekhov's *A Marriage Proposal* stems from the importance of marriage in Russian culture in the nineteenth century. Besides that, in this one-act farce, the theme is that economic security is more important than romance and love.<sup>520</sup> Sharon Marie Carnicke explicitly expresses an opinion about their reasons for getting married below;

The first clash begins when Chubukov plays a little joke on his daughter by telling her that “a merchant’s come for his goods” (trans. Carnicke, 22). While this joke picks up Lomov’s rather mercenary view of marriage, it also sets Natalya Stepanovna up for the argument. (Illustration 10) Ignorant of Lomov’s intention to propose, she is understandably taken aback by his fancy dress and searches for a reason for his formal attire. As Lomov nervously lists all the practical reasons for their union, she seizes upon his mention of a valueless piece of land as belonging to him. Thinking the Ox Field her family’s property, she jumps to the conclusion that Lomov has come to contest its ownership. As the argument builds, Chubukov defends his daughter and Lomov turns litigious, threatening to take them to court over the land. Of course, the audience knows that if they were to marry, the argument would be entirely moot.<sup>521</sup>

In fact, the play can be accepted as a satire on upper middle class and courtship. In Chekhov’s Russia, marriage in society is the necessity in terms of their economic status.<sup>522</sup> According to Chekhov, marriage was a method for economic permanence for a great many people.<sup>523</sup> They wedded to pick up riches and belonging.<sup>524</sup> In this play, the idea of marriage is being parodied to demonstrate the genuine motivation behind marriage - materialistic pick up as opposed to real love.<sup>525</sup> The parody is passed on effectively by making a mention of the couple's stupid conversations over little

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<sup>520</sup> Ibid., pp. 142-143.

<sup>521</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

<sup>522</sup> Aliandra Antoniaci, “The Crisis of the Russian Family in the Works of Dostoevsky, Tolstoy and Chekhov”, *Russian Studies*, University of Canterbury, 2015, p. 208.

<sup>523</sup> Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>524</sup> Ibid., p. 208.

<sup>525</sup> Sharon Marie Carnicke, *Checking Out Chekhov*, Brighton, US Academic Studies Press, 2014, pp. 142-143.



things.<sup>526</sup>This play examines how wealth and property are frequently regarded more than warmth and marriage.<sup>527</sup>

The Chekhov's play consists of lots of conflicts among the couple who are ready to marry.<sup>528</sup> At the same time, most of the conversations are also full of conflicts between them.<sup>529</sup> The three characters in *The Marriage Proposal*- Chubukov, Natasha, and Lomov are introduced as a father, a daughter and suitor to the daughter.<sup>530</sup> Despite the fact that the trio meets here to examine marriage, they generally tend to wind up in an extraordinary argument about some trifling matter.<sup>531</sup>

In fact, Chekhov tries to highlight both of their wishes to marry and their struggles about that subject. They both have their own justifications about their wishes to marry. Whereas some expressions of her inform on the audience about her love of him, some of them represent that social pressure forces her hand so as to get married to the suitor whom she thought not to be equivalent.<sup>532</sup>

**NATALIA:** I'm dying! Bring him back!

**TSCHUBUKOV:** Bah! In a minute! Don't bawl! (He rushes out, center.)

**NATALIA** (groaning): What have they done to me? Bring him back! Bring him back!<sup>533</sup>

As is also understood from the conversation above, his father is too willing to get her daughter to marry with Lomov. We have also knowledge about her daughters' wishes to marry with voluntarily from her father's expressions;

**TSCHUBUKOV:** Really! A fine boy like you— and you think she won't accept on the minute? Lovesick as a cat and all that—! (He goes out, right.)<sup>534</sup>

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<sup>526</sup> Ibid., pp. 142-143.

<sup>527</sup> Ibid., pp. 142-143.

<sup>528</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>529</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>530</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>531</sup> Ibid., p. 140.

<sup>532</sup> E.A. Gamini Fonseca, "A Critique of The Proposal by Anton Chekov", Web.12.01.2016, (<https://www.academia.edu>).

<sup>533</sup> Hilmer Baukhage -Barrett H. Clark, *A Marriage Proposal Drama by Anton Chekhov*, Samuel French, 1942, p. 268.

<sup>534</sup> Ibid., p. 263.

Although they have two violent arguments over dogs and the land, which shows us that they have different characters and are not suitable for getting married each other, they both would rather get married. From this point of view, the conversation below emphasizes the issues between them;

....**NATALIA**: Pardon the interruption. You said “my meadows”—but are they yours?

**LOMOV**: Yes, they belong to me.

**NATALIA**: What nonsense! The meadows belong to us—not to you!

**LOMOV**: No, to me! Now, my dear Natalia Stepanovna!

**NATALIA**: Well, that is certainly news to me. How do they belong to you?

**LOMOV**: How? I am speaking of the meadows lying between your birch woods and my brick earth.

**NATALIA**: Yes, exactly. They belong to us.

**LOMOV**: No, you are mistaken, my dear Natalia Stepanovna, they belong to me.

**NATALIA**: Try to remember exactly, Ivan Vassiliyitch. Is it so long ago that you inherited them?

**LOMOV**: Long ago! As far back as I can remember they have always belonged to us.

**NATALIA**: But that isn’t true! You’ll pardon my saying so....<sup>535</sup>

Having learned his intention of getting wedded with her, she had an argument with her suitor, Lomov, over their dog;

**LOMOV**: In my opinion it was very cheap. A wonderful dog!

**NATALIA**: Papa paid eighty-five rubles for his Otkatai, and Otkatai is much better than your Ugadi!

**LOMOV**: Really? Otkatai is better than Ugadi? What an idea! (He laughs.) Otkatai better than Ugadi!

**NATALIA**: Of course he is better. It is true Otkatai is still young; he isn’t full grown yet, but in the pack or on the leash with two or three, there is no bet (t) er than he, even—<sup>536</sup>

On the one hand the conversation between Natalia and her father below gives us some clues about not only her marriage wish or love but also women’s indicators of social oppression to get married;

**NATALIA**: Proposal for me? (falls into an armchair and groans) Bring him back! Bring him back!

**TSCHUBUKOV**: Bring whom back!

**NATALIA**: Faster, faster, I’m sinking! Bring him back! (She becomes hysterical.)

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<sup>535</sup> Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>536</sup> Ibid., p. 268.

**TSCHUBUKOV:** What is it? What's wrong with you? (his hands to his head )  
I'm cursed with bad luck! I'll shoot myself! I'll hang  
myself!<sup>537</sup>

Furthermore, in terms of the suitor's expectation to get married to Natalia, he wants to wed in order to have social and financial status versus the society. Even though he thinks he is ill both physically and psychologically, social pressure has him to get marry in terms of their properties and his family ties and other external things rather than himself.<sup>538</sup>

**LOMOV:** I'm cold. My whole body is trembling as though I was going to take my examination! But the chief thing is to settle matters! If a person meditates too much, or hesitates, or talks about it, waits for an ideal or for true love, he never gets it. Brrr! It's cold! Natalia is an excellent housekeeper, not at all bad looking, well educated—what more could I ask? I'm so excited my ears are roaring! (He drinks water.) And not to marry, that won't do! In the first place, I'm thirty-five—a critical age, you might say. In the second place, I must live a well-regulated life. I have a weak heart, continual palpitation, and I am very sensitive and always getting excited. My lips begin to tremble and the pulse in my right temple throbs terribly. But the worst of all is sleep! I hardly lie down and begin to doze before something in my left side begins to pull and tug, and something begins to hammer in my left shoulder—and in my head, too! I jump up like a madman, walk about a little, lie down again, but the moment I fall asleep I have a terrible cramp in the side. And so it is all night long! (Enter Natalia Stepanovna.)<sup>539</sup>

With the aim of Lomov's marriage, he talks about the long associate between his family and hers and the area of their properties in order to persuade her father.<sup>540</sup> This clears up that Lomov puts more confidence in his family name, his garments, his properties, and other things instead of himself.<sup>541</sup> He would prefer to talk about his properties and family bonds rather than love or adoring words which make a hit of his

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<sup>537</sup> Ibid., p. 268.

<sup>538</sup> E.A. Gamini Fonseka, "A Critique of The Proposal by Anton Chekov", Web.12.01.2016, (<https://www.academia.edu>)

<sup>539</sup> Hilmer Baukhage -Barrett H. Clark, *A Marriage Proposal Drama by Anton Chekhov*, Samuel French, 1942, p. 263.

<sup>540</sup> E.A. Gamini Fonseka, "A Critique of The Proposal by Anton Chekov", Web.12.01.2016, p.164, (<https://www.academia.edu>)

<sup>541</sup> Ibid.

partner, Natalia.<sup>542</sup> It is briefly seen that in his real world, those external things such as his family name, his clothes and his properties become more of an issue.<sup>543</sup>

**LOMOV:** It is all a matter of record, my dear Natalia Stepanovna. It is true that at one time the title to the meadows was disputed, but now everyone knows they belong to me. There is no room for discussion. Be so good as to listen: my aunt's grandmother put these meadows, free from all costs, into the hands of your father's grandfather's peasants for a certain time while they were making bricks for my grandmother. These people used the meadows free of cost for about forty years, living there as they would on their own property. Later, however, when—<sup>544</sup>

All those expressions he said below shows that they are the evidence of social pressure and also he is the victim of the public;

**LOMOV:** I'll try to be brief. My dear Natalia Stepanovna, as you know, for many years, since my childhood, I have had the honor to know your family. My poor aunt and her husband, from whom, as you know, I inherited the estate, always had the greatest respect for your father and your poor mother. The Lomovs and the Tschubukovs have been for decades on the friendliest, indeed the closest, terms with each other, and furthermore my property, as you know, adjoins your own. If you will be so good as to remember, my meadows touch your birch woods.<sup>545</sup>

As understood by his expressions above, he stated the families' acquaintances and estates instead of his real intention. His returning proposes that in spite of the fact that he is assaulted by the Chubukovs, he is still keen on wedding Natasha. This might infer that landowners dependably have a typical admiration for one another in spite of the fact that they split away at the seasons of debate. He is still in a tight corner since he cannot move far from his class, his own desire, and his wastefulness indiscretion.<sup>546</sup>

In addition to these, he brings his properties into the forefront so as to make a pitch for her getting married. Moreover, he goes into the past and realizes in truths two unique subjects, however; he does not figure out how to accomplish his point, to

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<sup>542</sup> Ibid.

<sup>543</sup> Ibid.

<sup>544</sup> Hilmer Baukhage -Barrett H. Clark, *A Marriage Proposal Drama by Anton Chekhov*, Samuel French, 1942, p. 264.

<sup>545</sup> Ibid., p. 264.

<sup>546</sup> Sharon Marie Carnicke, *Checking Out Chekhov*, Brighton, US Academic Studies Press, 2014, pp. 140-150

illustrate, proposing marriage to Natasha. In spite of his lack of education and social skills, she wants to get marry with him.<sup>547</sup>

Notwithstanding Lomov's complaints about various body pains and also his lack of self-confidence and his continuous excuse in speech, she wants to marry him. Moreover, although he is the worst personality in the surroundings, she knows that he is rich and he belongs to her own class. Chekhov in this perfect work of art splendidly demonstrates the strength of class-cognizance in the individual issues in the Russian society.<sup>548</sup>

It is clearly certain that Lomov is under the influence of society. She is around 25 years old. According to the Russian society, her age makes her life impossible to live single in the nineteenth century. Her dad thinks of her as a weight in his life. She herself might be disappointed in light of the fact that it is surprising for a lady to live so long single.<sup>549</sup>

His father expressed his similar feelings told below. He attaches the importance to the public like the other two characters, as well. He emphasizes the feelings about his daughter in his discourse below;

**TSCHUBUKOV** (interrupting): My dear, dear man. I am so happy that everything is so—everything! (embraces and kisses him) I have wanted this to happen for so long. It has been my dearest wish! (He represses a tear.) And I have always loved you, my dear fellow, as my own son! May God give you his blessings and his grace and—I always wanted it to happen. But why am I standing here like a blockhead? I am completely dumbfounded with pleasure, completely dumbfounded. My whole being—! I'll call Natalia—<sup>550</sup>

To sum up, at first, Chekhov's characters meet for a genuine reason in order to discuss the marriage that chooses the advancement of one's life as an individual from the ordinarily settled society. On the contrary, he goes ahead to discuss properties,

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<sup>547</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-150.

<sup>548</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-150.

<sup>549</sup> Hüseyin Kaplan, "Stanislavski Oyunculuk Sisteminde İllüzyon ve Anton Çehov'un "Evlenme Teklifi" Adlı Oyununda Çubukof Karakterini Oyun Üzerinden İncelenmesi ve Rol Üzerine Çalışmalar", *İleri Oyunculuk Programı*, Bahçeşehir Üniversitesi, 2009, p. 21.

<sup>550</sup> Hilmer Baukhage -Barrett H. Clark, *A Marriage Proposal Drama by Anton Chekhov*, Samuel French, 1942, p. 263.

relations, family histories, and pets, rather than proposing to wed her and examining how their marriage ought to be composed.<sup>551</sup>

The fact that individual is not powerful before the public to express themselves stems from that the individuals are suppressed by the society for the sake of values in the public; family reputation, wealth and political power... This is what Chekhov is talking about. Chekhov focuses on the strengths of the social power instead of the individuals' preferences. In view of these certainties; the play can be named as a parody of the ethics and estimations of a common area owning group in nineteenth-century Russia.<sup>552</sup>

### 3.3. Reading Marriage in *The Importance of Being Earnest*

Oscar Wilde preferred starting a new movement against realism. Its name he started was Aestheticism, “-a philosophy based in the simplistic beauty of things.”<sup>553</sup> Wilde was a leader of the Aesthetic Movement (1882).<sup>554</sup> As to Wilde, That movement admired like the other aesthetics that art is just for art's purpose.<sup>555</sup>

Wilde's innovation is clearest in his exploration of art forms that crossed generic boundaries in pursuit of a multi-sensory experience; the radical nature of his contribution to British aestheticism most apparent in his immersive ethic of the pursuit of beauty in art and life.

Aestheticism is a notoriously slippery category to define, but it is perhaps best captured as a belief that taste and the pursuit of beauty should be chief principles in not only art, but also life.<sup>556</sup>

Oscar Wilde also performed “the fantasy of a self that transcended modern divisions between public and private, outer and inner lives, body and soul.”<sup>557</sup> In addition to this, in terms of aesthetic movement, “the subjective view of beauty

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<sup>551</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-150.

<sup>552</sup> Ibid., pp. 140-150.

<sup>553</sup> Patrick Duggan, “The Conflict Between Aestheticism and Morality in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*”, *WR Journal of the CAS Writing Program*, 2008/2009, p. 60.

<sup>554</sup> Ruth Livesey, “Aestheticism”, *Oscar Wilde in Context*, Ed. Kerry Powell And Peter Raby, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 261.

<sup>555</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>556</sup> Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>557</sup> Ibid., p. 268.

becomes the primary means of judging value.”<sup>558</sup> Wilde likewise trusted that Wilde likewise trusted that art and life can be precious thanks to the pursuit of beauty.<sup>559</sup> That’s why; his first duty was to change life into art like in his masterpiece, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.<sup>560</sup> David Kasner’s comments on Wilde’s thoughts of Aestheticism that;

...with Wilde, what you see is never what you get. Every double entendre and innuendo in Wilde’s plays is illustrated and maximized; every jape implies another meaning; and every pose masks the veridical. “The first duty in life is to be as artificial as possible,” Wilde maintains; “What the second duty is no one has yet discovered.” 488 For Wilde, aesthetics is all – it is not something representative but rather the art in itself (though it is not art for art’s sake). In his plays everything relies on artifice, on what Michael Levenson calls his “witty campaign against earnestness,” and the artifice for Wilde is the “real” (or at least the real art)...<sup>561</sup>

Wilde got a handle on the basic substance of aestheticism with its scrutinizing of the limits amongst “art and life; form and content; the coterie and the mass; beauty and virtue.”<sup>562</sup> Ellis Hanson expresses that;

“Wilde’s drawing-room comedies are the ultimate theatricalization of aestheticism, especially in the formal purity of his epigrammatic style in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895), which stages a world ruled by the spirit of dandyism, in which pleasure is the chief duty and life resigns itself to imitating art.”<sup>563</sup>

As a response to prohibitive good and social rules of the Victorian Age, the Aesthetics such as Wilde, Walter Pater and James McNeill Whistler rejected morality in order to protect the value of artistic expression.<sup>564</sup> Moreover, they also contended that art had a place not in the realms of morality or rationality, but rather in a world of spirit and emotion.<sup>565</sup> As to Aesthetes, art should not be evaluated on morality; in contrast, it

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<sup>558</sup> Ibid., p. 262.

<sup>559</sup> Ibid., pp. 261-262.

<sup>560</sup> David Kasner, *History of Modern Drama (1)*, Hoboken, GB: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp. 189-192

<sup>561</sup> Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>562</sup> Livesey, “Aestheticism”, *Oscar Wilde in Context*, Ed. Kerry Powell And Peter Raby, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 261.

<sup>563</sup> Ellis Hanson, “Style at the fin de siècle: Aestheticist, Decadent, Symbolist”, *Oscar Wilde in Context*, Ed. Kerry Powell and Peter Raby, Cambridge University Press, 2013, p. 152.

<sup>564</sup> Jennifer S. Adams, “Nothing is True but Beauty: Oscar Wilde in the Aesthetic Movement”, *Masters Program in the History of Decorative Arts*, The Smithsonian Associates and the Corcoran College of Art & Design, 2009, p. 8.

<sup>565</sup> Ibid., p. 8.

just contains beauty and pleasure.<sup>566</sup> In Wilde's masterpiece, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, his character, Gwendolon, truly explains the Aesthetic Movement and says; "in matters of grave importance, style, not sincerity is the vital thing"<sup>567</sup> David Kasner's opinion about Wilde and his work is that;

"For Wilde, style is aestheticism – and every judgment of art must be measured by it; art is unmoored from reality because art is superior – no sense in copying nature, which is random and therefore "bad" art; and witticism is interjected at every opportunity. Like decorative rococo, comic flourishings, even if they fail to support plot or circumstances, are enthusiastically encouraged."<sup>568</sup>

The Victorian period, around 1830 and 1900, is viewed as one of the numerous inconsistencies.<sup>569</sup> It is simple for some to see a conflict between the boundless development of an outward appearance of respect and limitation, and the broad vicinity of numerous apparently despicable wonders.<sup>570</sup> These incorporate prostitution, child labour and having an economy based on the misdeeds of colonies through imperialism, and of the working classes.<sup>571</sup>

The Victorian Period is known as "its sham seriousness, hypocritical morality, and artificial sophistry".<sup>572</sup> Carrying on with a twofold life is a significant basic routine of the period. Oscar Wilde criticizes "the hypocrisy and snobbery of the aristocratic society of the late Victorian England."<sup>573</sup> *The Importance of Being Earnest* "produced by George Alexander at the St James's Theatre on 14 February 1895"<sup>574</sup>, portrays the Victorian upper-class life.<sup>575</sup> It concentrates on specific discrepancies such as "moral or

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<sup>566</sup> Patrick Duggan, "The Conflict Between Aestheticism and Morality in Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*", *WR Journal of the CAS Writing Program*, 2008/2009, p. 61.

<sup>567</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act III, p. 526.

<sup>568</sup> David Krasner, *History of Modern Drama (1)*, Hoboken, GB: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, p. 190.

<sup>569</sup> Lusie L. Steinbach, *Understanding the Victorians: Politics, Culture and Society in Nineteenth-Century Britain*, Routledge, 2012, p. 77.

<sup>570</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>571</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 77.

<sup>572</sup> Suchismita Hazra, "Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*: A Critique of The Victorian Society", *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2, Issue: 1, January 2013, pp. 3-4.

<sup>573</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>574</sup> Jackson Russell, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Cambridge Companion to Oscar Wilde. Ed. Peter Raby Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005, p. 161.

<sup>575</sup> Suchismita Hazra, "Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*: A Critique of The Victorian Society", *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2 | Issue: 1 | January 2013, pp. 3-4.



immoral, serious or trivial and town or country”.<sup>576</sup> So, Wilde’s play mirrors the image of Victorian society.<sup>577</sup>

In Victorian society, principles of social communication were astoundingly characterized, however in the event that anybody was equipped for remarking on the foolishness of Victorian high society, it was Oscar Wilde.<sup>578</sup> There were lots of rules for ladies and gentlemen, for dinner and courting as Wilde told in his masterpiece, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.<sup>579</sup> He worked Victorian upper-class society in that work.<sup>580</sup> Farnaz Sadaf stated in his study that “Wilde proceeds to ridicule the upheld strict beliefs and principles dear to the Victorian age in the following manner. The characters of Jack, Lady and Lord Bracknell and their course of action throughout the play challenge the very fundamental norms of noble birth and Protestant masculinity held dear by the conventional English society.”<sup>581</sup> As to Wilde, obeying the Victorian rules was a sign of class and upbringing.<sup>582</sup> Moreover, keeping up appearances was critical in Victorian high society.<sup>583</sup>

In this play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde mocks the Victorian age.<sup>584</sup> By making a joke of the Victorian beliefs, Wilde puts a humorous focus on the Victorian society all in all.<sup>585</sup> *The Importance of Being Earnest* particularly deals with twofold personalities and the topic of what is valid.<sup>586</sup> Therefore, Wilde, in this play, utilizes “the well-established Late Victorian concept of double identity as well as a

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<sup>576</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>577</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>578</sup> Sarika Priyadarshini Bose, “Women as Figures of Disorder in the Plays of Oscar Wilde”, *Faculty of Arts*, University of Birmingham, 1999, pp. 180-184.

<sup>579</sup> Ibid., pp. 180-184.

<sup>580</sup> Ibid., pp. 180-184.

<sup>581</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, “The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest”, *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, pp. 1-9.

<sup>582</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-9.

<sup>583</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-9.

<sup>584</sup> Sarika Priyadarshini Bose, “Women as Figures of Disorder in the Plays of Oscar Wilde”, *Faculty of Arts*, University of Birmingham, 1999, p. 183.

<sup>585</sup> Ibid. p. 183.

<sup>586</sup> Sara Fridell, “Dualism in Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*”, *BA Thesis*, Göteborgs University, 2014, p. 3.

dualistic theme, revealed in the language and in the strategies of lying, in order to exploit the hypocrisy of society.”<sup>587</sup>

Introducing the Wilde’s play, *The Importance of Being Earnest* Peter Raby mentions in the book: *A Reader’s Companion* (1995), “Wilde’s characters are all scriptwriters and storytellers: Chasuble’s sermons, Prism’s novel, Cecily’s and Gwendolen’s diaries, Lady Bracknell’s list of eligible young men. Jack and Algernon invent characters . . . to enable them to escape the restrictions of Victorian life and morality. . . . The dual fictions allow each bachelor to live a double life. The young women, in contrast, cannot wait to be married so that their double life can begin. . . . The play, so far from suggesting that the double life will be dispelled by marriage, suggests that it is a permanent and inescapable part of it”<sup>588</sup>

Class and society are among the main themes of the Wilde’s play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.<sup>589</sup> People in nineteenth-century England were composed into social classes.<sup>590</sup> In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde depicts the false morality of England’s high society amid the late Victorian period.<sup>591</sup> “The social structure at this time can be divided up in a class system beginning with the working class, the lower middle class, the middle class and ending with the aristocracy, the upper class.”<sup>592</sup> Therefore, Oscar Wilde pays attention to the upper-class society and their standards of judgment such as respectability, sincerity, thrift, obligation, self-change and devotion.<sup>593</sup> In Wilde’s play, Algernon expresses clearly the impact of social order, “if the lower orders don’t set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them?”<sup>594</sup>

Otto Reinert explains in his article *Satiric Strategy in The Importance of Being Earnest*, “The Bunburyist lives in a world of irresponsibility, freed from the enslavement of a hypocritical convention. He enjoys himself. But life beyond hypocrisy

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<sup>587</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>588</sup> Peter Raby, *The Importance of Being Earnest: A Reader’s Companion*. New York: Twayne, 1995, p. 89.

<sup>589</sup> Fiona Gregory, “Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*”, Insight Text Guide, 2009, p. 6.

<sup>590</sup> Yingyi Li, “The Gender Awareness of Oscar Wilde: Comparison between his Women Characters and Men Characters”, *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, Vol. 6, No. 5, pp. 1020-1025, September 2015.

<sup>591</sup> Eva Richardson, *Teaching Oscar Wilde’s The Importance of Being Earnest*, e-book, Multiple Critical Perspectives, Prestwick House Inc., p. 6.

<sup>592</sup> Lisa Bierschenk, “Alternate World: Edwin A. Abbott’s criticism on Victorian Society in his novel *Flatland*”, *Freiherr-Vom-Stein-Schule*, 2012, p. 5.

<sup>593</sup> Eva Richardson, *Teaching Oscar Wilde’s The Importance of Being Earnest*, e-book, Multiple Critical Perspectives, Prestwick House Inc., p. 6.

<sup>594</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 491.

is life in a climate of dangerous moral anarchy [. . .]”<sup>595</sup> As Reinert suggests, Wilde here presents an idea that is both integral to the development of true identity and dangerous to that of social mores.<sup>596</sup>

The existence of a high society Victorian is analyzed transcendently in association with marriage.<sup>597</sup> Victorian marriage depended on increasing economic wellbeing, riches, and property.<sup>598</sup> All through the play, clearly societal position took essential significance among all the aforementioned values.<sup>599</sup> It was very required to wed a man from the remarkable social foundation that likewise had an incredible fortune.<sup>600</sup> The significance of social foundation is stressed in the play by means of the character of Lady Bracknell transcendently.<sup>601</sup>

As mentioned Lady Bracknell in the play, any deviation from the standards such as being born poor, or being found in a handbag like Jack's situation might constrain a youngster from being matched-pair and having a good reputation in Victorian society.<sup>602</sup> In his/ her writing, *The Importance of Being Bracknell*, Yuezhou Huo states that “Lady Bracknell then chooses the other way: she decides to believe in the predictability of fortune and reputation rather than the volatile passion of youth, for at least those worldly possessions and relationships are better predictors of long-lasting marriages than reckless love.”<sup>603</sup> Yuezhou Huo also emphasizes that Lady Bracknell's task in the play is to hinder the desired outcome of marriage because of Victorian privileged people's preference of living in good conditions rather than love.<sup>604</sup> As to Yuezhou Huo, “the young ladies' concern is not about the feeling of sincere love and genuine affection, but about what love should look like only in its external form.”<sup>605</sup>

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<sup>595</sup> Otto Reinert, “Satiric Strategy in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.” *College English* 18.1 (1956) 14-18.

<sup>596</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-17.

<sup>597</sup> Lucie Hornychová, “Social Criticism in Oscar Wilde's Comedies (An Ideal Husband, The Importance of Being Earnest)”, *Bachelor Thesis*, Zlin Faculty of Humani(t)ies, Tomas Bata University, 2010, p. 35.

<sup>598</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>599</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>600</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>601</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.

<sup>602</sup> Richard Hornby, “Earnest”, *The Hudson Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (WINTER 2012), pp. 683-690.

<sup>603</sup> Yuezhou Huo, *The Importance of Being Bracknell*, *Discoveries*, ed. David Faulkner, John S. Knight Institute, Cornell University Ithaca, New York, Spring 2014, No. 12, p. 100.

<sup>604</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 97.

<sup>605</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 99.

Both Cecily and Gwendolen prefer to marry with Ernest for the sake of his name or his fame.<sup>606</sup>

According to Fiona Gregory, in the play, *The Importance of Being Earnest* Oscar Wilde represents three social classes.<sup>607</sup> Lane, Merriman and the footman have a place with the working class.<sup>608</sup> Miss Prism and Dr. Chasuble are from the genteel middle class and Jack, Algernon, Gwendolen, Lady Bracknell and Cecily belong to the upper class.<sup>609</sup>

The play belongs to “three literary genres: comedy of manners, satiric comedy and farce comedy.”<sup>610</sup> Comedy of manners, reflecting “the sophisticate code of behaviour of fashionable circles of society, where appearances count for more than true moral characters”<sup>611</sup> is represented in the play most significantly.<sup>612</sup> Another kind of comedy reflected in the play is satiric comedy, “which ridicules attitudes and political or social doctrines.”<sup>613</sup> The last genre mirrored in play is farce comedy, “in which exaggerated character-types find themselves in ludicrous situations in the course of an improbable plot, but which achieve their comic effects not by broad humour and bustling action, but by the sustained brilliance and wit of the dialogue.”<sup>614</sup> In addition, the play is also a satire because of making fun of its characters and criticizing the social classes, especially the upper or aristocracy class.<sup>615</sup> Wilde always overstates the high society's triviality in order to demonstrate their degenerate values.<sup>616</sup> Moreover, as to Russell Jackson, “it is possible to see that Wilde’s play does touch on principles of art and morals, and that it does have some relation to existing canons and conventions. Like

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<sup>606</sup> Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>607</sup> Fiona Gregory, “Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*”, *Insight Text Guide*, 2009, p. 6.

<sup>608</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>609</sup> Ibid., p. 6.

<sup>610</sup> Lucie Hornyčová, “Social Criticism in Oscar Wilde’s Comedies (*An Ideal Husband*, *The Importance of Being Earnest*)”, *Bachelor Thesis*, Zlin Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University, 2010, pp. 22-23.

<sup>611</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>612</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>613</sup> Ibid., pp. 22-23.

<sup>614</sup> Meyer Howard Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms*, Seventh Edition, Heinle & Heinle, a division of Thomson Learning Inc., 1999, p. 40.

<sup>615</sup> Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*, ed. Jackson Russell, First New Mermaid edition, Ernest Benn Ltd., 1980, p. 23.

<sup>616</sup> Katy Neal, “Oscar Wilde”, *The University of Nottingham, Innervate Leading Undergraduate Work in English Studies*, Volume 1 (2008-2009), pp. 224-229.

a soufflé, it has its ingredients."<sup>617</sup>By emphasizing on earnestness or seriousness against triviality and Victorian society values, Oscar Wilde satirizes Victorian society's valuables in a sarcastic way, such as marriage, appearance and value of love.<sup>618</sup>

As a representative for the aesthetes, who rebelled against the earnestness of Victorian ideals and delighted in ridiculing middle-class ideas, Wilde tested and stunned his audience by utilizing "sensational imagery, hyperbole, dandyism, and decadence."<sup>619</sup>The intricate and conflicting idea of being earnest is exemplified through the innovation of Jack's non-existent naughty sibling Ernest from one perspective and the real desires which Cecily and Gwendolen marry with the name Ernest then again.<sup>620</sup> Wilde utilizes the opposing implications installed as a part of the thought of being earnest/Ernest with a specific end goal to uncover the shallow, fake, and strict social norms of Victorian privileged society.<sup>621</sup>

When we focus on the gender roles in Victorian society, in the Victorian universe of this play men have more prominent impact than ladies.<sup>622</sup> In order to criticize the Victorian society, Wilde brings up intriguing issues about gender roles in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, so Mr. Wilde introduces the Victorian lady character, Lady Bracknell as "a challenge to the strict segregation of gender roles defined by the accepted social norms."<sup>623</sup> However, he demonstrates that by my means of male characters like Jack and Algernon, Wilde reasons "to ignore the important surface matters of name, appearance, and manner, and to point instead to the trivial moral matter of their both being deceivers."<sup>624</sup> To illustrate, in the play, the women character, Gwendolen gains attention for gender roles, by saying;

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<sup>617</sup> Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*, ed. Jackson Russell, First New Mermaid edition, Ernest Benn Limited, 1980, p. 8.

<sup>618</sup> Suchismita Hazra, "Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest: A Critique of The Victorian Society", *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2 | Issue: 1 | January 2013, pp. 3-4.

<sup>619</sup> Sara Fridell, "Dualism in Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest", *BA Thesis*, Göteborgs University, 2014, pp. 2-3.

<sup>620</sup> Yuezhou Huo, The Importance of Being Bracknell, *Discoveries*, ed. David Faulkner, John S. Knight Institute, Cornell University Ithaca, New York, Spring 2014, No. 12, pp. 97-102.

<sup>621</sup> Otto Reinert, "Satiric Strategy in The Importance of Being Earnest." *College English* 18.1 (1956), pp. 14-15.

<sup>622</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, "The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest", *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, pp. 1-9.

<sup>623</sup> Ibid, pp. 1-9.

<sup>624</sup> Roger Sale, "Being Earnest", *The Hudson Review*, Vol. 56, No. 3 (Autumn, 2003), pp. 475-484

"Outside the family circle, papa, I am glad to say is entirely unknown. I think that is quite as it should be. The home seems to me to be the proper sphere for a man. And certainly once a man begins to neglect his domestic duties; he becomes painfully effeminate, does he not"<sup>625</sup>

Her reaction is very common a response to the general public which is to a great degree attached to the male control.<sup>626</sup> By and large, Victorian marriage must be a convenience rather than an ideal.<sup>627</sup> Lady Bracknell's duty in the play is to hinder the attractive result of marriage.<sup>628</sup> Lady Bracknell, introduced as "the keeper of Society's standards",<sup>629</sup> has confidence in "the predictability of fortune and reputation rather than the volatile passion of youth, for at least those worldly possessions and relationships are better predictors of long-lasting marriages than reckless love."<sup>630</sup> The young are obliged to marry with their suitors whom their parents give an approval and the society anticipates them.<sup>631</sup>

Oscar Wilde is the leader of the aesthetic movement supports the art for the sake of beauty and pleasure.<sup>632</sup> His aim in his masterpieces is not to convey a moral or sentimental message, but rather to seek beauty and pleasure.<sup>633</sup> In his significant masterpiece named *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, "its amoral pleasure-seeker"<sup>634</sup>, Wilde also emphasizes on the aestheticism.<sup>635</sup> Concerning beauty itself, Wilde explains exceedingly of its worth in his work:<sup>636</sup>

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<sup>625</sup> Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest: A Trivial Comedy for Serious People*, ed. Jackson Russell, First New Mermaid edition, Ernest Benn Ltd., 1980, Act II, Lines, 584-590.

<sup>626</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, "The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest", *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, pp. 1-9.

<sup>627</sup> Sarika Priyadarshini Bose, "Women as Figures of Disorder in the Plays of Oscar Wilde", *Faculty of Arts*, University of Birmingham, 1999, p. 171

<sup>628</sup> Yuezhou Huo, The Importance of Being Bracknell, *Discoveries*, ed. David Faulkner, John S. Knight Institute, Cornell University Ithaca, New York, Spring 2014, No. 12, pp. 97-102.

<sup>629</sup> Sarika Priyadarshini Bose, "Women as Figures of Disorder in the Plays of Oscar Wilde", *Faculty of Arts*, University of Birmingham, 1999, p. 201

<sup>630</sup> Yuezhou Huo, The Importance of Being Bracknell, *Discoveries*, ed. David Faulkner, John S. Knight Institute, Cornell University Ithaca, New York, Spring 2014, No. 12, pp. 97-102.

<sup>631</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

<sup>632</sup> Andrew Goldstone, "Servants, Aestheticism, and "The Dominance of Form"", *Johns Hopkins University Press*, ELH, Vol. 77, No. 3 (FALL 2010), pp. 615-643.

<sup>633</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 615-643.

<sup>634</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 615-643.

<sup>635</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 615-643.

<sup>636</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 615-643.

“Beauty is a form of genius—is higher, indeed, than genius, as it needs no explanation. It is one of the great facts in the world like sunlight, or springtime, or the reflection in dark water of that silver shell we call the moon.”<sup>637</sup>

From one perspective, the irony in *The Importance of Being Earnest* makes his work beauty.<sup>638</sup> The ordinary illustration of irony is the recognizable proof in the middle of seriousness and triviality in Wilde’s play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.<sup>639</sup> Rowell comments on the play:

Then, having demonstrated his orthodoxy in these three plays, Wilde showed himself a joyous rebel in a fourth. *The Importance of Being Earnest* is his exuberant parody of the 'trivial comedies' (his own amongst them) which the 'serious people' had established in the English theatre. It contains all the features of Wilde's earlier plays -- the shameful secret (Worthing's origin in a handbag), the mistaken and assumed identities (Bunburying), and the sensational dénouement in which Worthing turns out to be Lady Bracknell's long-lost nephew. It even contains a sally against the dual morality which distinguished male and female infidelity [see the dialogue between Jack and the woman he momentarily takes for his mother, Miss Prism].<sup>640</sup>

Mr. Wilde also made a comment on seriousness and triviality interpretation to his friend; “We should treat all the trivial things of life very seriously, and all the serious things of life with sincere and studied triviality.”<sup>641</sup> The main illustration below is the personality in the middle of name and love. In the first act of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Gwendolen explains that;

**GWENDOLEN:** My ideal has always been to love someone of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.<sup>642</sup>

In the second act of *The Importance of Being Earnest*, as mentioned above, Cecily also support love in marriage like Gwendolen. She believes someone named

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<sup>637</sup> Oscar Wilde, *The Picture of Dorian Gray: The 1890 Text*, ed. James Gifford, McPherson Library, University of Victoria, 2011, p. 20.

<sup>638</sup> Sara Fridell, “Dualism in Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*”, *BA Thesis*, Göteborgs University, 2014, pp. 12-18

<sup>639</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 12-18.

<sup>640</sup> George Rowell, *The Victorian Theatre 1792-1913, A Survey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1956. Rpt. 1967. p. 111.

<sup>641</sup> Richard, Ellmann, *Oscar Wilde*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1988, p. 398.

<sup>642</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 490.

Ernest must be reliable, so she thinks that there is no reason not to fall in love him.<sup>643</sup>  
Cecily supports Wilde's idea of identity between name and love.<sup>644</sup> As stated by Wilde:

Well, ever since dear Uncle Jack first confessed to us that he had a younger brother who was very wicked and bad, you, of course, have formed the chief topic of conversation between myself and Miss Prism. And of course, a man who is much talked about is always very attractive. One feels there must be something in him, after all. I daresay it was foolish of me, but I fell in love with you, Ernest.<sup>645</sup>

The *Importance of Being Earnest* is a play that takes the shape of the words of the character called Ernest.<sup>646</sup> "In context of the romantic ideals"<sup>647</sup>, since the meaning of the word is being reliable and sincere, Cecily and Gwendolen represents and supports love in marriage and also their preference suggests that "their attachment to romantic ideas and their dissatisfaction with the strict rules attached to marriage and family life."<sup>648</sup> For them, marriage is such an unimportant institution that they just want to get marry for the sake of the pleasing name, Ernest.<sup>649</sup> Reinert puts in the picture that:

No one in his right mind gets emotionally involved with the destinies of Algernon and Cecily, Gwendolen and Jack. But it is precisely their emotive neutrality as figures of farce that allows Wilde's characters to establish his "limited perspective": Wilde's basic formula for satire is their assumption of a code of behavior that represents the reality that Victorian convention pretends to ignore.<sup>650</sup>

The play is a satire which emphasizes on the Victorian period's facts in the nineteenth century.<sup>651</sup> In *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Wilde particularly assaults the structure of Victorian culture.<sup>652</sup> He utilizes doubleness in order to ironise the

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<sup>643</sup> Nesrin Kaplan, "Parodi Kadınlar", *Tiyatro Dergisi*, Sayı:335, *İstanbul Üniversitesi*, Web.27.Apr.2016, (<http://www.journals.istanbul.edu.tr/iutiyatro/article/viewFile>)

<sup>644</sup> Ibid.

<sup>645</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act II, p. 513.

<sup>646</sup> Anni Alto, "Queer Representations of Gender, Sexuality, Marriage and Family in Oscar Wilde's comedies", *Master Thesis*, English Philology, University of Tampere, 2010, p. 55.

<sup>647</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, "The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest", *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, pp. 1-9.

<sup>648</sup> Ibid, pp. 1-9.

<sup>649</sup> Anni Alto, "Queer Representations of Gender, Sexuality, Marriage and Family in Oscar Wilde's comedies", *Master Thesis*, English Philology, University of Tampere, 2010, p. 55.

<sup>650</sup> Otto Reinert, "Satiric Strategy in The Importance of Being Earnest." *College English* 18.1 (1956), pp. 14-15.

<sup>651</sup> Ibid, pp. 14-15.

<sup>652</sup> Ibid, p. 14-15.



morality of Victorian society, earnestness, by means of wit and paradox.<sup>653</sup> We can see this at work in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.<sup>654</sup> Thus, Wilde stages the play as a trivial play that discloses a serious truth.<sup>655</sup> Reinert states that:

When the pattern of inversion operates the characters either express or assume a morality that is deduced from the actual behavior of high society, though the existence of conventional morality is sometimes recognized as a fact to come to terms with. What the accumulation of paradox adds up to is an exposure both of hypocrisy and of the unnatural convention that necessitates hypocrisy.<sup>656</sup>

The characters just come together on the condition that their social and financial convenience for one another is illustrated, not as a result of intimate romance.<sup>657</sup> To illustrate, Lady Bracknell's portrayal of marriage was considered "as a masque in crude economic transaction in Act I, where she overtly intimates the importance of money and her own resolute belief in her ability to form society..."<sup>658</sup> What's more, not only was Lady Bracknell similarly dedicated to imaging the self as the others but also represented the social hypocrisy of high society.<sup>659</sup> Farnaz Sadaf sketched out the play's characters in her study;

"...Thus the characters in the play voice noble sentiments representing the strait laced individuals of the time while at the same time they are full of all the cynicism, hypocrisy and colorful natural urges such as, a love of monetary gain, natural sexual urges, gender role reversals; that completely challenge the same rigorous code..."<sup>660</sup>

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<sup>653</sup> Sara Fridell, "Dualism in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*", *BA Thesis*, Göteborgs University, 2014, p. 3.

<sup>654</sup> Otto Reinert, "Satiric Strategy in *The Importance of Being Earnest*", *College English 18.1* (1956), pp. 14-18.

<sup>655</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-18.

<sup>656</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-18.

<sup>657</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, "The Motif of Inversion in the *Importance of Being Earnest*", *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, pp. 1-9.

<sup>658</sup> Katy Neal, "Oscar Wilde", The University of Nottingham, *Innervate Leading Undergraduate Work in English Studies*, Volume 1 (2008-2009), pp. 224-229.

<sup>659</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 224-229.

<sup>660</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, "The Motif of Inversion in the *Importance of Being Earnest*", *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)*, Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, pp. 1-9.

*The Importance of Being Earnest* touches on the serious themes such as love, marriage, identity, and power.<sup>661</sup> Regarding marriage, in the play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Algernon expressed;

**ALGERNON:** I don't play accurately-anyone can play accurately-but I play with wonderful expression.<sup>662</sup>

Algernon's expression serves as a model of Wilde's thought of the Aesthetic movement, which esteemed art for art's purpose.<sup>663</sup> That's why; Algernon can be obviously seen as a supporter of the Aesthetic movement.<sup>664</sup> Algernon, the character of Wilde's play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, explains that:

**ALGERNON:** Really, if the lower orders don't set us a good example, what on earth is the use of them?<sup>665</sup>

Algernon emphasizes on this main issue, marriage after he and his servant, Lane, have a talk about marriage and Lane also appears to be casual about the subject of the marriage.<sup>666</sup> He expresses that the lower classes have no consciousness of responsibility.<sup>667</sup> What Wilde tries to imply is the foolishness of the high society and their absence of moral responsibility.<sup>668</sup> The play is ironic on the grounds that in the nineteenth century England, the privileged should be the respectable class as a good example for other people.<sup>669</sup> Algernon points out in the first act:

**ALGERNON:** My dear fellow, the way you flirt with Gwendolen is perfectly disgraceful. It is almost as bad as the way Gwendolen flirts with you.<sup>670</sup>

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<sup>661</sup> Sarika Priyadarshini Bose, "Women as Figures of Disorder in the Plays of Oscar Wilde", *Faculty of Arts*, University of Birmingham, 1999, p. 181.

<sup>662</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 480.

<sup>663</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, "The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest", *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, pp. 1-9.

<sup>664</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 1-9.

<sup>665</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 481.

<sup>666</sup> Suchismita Hazra, "Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest: A Critique of The Victorian Society", *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2, Issue: 1, January 2013, pp. 3-4.

<sup>667</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>668</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>669</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>670</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 482.

This expression is said accidentally in a humorous way by Algernon. Its tone ridicules the Victorianism and hypocrisy of flirting among the high societies.<sup>671</sup> Farnaz Sadaf states about the character, Algernon in her journal article that “Algernon's yearning for an aesthetic life amidst strict Victorian correctness is his natural need against a social code that says life must be lived without human instincts.”<sup>672</sup> Miss Prism says in the second part of the play:

**MISS PRISM:** No married man is ever attractive, except to his wife.<sup>673</sup>

This quote is a good example of the marriage theme. Miss Prism tries to emphasize the importance of the marriage by taking into the consideration of the moral responsibilities on the behalf of the Victorian society. Algernon explains in the second part of the play:

**ALGERNON:** What a fearful liar you are, Jack. I have not been called back to town.<sup>674</sup>

This is one of the examples of the irony. Jack is named as a liar; yet still, he has gone to Jack's country house under an expected character.<sup>675</sup> Lady Bracknell to Algernon emphasizes on taking into the consideration of his christening in question:

**LADY BRACKNELL:** Lord Bracknell would be highly displeased if he learned that that was the way in which you wasted your time and money.<sup>676</sup>

This is a good example of Lady Bracknell's portrayal: she is principally worried with cash.<sup>677</sup> This is an astounding illustration of the wealth's appreciation of money rather than morality.<sup>678</sup> Jack expresses at the end of the play:

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<sup>671</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, “The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest”, *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, pp. 1-9.

<sup>672</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-9.

<sup>673</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act II. p. 505.

<sup>674</sup> Ibid., Act II. p. 510.

<sup>675</sup> Sara Fridell, “Dualism in Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest”, *BA Thesis*, Göteborgs University, 2014, p. 15.

<sup>676</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act III. p. 533.

<sup>677</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, “The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest”, *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, pp. 1-9.

<sup>678</sup> Richard Hornby, “Earnest”, *The Hudson Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (WINTER 2012), p. 689.

**JACK:** I've finally realized for the first time in my life, the vital Importance of Being Earnest.<sup>679</sup>

This is a magnificent shutting line for the play since it incorporates the majority of the incongruity with which this plot is loaded.<sup>680</sup> Studying the background of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest* especially, Suchismita Hazra comments on Jack's statement above: "The real importance of "earnestness" lies only in the superficial naming. The sham hypocritical morality which the Victorians practised under the garb of "earnestness" is totally done away with in this play."<sup>681</sup>

By the time "the internal collapse of the make-belief culture of the late Victorian society"<sup>682</sup> is thoroughly criticized in the play, Wilde centres upon certain issues such as marriage, class order and identity.<sup>683</sup> Marriage becomes the main theme of the playwright.<sup>684</sup> The conversation below is about marriage;

**ALGERNON:** Why is it that at a bachelor's establishment the servants invariably drink the champagne? I ask merely for information.

**LANE:** I attribute it to the superior quality of the wine, sir. I have often observed that in married households the champagne is rarely of a first-rate brand.

**ALGERNON:** Good heavens! Is marriage so demoralising as that?

**LANE:** I believe it is a very pleasant state, sir. I have had very little experience of it myself up to the present. I have only been married once. That was in consequence of a misunderstanding between myself and a young person.<sup>685</sup>

The inquiry here is regardless of whether marriage is unsettling.<sup>686</sup> The idea of marriage as a perfect foundation is ironized in the above discussion amongst Algernon and his Lane.<sup>687</sup> Marriage is imagined as a misconception between the youthful couple. The conversation is full of contradictory statements on marriage in this play like other

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<sup>679</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act III. p. 538.

<sup>680</sup> Suchismita Hazra, "Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*: A Critique of The Victorian Society", *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2, Issue: 1, January 2013, pp. 3-4.

<sup>681</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>682</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>683</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>684</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>685</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 480.

<sup>686</sup> Suchismita Hazra, "Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*: A Critique of The Victorian Society", *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2, Issue: 1, January 2013, pp. 3-4.

<sup>687</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

issues.<sup>688</sup>Algernon's comment that separations are made in paradise is in contradiction with the celestial saying, "Marriages are made in heaven."<sup>689</sup>All these remarks clue at the moral laxity of the time.<sup>690</sup>

**JACK:** I am in love with Gwendolen. I have come up to town expressly to propose to her.

**ALGERNON:** I thought you had come up for pleasure? . . . I call that business.

**JACK:** How utterly unromantic you are!<sup>691</sup>

Algernon assumes that engagements and marriage come true because of the implementation of the social responsibilities, but not due to pleasure or love.<sup>692</sup>He considers marriage as a social obligation he should satisfy so as to keep up a respectable name.<sup>693</sup>So, Algernon tries to demonstrate an unimportant approach of aristocratic society to marriage as well as to moral principles.<sup>694</sup>

**ALGERNON:** Nothing will induce me to part with Bunbury, and if you ever get married, which seems to me extremely problematic, you will be very glad to know Bunbury. A man who marries without knowing Bunbury has a very tedious time of it.

**JACK:** That is nonsense. If I marry a charming girl like Gwendolen, and she is the only girl I ever saw in my life that I would marry, I certainly won't want to know Bunbury.

**ALGERNON:** Then your wife will. You don't seem to realise, that in married life three is company and two is none.<sup>695</sup>

Algernon's doubt about marriage is uncovered in his remarks about Bunbury.<sup>696</sup>The fictional character, Bunbury, is utilized as a reason for a man in order to escape his obligations.<sup>697</sup>Algernon imagines "Bunburyism", used in various words in Wilde's play such as Burbury, Burburying, Mr Burbury and Burryist<sup>698</sup>; which asserts

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<sup>688</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>689</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>690</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>691</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 482.

<sup>692</sup> Lucie Hornychová, "Social Criticism in Oscar Wilde's Comedies (An Ideal Husband, The Importance of Being Earnest)", *Bachelor Thesis*, Zlin Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University, 2010, pp. 31-33.

<sup>693</sup> Ibid., pp. 31-33.

<sup>694</sup> Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>695</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 487.

<sup>696</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, "The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest", *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, p. 5.

<sup>697</sup> Ibid., 5.

<sup>698</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I., II, III.

the contrary of the high morality esteemed very highly by the Victorian society.<sup>699</sup> According to Otto Reinert, the term, Bunburyism is defined as: "Bunburyism means to invent a fictitious character, who can serve as a pretext for escaping a frustrating social routine, regulated by a repressive convention."<sup>700</sup> Moreover, Farnaz Sadaf added that "Algernon has invented a fictitious invalid friend by the name of Mr. Bunbury who serves as an excuse for him to escape a frustrating social routine."<sup>701</sup> In the play these statements clearly express that "I have invented an invaluable permanent invalid called Bunbury, in order that I may be able to go down into the country whenever I choose."<sup>702</sup> Algernon's drift towards Bunburyism serves to dispose of the tedious life that stifles to appreciate life.<sup>703</sup>

**ALGERNON:** [...] I may mention that I have always suspected you of being a confirmed and secret Bunburyist; and I am quite sure of it now.

**JACK:** Bunburyist? What on earth do you mean by a Bunburyist?

**ALGERNON:** I'll reveal to you the meaning of that incomparable expression as soon as you are kind enough to inform me why you are Ernest in town and Jack in the country.<sup>704</sup>

The conversation between Jack and Algernon in the act one of the play marks in the dominance of "Bunburyism" in consideration of the characters' lives of double identities.<sup>705</sup>

**JACK:** Gwendolen, we must get married at once. There is no time to be lost.

**GWENDOLEN:** Married, Mr. Worthing?

**JACK:** Well...surely. You know that I love you, and you led me to believe, Miss Fairfax, that you were not absolutely indifferent to me.

**GWENDOLEN:** I adore you, but you haven't proposed to me yet. Nothing has been said at all about marriage. The subject has not even been touched on.

**JACK:** Well... May I propose to you now?

**GWENDOLEN:** I think it would be an admirable opportunity. And to spare you any possible disappointment, Mr Worthing, I think it

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<sup>699</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, "The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest", *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, p. 5.

<sup>700</sup> Otto Reinert, "Satiric Strategy in The Importance of Being Earnest." *College English* 18.1 (1956), p. 17.

<sup>701</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, "The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest", *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, p. 5.

<sup>702</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I., p. 486.

<sup>703</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, "The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest", *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, p. 5.

<sup>704</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 485.

<sup>705</sup> Suchismita Hazra, "Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest: A Critique of The Victorian Society", *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2, Issue: 1, January 2013, pp. 3-4.

only fair to tell you quite frankly beforehand that I am fully determined to accept you.<sup>706</sup>

Gwendolen's remarks shed light that she supposes marriages and proposals ought to be sorted out. According to Magdalena Nigoević and Katarina Perišić, Wilde's emphasis is that Algernon is the suitor of a lady about whom he does not basically know anything.<sup>707</sup> They also enunciate that "additionally characteristic of the path in which Earnest's ladies, without a minute's notification, seize control of a great part of the discussion is the scene in which Jack too gives himself a chance to be locked in to Gwendolen. It is by method for her sharp mind that the Wildean hermaphroditic champion controls her suitor consequently managing the pace of relationship."<sup>708</sup>

**LADY BRACKNELL:** Pardon me, you are not engaged to any one. When you do become engaged to some one, I, or your father, should his health permit him, will inform you of the fact. An engagement should come on a young girl as a surprise, pleasant or unpleasant, as the case may be. It is hardly a matter that she could be allowed to arrange for herself . . . And now I have a few questions to put to you, Mr. Worthing.<sup>709</sup>

It is obviously understood that her concept of marriage varies incredibly from Gwendolen's. Whereas Gwendolen trusts that a young lady ought to have the capacity to begin to look all starry eyed at and wed her preferred man, paying little respect to his social class, Lady Bracknell thinks that the convenience marriage like suitability of classes, social status, and their financial situation must be valid between partners instead of love.<sup>710</sup> Those consecutive questions Lady Bracknell asks Jack on marriage obviously show that the social and financial statuses are so significant in marriages in Victorian society.<sup>711</sup> Yuezhou Huo's statements clarify the situations that;

"...in her eyes, relationships are arranged in hierarchy, and people are judged based on their social status and their wealth. There is no ambiguity, no room for the witticism to confuse the neat order in her

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<sup>706</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I., p. 491.

<sup>707</sup> Magdalena Nigoević- Katarina Perišić, "Who's the Bigger (Wo)Man in Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest*?", *Facta Universitatis, Linguistics and Literature*, Vol. 10, No 2, 2012, pp. 125 – 132.

<sup>708</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 129.

<sup>709</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I., p. 492.

<sup>710</sup> Yuezhou Huo, *The Importance of Being Bracknell*, *Discoveries*, ed. David Faulkner, John S. Knight Institute, Cornell University Ithaca, New York, Spring 2014, No. 12, pp. 97-102.

<sup>711</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 101.

mental world. This is a sad, yet a more functional vision, given the society she inhabits.”<sup>712</sup>

Lady Bracknell's idea of marriage depends on the thought that it must be, first and foremost, a characteristic of economic wellbeing.<sup>713</sup>

**LADY BRACKNELL:** You can hardly imagine that I and Lord Bracknell would dream of allowing our only daughter—a girl brought up with the utmost care—to marry into a cloak-room, and form an alliance with a parcel? Good morning, Mr. Worthing!<sup>714</sup>

The Victorian fixation on nobility is engaged in this play.<sup>715</sup> Since Lady Bracknell imagines that a lady ought to wed to enhance her societal position, Lady Bracknell objects to the relationship between her little girl, Gwendolen and Jack since she does not know anything about Jack’s family.<sup>716</sup> She cannot envision any decent man longing for proposing to her daughter without having any aristocrat associations.<sup>717</sup>

**LADY BRACKNELL:** Never speak disrespectfully of Society, Algernon. Only people who can’t get into it do that. (*To Cecily*) Dear child, of course you know that Algernon has nothing but his debts to depend upon. But I do not approve of mercenary marriages. When I married Lord Bracknell I had no fortune of any kind. But I never dreamed for a moment of allowing that to stand in my way. Well, I suppose I must give my consent.<sup>718</sup>

For Lady Bracknell, wealth and social status are more important than love or emotions.<sup>719</sup> Moreover, she does not assent to mercenary marriages.<sup>720</sup>

**LADY BRACKNELL:** The line is immaterial. Mr Worthing, I confess I feel somewhat bewildered by what you have just told me. To be born, or at any rate bred, in a hand-bag, whether it had handles or not, seems to me to display a contempt for the ordinary decencies of family life that reminds one of the worst excesses of the French Revolution. And I presume you know what that unfortunate movement led to? As for the particular locality in which the hand-bag was found, a cloak-room at a railway station might serve to conceal a social indiscretion—has probably, indeed, been used for that purpose before now—but

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<sup>712</sup> Ibid., p. 101.

<sup>713</sup> Ibid., pp. 97-102.

<sup>714</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 495.

<sup>715</sup> Suchismita Hazra, “Oscar Wilde’s The Importance of Being Earnest: A Critique of The Victorian Society”, *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2, Issue: 1, January 2013, pp. 3-4.

<sup>716</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>717</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>718</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act III. p. 530.

<sup>719</sup> Anni Alto, “Queer Representations of Gender, Sexuality, Marriage and Family in Oscar Wilde’s comedies”, *Master Thesis*, English Philology, University of Tampere, 2010, p. 52.

<sup>720</sup> Ibid., p. 52.



it could hardly be regarded as an assured basis for a recognized position in good society.<sup>721</sup>

As a dominant, Jack is always questioned in terms of family structure.<sup>722</sup> Lady Bracknell in her conversation above emphasizes the importance of family relations regarding status and marital eligibility.<sup>723</sup>

**ALGERNON:** But why on earth did you break it off? What had I done? I had done nothing at all. Cecily, I am very much hurt indeed to hear you broke it off. Particularly when the weather was so charming

**CECILY:** It would hardly have been a really serious engagement if it hadn't been broken off at least once. But I forgave you before the week was out.<sup>724</sup>

Cecily's remark on the engagement remembers that marriage always ends happily like in the ending of the story books.

**LADY BRACKNELL:** To speak frankly, I am not in favour of long engagements. They give people the opportunity of finding out each other's character before marriage, which I think is never advisable.<sup>725</sup>

The fact that Lady Bracknell thinks of it "never advisable"<sup>726</sup> to "give people the opportunity of finding out each other's character before marriage"<sup>727</sup> just demonstrates that high society associates with the establishment of marriage like legislative issues instead of love.<sup>728</sup> A politically or socially respectable marriage is not related to the harmony of feelings or personality.<sup>729</sup> In contrast; it is relevant to every individual's social class or status.<sup>730</sup>

**JACK :** [*Embracing her*] Yes . . . mother!

**MISS PRISM :** [*Recoiling in indignant astonishment*] Mr. Worthing! I am unmarried!

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<sup>721</sup> Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Ernest*, ed. Russell Jackson, First New Mermaid edition by Ernest Benn Limited, 1980, Act. I, lines 570-580.

<sup>722</sup> Anni Alto, "Queer Representations of Gender, Sexuality, Marriage and Family in Oscar Wilde's comedies", *Master Thesis*, English Philology, University of Tampere, 2010, p. 61.

<sup>723</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 61.

<sup>724</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act II. p. 514.

<sup>725</sup> *Ibid.*, Act III. p. 531.

<sup>726</sup> *Ibid.*, Act III., p. 531.

<sup>727</sup> *Ibid.*, Act III., p. 531.

<sup>728</sup> Anni Alto, "Queer Representations of Gender, Sexuality, Marriage and Family in Oscar Wilde's comedies", *Master Thesis*, *English Philology*, University of Tampere, 2010, pp. 51-52.

<sup>729</sup> *Ibid.*, pp., 51-52.

<sup>730</sup> *Ibid.*, pp., 51-52.

**JACK:** Unmarried! But after all, who has the right to cast a stone against one who has suffered? Cannot repentance wipe out an act of folly? Why should there be one law for men, and another for women? Mother, I forgive you.<sup>731</sup>

In the nineteenth century, the fact that an unmarried woman's having a child was an unapproved case "as the stigma of an unmarried mother is something that the upper class want to avoid"<sup>732</sup> In the play *Miss Prism*, represented as "an embodiment of female unreliability, has been derelict in her duty by mixing up infant Jack, the child in her charge, with her sentimental novel, the child of her feminine fancy."<sup>733</sup>

**ALGERNON:** I really don't see anything romantic in proposing. It is very romantic to be in love. But there is nothing romantic about a definite proposal. Why, one may be accepted. One usually is, I believe. Then the excitement is all over. The very essence of romance is uncertainty.<sup>734</sup>

As to girls like Algernon, the magic of a marriage proposal is romance and the proposal should be full of romantic words.<sup>735</sup> That's why she complains about it. This is the reason that he considers an engagement proposition as a business rather than pleasure.<sup>736</sup>

**GWENDOLEN:** ... my ideal has always been to love some one of the name of Ernest. There is something in that name that inspires absolute confidence. The moment Algernon first mentioned to me that he had a friend called Ernest, I knew I was destined to love you.<sup>737</sup>

To love a man named Ernest is the juvenile dream of Cecily, as well. They are just keen the name, Ernest, but not anything else.<sup>738</sup> This highlights their dependence on

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<sup>731</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act III. p. 536.

<sup>732</sup> Oscar Wilde, *The Importance of Being Earnest*, Statesa Theatre Company, Study Guide *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Robyn Brookes, 2014, p. 22.

<sup>733</sup> Sarika Priyadarshini Bose, "Women as Figures of Disorder in the Plays of Oscar Wilde", *Faculty of Arts*, University of Birmingham, 1999, p. 205.

<sup>734</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 482.

<sup>735</sup> Suchismita Hazra, "Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest: A Critique of The Victorian Society", *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2, Issue: 1, January 2013, pp. 3-4.

<sup>736</sup> Lucie Hornychová, "Social Criticism in Oscar Wilde's Comedies (An Ideal Husband, The Importance of Being Earnest)", *Bachelor Thesis*, Zlin Faculty of Humanities, Tomas Bata University, 2010, pp. 31-33.

<sup>737</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 490.

<sup>738</sup> Suchismita Hazra, "Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest: A Critique of The Victorian Society", *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2, Issue: 1, January 2013, pp. 3-4.

triviality and artificiality.<sup>739</sup> First impressions are very important for them.<sup>740</sup> This demonstrates that she may be stirring up true love with the hopeful sentiments of books.<sup>741</sup>

**GWENDOLEN:** Ernest, we may never be married. From the expression on mamma's face I fear we never shall. [...] But although she may prevent us from becoming man and wife, and I may marry some one else, and marry often, nothing that she can possibly do can alter my eternal devotion to you.<sup>742</sup>

Gwendolen does not choose Jack for his family status or honorable parentage like some other young ladies of her age at the time.<sup>743</sup> The reasons which she relates for her admiration to him are entirely inverted to the strict morality of the Victorian culture.<sup>744</sup>

**ALGERNON:** Well, my own dear, sweet, loving little darling, I really can't see why you should object to the name of Algernon. It is not at all a bad name. In fact, it is rather an aristocratic name. Half of the chaps who get into the Bankruptcy Court are called Algernon. But seriously, Cecily... [*Moving to her*] ... if my name was Algy, couldn't you love me?

**CECILY:** [*Rising*] I might respect you, Ernest, I might admire your character, but I fear that I should not be able to give you my undivided attention.<sup>745</sup>

Like Gwendolen, Cecily associates her affection to something senseless.<sup>746</sup> Algernon Moncrieff, Algy, is one of the fundamental important characters of the play and he makes up a nonexistent companion not only to hide his twofold life but also acquire Jack's phony name, Ernest to influence Cecily.<sup>747</sup> Sara Fridell expresses that

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<sup>739</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>740</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>741</sup> Ibid., pp. 3-4.

<sup>742</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 498.

<sup>743</sup> Farnaz Sadaf, "The Motif of Inversion in the Importance of Being Earnest", *International Journal on Studies in English Language and Literature (IJSELL)* Volume 3, Issue 6, June 2015, pp 1-9.

<sup>744</sup> Ibid., pp. 1-9.

<sup>745</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act II. p. 514.

<sup>746</sup> Sara Fridell, "Dualism in Oscar Wilde's The Importance of Being Earnest", *BA Thesis*, Göteborgs University, 2014, p. 7.

<sup>747</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

“Algernon Moncrieff’s name is Scottish and aristocratic in sound.”<sup>748</sup> He also added that “He is the charming, idle, selfish, witty dandy of the play, Wilde’s alter-ego.”<sup>749</sup>

**GWENDOLEN:** Mr. Worthing, what explanation can you offer to me for pretending to have a brother? Was it in order that you might have an opportunity of coming up to town to see me as often as possible?

**JACK:** Can you doubt it, Miss Fairfax?<sup>750</sup>

He invoked an anecdotal Ernest to be freedom.<sup>751</sup> Both Burbury, an imaginary character Algernon makes up and Ernest, fabrication brother Jack makes up, provide their freedom and moving away their responsibilities.<sup>752</sup>

**JACK:** But my dear Lady Bracknell, the matter is entirely in your own hands. The moment you consent to my marriage with Gwendolen, I will most gladly allow your nephew to form an alliance with my ward.

**LADY BRACKNELL:** [Rising and drawing herself up] You must be quite aware that what you propose is out of the question.

**JACK:** Then a passionate celibacy is all that any of us can look forward to.<sup>753</sup>

The reason why Lady Bracknell does not want Cecily to get married to Jack is that Algernon is a suitable partner for Cecily; as to Lady Bracknell, love is not enough for the suitable marriage by virtue of “Lady Bracknell’s high regard for money and property”.<sup>754</sup> Therefore, “As a character in so very light a comedy”,<sup>755</sup> As mentioned in the Dying and Restoration in Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Wole Soyinka’s *The Lion And The Jewel*, “Marriage to Lord Bracknell is by calculation and stratagem.”<sup>756</sup>

To sum up, as an expert of aestheticism, Oscar Wilde passes on to his pursuers various incredible works. In his masterpiece, *The Importance of Being Earnest* Mr.

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<sup>748</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>749</sup> Ibid., p. 7.

<sup>750</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act III. p. 526.

<sup>751</sup> Anni Alto, “Queer Representations of Gender, Sexuality, Marriage and Family in Oscar Wilde’s comedies”, *Master Thesis*, English Philology, University of Tampere, 2010, p. 38.

<sup>752</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

<sup>753</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act III. p. 532.

<sup>754</sup> Richard Hornby, “Earnest”, *The Hudson Review*, Vol. 64, No. 4 (WINTER 2012), pp. 683-690.

<sup>755</sup> St. John Hankin, Review of Wilde Collected Works (1908), In Beckson, *Oscar Wilde*, p. 321.

<sup>756</sup> Amechi Nicholas Akwanya, Emeka Thomas Michael Chukwumezie, “As mentioned in the Dying and Restoration in Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Wole Soyinka’s *The Lion And The Jewel*”, *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)* Volume 18, Issue 6 (Nov. - Dec. 2013), pp. 25-31

Wilde obviously depicts to his philosophy of “Aestheticism”.<sup>757</sup> Additionally, he uncovers his fundamentally realistic interest toward the Victorian Society.<sup>758</sup> Otto Reinert states that “*The Importance of Being Earnest* is one sustained metaphor, and aesthetic detachment is the only mood in which it can be intelligently enjoyed.”<sup>759</sup> The Conflict between aestheticism and morality takes part in Wilde’s works.<sup>760</sup>

The idea of marriage as a perfect foundation is satirized ironically in Wilde’s play, *The Importance of Being Earnest*.<sup>761</sup> Marriage is considered as a misconception between the youthful couples.<sup>762</sup> At the point when Jack arrives, Algernon remarks that “women never marry the men they flirt with.”<sup>763</sup> Like all different issues, marriage is also focused on paradoxically in this play.<sup>764</sup>

First and foremost, by distinguishing seriousness with triviality and the inversion of value judgment of society, Mr. Wilde snidely condemns the three parts of the Victorian culture: marriage, class and identity.<sup>765</sup> Moreover, he criticizes the Victorian upper class in terms of their self-centered and amoral aspects.<sup>766</sup> He also adds that “Without any harsh satire, by exploiting the device of wit, humour and paradox, Wilde pinpoints the moral laxity of his contemporary period.”<sup>767</sup>

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<sup>757</sup> David Krasner, *History of Modern Drama (1)*. Hoboken, GB: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011. ProQuest ebrary. Web. 1 May 2016.

<sup>758</sup> Otto Reinert, “Satiric Strategy in *The Importance of Being Earnest*.” *College English* 18.1 (1956) 14-18.

<sup>759</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 14-18.

<sup>760</sup> Patrick Duggan, “The Conflict Between Aestheticism and Morality in Oscar Wilde’s *The Picture of Dorian Gray*”, *WR Journal of the CAS Writing Program*, 2008/2009, p. 61.

<sup>761</sup> Suchismita Hazra, “Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*: A Critique of The Victorian Society”, *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2, Issue: 1, January 2013, pp. 3-4.

<sup>762</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>763</sup> Oscar Wilde, *Oscar Wilde - The Major Works*, Cary, GB Oxford Paperbacks, 2000, Act I. p. 482.

<sup>764</sup> Suchismita Hazra, “Oscar Wilde’s *The Importance of Being Earnest*: A Critique of The Victorian Society”, *Paripex - Indian Journal of Research*, Volume: 2, Issue: 1, January 2013, pp. 3-4.

<sup>765</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>766</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

<sup>767</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

## CONCLUSION

This thesis planned to achieve a representation of 19<sup>th</sup>-century marriages through an analysis of the treatment of the concept of marriage in three plays by three different playwrights; *A Marriage Proposal* by Chekhov, *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Wilde and *A Doll's House* by Ibsen. In the second chapter, a historical context was given in order to present the social and historical framework of the century that shaped the playwrights' worldviews and their works. The sequence of historical events, starting with beginning with the Enlightenment views, going ahead with the French Revolution and moving to the Industrial Revolution, were clarified in the light of their effects on the society as well as on marriages particularly. After examining the fixed notions of the time with respect to marriage and specific gender roles, the progressive enhancement of the lawful rights for ladies were examined. Finally, their central themes were presented in that chapter.

Accordingly, the second part of my thesis consists of the theoretical one which touches on Scandinavian, Victorian and Russian societies' point of view to the marriages. Besides, the other issues related to the marriages such as gender, family, society and class are also mentioned in the second part. Thanks to this thesis, the investigations I have done and the books I have ever gone through, demonstrate that the general public in Scandinavia, England and Russia nations considered marriage to be an ideal way for women. In the nineteenth century, the previous idea of getting married for cash was started to be swapped for love marriage. In three nations while unmarried ladies or dowagers could come into it by acquisition or legacy, wedded ladies were not permitted to have property. The principle contrast was the way to deal with ladies' work and spinsterhood. Married women should be looked after by their spouses. As to the nineteenth-century society, in Scandinavia, England and Russia, getting married for women is one of the principle reasons to have a place in public. In any case, unmarried women without male relatives who might accommodate them were left to depend on themselves. Unmarried ladies in European countries may have compelled to work by circumstances. In any case, it brought down their societal position. In that age, while nineteenth-century women had fewer opportunities, men in three societies had more open

doors. Men in those societies were permitted to work and have their own particular professions by contrast with Russian, English and Norwegian married women.

All things considered for a wedded lady it was not exceptionally normal to work on the grounds that these ladies were occupied with taking care of their families. Girls were regularly expected to work to help their families and it was entirely normal that women got married at an early age and stayed with them and dealt with them. A woman tended to dedicate herself more to her children.

The practical part focuses on similarities among *A Marriage Proposal* by Anton Chekhov, *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde and *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. The relations are similar in three plays – desire to be a good partner, being a wife caring for the husband, a mother raising children and at the same time, the relations are not also sincere because of social influence to the marriages. In three plays the partners choose the suitors to marry for convenience. The characters state reasons for better marrying someone whom they do not love instead of remaining unmarried. In this situation, it is clearly understood that the society and families choose the suitors to have a suitable couple in terms of the economic situations and the social status in the nineteenth century. In three plays, these women seek chiefly for material support.

As for marriage or choosing their suitors in these dramas, all women get married or want to get married in order to gain the social status of married women and will be secured by their husbands for the future. The marriage in those plays also shows the sad reality of those who got married to an unloved man purely for convenience.

In the third chapter, three plays were studied. The female characters in three dramas were analysed concerning their subordination in a male-ruled society, their desires from marriage, their bafflement or satisfaction in marriage, and finally their response to marriage which uncover these ladies' position against the similar compelling circumstances in Victorian, Scandinavian, and Russian societies. The playwrights accomplish this point by underlining the discussions between the suitors.

Three plays were motivated by the conditions and issues of their general public and, displayed their acts as instruments of criticism on social and moral issues

confronted by individuals by and large and particularly experienced by women. They also underscored issues of gender as a typical point in *A Marriage Proposal* by Chekhov, *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Wilde and *A Doll's House* by Ibsen.

Correspondingly, they all touch on themes and topics related to gender roles, the most critical of which is marriage. A repetitive subject of the nineteenth-century dramatizations, marriage is likewise at the focal point of the plays. Considering that all these three plays were composed at the season of literary maturity of these writers, it can be true to say that they all have a brand new approach towards the subject of marriage. This implies that by setting marriage ahead of schedule in the script, they make a space for their characters to see the consequences of their choices and decisions. How they vary from the ordinary types of shows in the plays is that marriage is no more a definitive joy to be come to. In every one of the dramas analysed in the thesis, most relational unions result in thwarted expectation in light of the fact that the characters have illusions about their partners or assemble wrong suspicions with respect to the roles of husband and wife. It is suggested that marriage does not generally hint joy, in addition, as a case of a social foundation, it can be flawed. Nora and Torvald in *A Doll's House* fail in their marriages and suffer the consequences of their choices afterwards due to the sexual double standards of a male-dominated society. Natalia and Lomov in *A Marriage Proposal* suffer from their idealization of marriage. They preferred social status and financial security instead of love. Cecily's and Ernest's romantic illusions in *the Importance of Being Earnest* are not actualized. The young are obliged to marry with their suitors whom their parents give an approval and the society anticipates them.

In addition, every one of the writers delivers the issues identified with ladies and ladies' subordination such as monetary, social, and professional tensions and impossibilities. They display ladies from all social classes. Cecily and Gwendolon are blue-blooded, Natalia is middle-class girl, and Nora has a place with the working class. Social class is so essential in every one of dramatists' works. There are the portrayals of female characters from various social classes and their yearnings to climb the social stepping stool through marriage, for example, we find in the characters of Nora, Natalia, Cecily and Gwendolon.



Morality is also a common subject matter for all the plays. They are similar in their treatment of the theme. The morality in three plays all in all includes the individual moral choices of the characters swaying in the middle of obligation and liberality.

At long last, this thesis principally aimed at displaying the matters of societal position and the attitude of marriage, family and family relations concerning the importance of marriage, as well as gender roles, social life, financial circumstances and class differences from the perspective of the playwrights in the nineteenth-century England, Norway, and Russia. These subjects are principally investigated in *A Marriage Proposal* by Anton Chekhov, *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde and *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen.



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## APPENDIX A

### The Synopsis of *A Doll's House*

*A Doll's House* traces the awakening of Nora Helmer from her previously unexamined life of domestic, wifely comfort. Having been ruled her whole life by either her father or her husband Torvald, Nora finally comes to question the foundation of everything she has believed in once her marriage is put to the test. Having borrowed money from a man of ill-repute named Krogstad by forging her father's signature, she was able to pay for a trip to Italy to save her sick husband's life (he was unaware of the loan, believing that the money came from Nora's father). Since then, she has had to contrive ways to pay back her loan, growing particularly concerned with money and the ways of a complex world.

When the play opens, it is Christmas Eve, and we find that Torvald has just been promoted to manager of the bank, where he will receive a huge wage and be extremely powerful. Nora is thrilled because she thinks that she will finally be able to pay off the loan and be rid of it. Her happiness, however, is marred when an angry Krogstad approaches her. He has just learned that his position at the bank has been promised to Mrs. Linde, an old school friend of Nora's who has recently arrived in town in search of work, and he tells Nora that he will reveal her secret if she does not persuade her husband to let him keep his position. Nora tries to convince Torvald to preserve Krogstad's job, using all of her feminine tricks (which he encourages), but she is unsuccessful. Torvald tells her that Krogstad's morally corrupt nature is physically repulsive to him and impossible to work with. Nora becomes very worried.

The next day, Nora is nervously moving about the house, afraid that Krogstad will appear at any minute. Her anxiety is reduced by being preoccupied with the preparations for a big fancy-dress party that will take place the next night in a neighbor's apartment. When Torvald returns from the bank, she again takes up her pleas on behalf of Krogstad. This time, Torvald not only refuses but also sends off the notice of termination that he has already prepared for Krogstad, reassuring a scared Nora that he will take upon himself any bad things that befall them as a result. Nora is extremely moved by this comment. She begins to consider the possibility of this episode transforming their marriage for the better—as well as the possibility of suicide.

Meanwhile, she converses and flirts with a willing Dr. Rank. Learning that he is rapidly dying, she has an intimate conversation with him that culminates in him professing his love for her just before she is able to ask him for financial help. His words stop her, and she steers the conversation back to safer ground. Their talk is interrupted by the announcement of Krogstad's presence. Nora asks Dr. Rank to leave and has Krogstad brought in.

Krogstad tells her that he has had a change of heart and that, though he will keep the bond, he will not reveal her to the public. Instead, he wants to give Torvald a note explaining the matter so that Torvald will be pressed to help Krogstad rehabilitate himself and keep his position at the bank. Nora protests against Torvald's involvement, but Krogstad drops the letter in Torvald's letterbox anyway, much to Nora's horror.

Nora exclaims aloud that she and Torvald are lost. Still, she tries to use her charms to prevent Torvald from reading the letter, luring him away from business by begging him to help her with the tarantella for the next night's party. He agrees to put off business until the next day. The letter remains in the letterbox.

The next night, before Torvald and Nora return from the ball, Mrs. Linde and Krogstad, who are old lovers, reunite in the Helmers' living room. Mrs. Linde asks to take care of Krogstad and his children and to help him become the better man that he knows he is capable of becoming. The Helmers return from the ball as Mrs. Linde is leaving (Krogstad has already left), with Torvald nearly dragging Nora into the room. Alone, Torvald tells Nora how much he desires her but is interrupted by Dr. Rank. The doctor, unbeknownst to Torvald, has come by to say his final farewells, as he covertly explains to Nora. After he leaves, Nora is able to deter Torvald from pursuing her any more by reminding him of the ugliness of death that has just come between them, Nora having revealed Dr. Rank's secret. Seeing that Torvald finally has collected his letters, she resigns herself to committing suicide.

As she is leaving, though, Torvald stops her. He has just read Krogstad's letter and is enraged by its contents. He accuses Nora of ruining his life. He essentially tells her that he plans on forsaking her, contrary to his earlier claim that he would take on everything himself. During his tirade, he is interrupted by the maid bearing another note from Krogstad and addressed to Nora. Torvald reads it and becomes overjoyed. Krogstad has had a change of heart and has sent back the bond. Torvald quickly tells Nora that it is all over after all: he has forgiven her, and her pathetic attempt to help him has only made her more endearing than ever.

Nora, seeing Torvald's true character for the first time, sits her husband down to tell him that she is leaving him. After he protests, she explains that he does not love her—and, after tonight, she does not love him. She tells him that, given the suffocating life she has led until now, she owes it to herself to become fully independent and to explore her own character and the world for herself. As she leaves, she reveals to Torvald that she hopes that a "miracle" might occur: that one day, they might be able to unite in real wedlock. The play ends with the door slamming on her way out.

## APPENDIX B

### *The Synopsis of A Marriage Proposal*

Stepan Stepanovitch Tschubukov and Ivan Vassiliyitch Lomov were neighbours in a village. Natalia Stepanovna was the daughter of Tschubukov. Lomov a man of thirty five wanted to marry. He thought Natalia was good at farm work and she was not bad looking. So he came to the house of Tschubukov one evening to propose to Natalia. Naturally he was in his best clothes befitting the occasion of a marriage proposal. Tschubukov received him cordially in his reception room. Like every young man going to make a marriage proposal Lomov was also excited and nervous. After some nervous stammering, he told Tschubukov that he wanted Natalia's hand in marriage. Tschubukov was very excited and happy at the proposal. He went out and sent Natalia into the room to meet the suitor. Natalia was not told of the purpose of Lomov. Natalia and Lomov began to talk.

Lomov was more nervous as he was facing the bride. He made a strong preface before coming to the proposal. He told Natalia about how the Lomovs and the Tschubukovs had been good neighbours on good terms for many years. In this context, he mentioned that his meadow touched the birch woods of Tschubukov. Natalia was surprised to hear that the meadows belonged to Lomov. She claimed that the plot of land belonged to them, the Tschubukovs. A bitter quarrel ensued. Lomov claimed it belonged to him and Natalia too claimed it to be theirs. Lomov forgot his original purpose. They called each other names, even though a little while ago they were full of good neighbourly feelings. Tschubukov came in and heard their quarrel. He too claimed that the meadow belonged to him. The quarrel grew even bitterer. They called each other names and began to expose the scandals of each others' families. Lomov had a weak heart. He used to have palpitation in the heart. He was excited and he fainted. He rose and left the house. At this juncture, Tschubukov remarked that such a fool had dared to come seeking the hand of Natalia.

The moment she heard that he had come to propose to her, Natalia changed her tone. She asked her father to bring back Lomov. Her self interest overruled all other considerations like her loyalty to her family. Lomov came back. Natalia was all politeness. She even conceded that the meadow belonged to Lomov. After all, if they were married, the meadow would come to be hers only. Lomov informed that he would go hunting after the harvest. He was sorry that his dog Ugadi limped and he began to praise his dog. He thought that a hundred and twenty five roubles that he had paid for it was very cheap for such a good dog. Natalia, however, thought that it was a very high price because her father had paid only eighty-five roubles for their dog Otkatai, which was a better dog than Ugadi.

Lomov disagreed and asserted that Otkatai had a lower jaw and Ugadi was a far better dog than Otkatai. Once again their pride in their dogs led to another quarrel. Tschubukov came in and joined the quarrel. Lomov once again got excited and he fainted. Tschubukov who knew the importance of getting his daughter married, at once joined the hands of Natalia and Lomov and declared that Natalia agreed to the match.

Natalia too, declared that she was willing and Lomov declared that he too, was happy. Tschubukov shouted for champagne to celebrate the intended marriage.



## APPENDIX C

### **The Synopsis of *The Importance of Being Earnest***

Algernon Moncrieff prepares for the arrival of his aunt, Lady Bracknell, and her daughter, Gwendolen, in his stylish London flat in 1895. His butler, Lane, brings in "Ernest Worthing" (who is listed as "John Worthing" in the cast list and "Jack" in the body of the play, although both Lane and Algernon believe his name is Ernest), who has just returned from the country. Jack reveals he has come to London to propose to Gwendolen. Algernon ridicules the notion of marriage, and says that before Jack can marry Gwendolen, he has to clear up the issue of Cecily. Algernon orders Lane to bring in Jack's cigarette case and shows the inscription: "From little Cecily, with her fondest love to her dear Uncle Jack." Jack says his name is Ernest in town and Jack in the country. Algernon says he has always suspected Jack was a "Bunburyist," and now he has proof.

Jack explains that Thomas Cardew, who adopted him, willed Jack to be guardian to his granddaughter, Cecily. Cecily now lives at Jack's place in the country under the guidance of her governess, Miss Prism. Since Jack must maintain a high level of morality to set an example, he needs an excuse to get into town. He has invented a ne'er-do-well younger brother named Ernest who lives in Albany, and whose problems frequently require Jack's attendance. Algernon confesses that he has invented an invalid in the country, Bunbury, for when he needs to get out of town. Jack insists that he is through with "Ernest," but Algernon maintains that he will need him more than ever if he marries.

Lady Bracknell and Gwendolen arrive. Algernon tells Lady Bracknell that he will be unable to attend her dinner tonight, as Bunbury is ill. They go into the music room. Jack confesses his feelings to Gwendolen, and she admits that she likes him, too, especially since she has always wanted to love someone named Ernest. Jack asks if she would still love him if his name were not Ernest. She would not, she maintains. He proposes to her, and she accepts. Lady Bracknell comes in, and Gwendolen informs her of their engagement. Lady Bracknell says that only she or her father can engage Gwendolen, and orders her to wait in the carriage. After she leaves, Lady Bracknell learns from Jack that he was an orphan, found in a handbag on a train. She is aghast and says she will not allow her daughter to marry him. She leaves and Algernon enters.

Jack tells Algernon what happened, and promises to "kill off" his brother Ernest later in the week. Algernon expresses interest in meeting Cecily, but Jack does not want this to happen, as she is young and pretty. Gwendolen returns. She tells Algernon to turn his back. She asks Jack his address in the country, and Algernon slyly writes this down and checks a train timetable. Gwendolen promises to write Jack daily when he returns to the countryside, and Jack escorts her out. Algernon informs Lane that he will be going Bunburying tomorrow.



In the garden at Jack's country house, Miss Prism and Cecily discuss Jack's seemingly serious demeanor; Miss Prism believes it is due to his anxiety over his reckless brother. Dr. Chasuble enters the garden. He and Miss Prism leave for a walk together. Merriman, their butler, announces the arrival of Ernest Worthing. Algernon enters, pretending to be Ernest. He and Cecily briefly discuss his "wicked" reputation. When he learns that Jack will be back Monday afternoon, Algernon announces that he must leave Monday morning. He flirts with Cecily and they exit into the house.

Miss Prism and Chasuble return. She urges him to get married to a mature lady. Jack enters the garden, dressed in black. He tells Miss Prism he has returned earlier than expected, and explains that he is dressed in black for his brother, who died in Paris last night. Jack asks Chasuble if he would christen him this afternoon. He agrees, and Cecily emerges from the house. She tells him that his brother is in the dining room; Jack says he does not have a brother. She runs into the house and brings out Algernon. Jack refuses to shake Algernon's hand, but Cecily says that "Ernest" has been telling him about his friend Bunbury, and that someone who takes care of an invalid must have some good in him. Everyone but Jack and Algernon leaves. Jack orders Merriman to get the dogcart, as Ernest has been called back to town (he wants to get rid of Algernon). Jack tells Algernon he must leave, while Algernon expresses an interest in Cecily. Jack exits.

Cecily enters the garden. Merriman tells Algernon that the dogcart is ready, but Cecily says it can wait. Algernon compliments Cecily to her great delight. She then tells Merriman that the dogcart can come back next week. He asks Cecily to marry him, and she points out that they have been engaged for three months. "Ever since [she] heard of Jack's wicked brother Ernest" she has loved him. Cecily shows him the box of letters he "wrote" to her (which she really wrote to herself). She also admits that she loves him because his name is Ernest. Upon prompting, she doubts she would be able to love him were his name Algernon. He says he needs to see Chasuble quickly about "christening...I mean on most important business." Algernon exits.

Merriman announces that Gwendolen has asked to see Mr. Worthing (Jack). Cecily informs him that he has gone off to see Chasuble some time ago, but invites her in. Gwendolen immediately takes to Cecily, but wishes Cecily were not so young and alluring, as "Ernest," despite his moral nature, is still susceptible to temptation. Cecily tells her that she is not Ernest's ward, but his brother Jack's. Rather, she is going to marry Ernest. They compare diary entries. Gwendolen feels she has the prior claim, since Ernest asked to marry her yesterday. The girls argue and insult each other.

Jack enters the garden, and Gwendolen asks if he is engaged to Cecily; he laughs and denies it. Cecily says the man before them is her Uncle Jack. As Gwendolen goes into shock, Algernon enters, and Cecily calls him Ernest. She asks if he is married to Gwendolen; he denies it. Gwendolen says that his name is Algernon. Cecily is shocked, and she and Gwendolen hold each other and make up. Jack confesses he has neither a brother named Ernest, nor any brother at all. The women retire to the house. The women retire to the house. Jack is angry at Algernon for stirring up trouble with his Bunburying. They have both arranged for Chasuble to christen them "Ernest" later that evening. Jack tells Algernon to go, but he refuses.

Jack and Algernon join Gwendolen and Cecily inside the country house. The women tell the men their "Christian names are still an insuperable barrier." The men reveal that they are to be re-christened this afternoon, and the couples hug. Lady Bracknell arrives, and Gwendolen informs her of her engagement. Lady Bracknell tells Jack that he may not speak any more to her daughter.

Jack introduces Cecily to Lady Bracknell, and Algernon says that he is engaged to her. Only when Lady Bracknell discovers Cecily has a large personal fortune does she give her consent for their marriage. However, Jack claims that, as his ward, Cecily may not marry without his consent until age 35. He declines to give the necessary consent. He says that he suspects Algernon of being untruthful. He recounts this afternoon's events, in which Algernon impersonated Jack's brother. Jack tells Lady Bracknell that if she consents to his marriage with Gwendolen, he will consent to Cecily's with Algernon. Lady Bracknell refuses and tells Gwendolen to get ready for the train.

Chasuble enters and announces that he is prepared for the christenings. Lady Bracknell refuses to allow Algernon to be baptized, and Jack tells Chasuble that the christenings will not be necessary any more. Chasuble says he will leave, and mentions that Miss Prism is waiting for him. Lady Bracknell asks to see Miss Prism. When she enters, she goes pale upon seeing Lady Bracknell, who accuses her of kidnapping a baby boy from her house 28 years ago. Under Jack's questioning, Miss Prism reveals that she accidentally left the baby in a handbag on the Brighton railway line. Jack leaves excitedly.

Jack returns with this very handbag. Jack tells her he was the baby. Lady Bracknell informs Jack that he is the son of her sister, making him Algernon's older brother. Jack asks Lady Bracknell what his original name was. She says he was named after his father; after locating his name under the Army Lists, they learn his full name is Ernest John Moncrieff. All three couples, Chasuble and Miss Prism, Algernon and Cecily, and Jack and Gwendolen, embrace. Jack tells Lady Bracknell that he has realized, for the first time in his life, "the vital Importance of Being Earnest."

## CURRICULUM VITAE

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