

**SOCIAL INHIBITIONS AND THE
DESIRE TO TRANSCEND SOCIETY IN
HENRIK IBSEN'S PILLARS OF
SOCIETY, A DOLL'S HOUSE AND AN
ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE**

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**by
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For my beloved wife and my newborn cute son...

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AUTHOR DECLARATIONS

1. The material included in this thesis has not been submitted wholly or in part for any academic award or qualification other than that for which it is now submitted.
2. The program of advanced study of which this thesis is part has consisted of:
 - i) Key elements such social inhibitions and desire to transcend community.
 - ii) Analysis of how Ibsen uses the illusion of reality to help the individual to emancipate and free himself from restrictions of society.

Nazmi KAYA

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ABSTRACT

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SOCIAL INHIBITIONS AND THE DESIRE TO TRANSCEND SOCIETY IN HENRIK IBSEN'S PILLARS OF SOCIETY, A DOLL'S HOUSE AND AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

This thesis aims to explore social restrictions and the desire to transcend community in Henrik Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House* and *An Enemy of the People*. The thesis consists of four chapters apart from the Introduction and Conclusion. The first chapter deals with Ibsen's philosophical and literary metamorphosis. It discusses why and how Ibsen had a transformation in literary ideology, that is from an idealistic approach to a realistic one; why and how he reconstructed form and stage props in terms of giving the illusion of reality in his dramas through *Pillars of Society* (1877) to *An Enemy of the People* (1882). The second chapter discusses Ibsen's effective means to reflect the illusion of reality on stage. The chapter sheds light on how Ibsen employed his revolutionary instrument both to enlighten the spectator regarding contemporary problems and to make the audience identify with the characters on stage. The third chapter examines social inhibitions in *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House* and *An Enemy of the People*. Social inhibitions and pressures of bourgeois class created social traumas in the characters' lives. It explains how characters' suffering prevails throughout their personal lives and alienates them from the community. The final chapter focuses on some major characters' efforts to transcend their communities in order to escape from restraints of the bourgeois society. It brings forth how Dina and Lona from *Pillars of Society*, Nora, from *A Doll's House* and doctor Stockmann from *An Enemy of the People* oppose the demands of the hypocritical community, act to be freed from dominant values of society and struggle to transcend their societies.

Key words:

Ibsen's literary metamorphosis, Social Inhibitions, Desire to Transcend the Community, and Bourgeois Values.

KISA ÖZET

Nazmi Kaya

Haziran 2010

HENRIK IBSEN'İN PILLARS OF SOCIETY, A DOLL'S HOUSE VE AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE ADLI ESERLERİNDE SOSYAL BASKI VE TOPLUMUN ÖTESİNE GEÇME ARZUSU

Bu tez Henrik Ibsen'in *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House* ve *An Enemy of the People* adlı eserlerinde sosyal baskı ve bireylerin toplumun ötesine geçme arzusunu incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Tez giriş ve sonuç kısmı hariç dört bölümden oluşmaktadır. İlk bölüm Henrik Ibsen'in felsefi ve edebi başkalaşımını ele almaktadır. Bu kısım Ibsen'in nasıl edebi ideolojide değişim yaşadığını, onun nasıl ülkücü boyuttan gerçekçi çizgiye geçtiğini ve onun *Pillars of Society*'dan (1877) *An Enemy of the People*'a kadar nasıl şekil ve sahne yapısını gerçekçiliğin yansımasını sahnede vermek için kullandığını ele alır. İkinci bölüm Ibsen'in gerçeğin yansımasını sahnede ortaya koymak için kullandığı etkili yöntemlere değinir. Bu bölüm Ibsen'in devrim niteliğindeki yöntemini hem izleyiciyi aydınlatmak hemde seyirciyi o döneme ait olaylarla özdeşleştirme gayretlerini ele alır. Üçüncü bölüm *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House* ve *An Enemy of the People* adlı eserlerde sosyal yasakları ve baskıyı inceler. Baskıcı toplumun sosyal yasakları ve baskıları karakterlerin iç dünyalarında sosyal travmalar yarattı. Bu bölüm karakterlerin acılarının hayatları boyunca kendilerini nasıl olumsuz bir şekilde etkilediğini ve hayatlarına acının nasıl hükmettiğini ve onların toplumdan nasıl soyutlandığını işler. En son bölüm ise bazı önemli bireylerin toplumun ötesine geçme ve burjuvazi toplumunun engellerinden kaçma gayretlerini ortaya koyar. *Pillars of Society* adlı eserde Dina ve Lona, *A Doll's House*'da Nora ve *An Enemy of the People* adlı oyunda Dr. Stockmann adlı karakterlerin iki yüzlü toplumun taleplerine nasıl karşı geldiğini, baskın değerlerden kaçmak için nasıl davrandıklarını ve toplumun ötesine geçme isteklerini irdeler.

Anahtar Kelimeler

Ibsen'in Edebi Başkalaşımı, Sosyal Kısıtlamalar, Toplumun Ötesine Geçme Arzusu ve Burjuvazi Değerler.

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INTRODUCTION

“My task has been the description of humanity.” (Henrik Ibsen)

From 1877 to 1890, Henrik Ibsen wrote a succession of social and ethical plays which “brought a fresh air” to the world of drama. Via these sensational and unusual plays, Ibsen managed to draw attention to speaking the unspeakable and taboo subjects that were not dealt with at the time. Ibsen, explains Einar Haugen, “challenged accepted and conventional views and broke taboos on what could be printed in books and spoken on the stage” (4). Contemporary topics, mainly focusing on the liberty of the individual, were the essential arch of his literary concept.

Subsequent to writing his social plays, particularly, *A Doll's House*, Ibsen was heralded as a champion of female liberation. Followers of the feminist movement and advocates of women's rights praised Ibsen as a feminist writer and most critics adopted the same idea regarding Ibsen's writing ideology. However, in many of his interviews and letters, Ibsen asserted that the problems he wished to center on were not just women's rights and female emancipation, but problems of mankind in general. He was, in Templeton's words, “a poet of the truth of the human soul” (28). Although Ibsen was labeled as a feminist writer and his middle plays particularly focus on the rights of women and though *A Doll's House* was the play that made a resounding impression in the world of drama, Ibsen did not merely reflect problems of the female but men as well. For instance, Johan's (*Pillars of Society*) and Dr. Stockmann's (*An Enemy of the People*) being subject to oppression and their personal calamity is depicted in his plays in a tremendous way which testifies that he is not a feminist but an idealist artist in quest of human liberation.

My thesis will cover social restrictions in the environment of the plays *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's house* and *An Enemy of the People*. With references to various scholars, it will analyze how social inhibitions are exercised by bourgeois codes in the representation of certain characters in each play. It will also present how some major characters' attempt to stand up against the oppression of bourgeois values and consequently, how they endeavor to transcend the bourgeois doctrines in order to grasp self-realization and emancipation.

The first chapter of my thesis will shed light on Ibsen's philosophical and literary metamorphosis. Although Henrik Ibsen's middle plays touched on the subject of emancipation of the individual and even though these plays were mostly known throughout Europe and Anglo-Saxon world, Ibsen's writing style and his literal perspective was different in the period of the works from *Catiline* (1850) to *Emperor and Galilean* (1873). This chapter will discuss why and how Ibsen had a transformation in literary ideology, that is from an idealistic approach to a realistic one; why and how he reconstructed form and stage properties in terms of giving the illusion of reality in his dramas through *Pillars of Society* (1877) to *An Enemy of the People* (1882).

The second chapter of my thesis will discuss Ibsen's effective means to reflect the illusion of reality on stage. The chapter will shed light on how Ibsen employed his revolutionary instrument both to enlighten the spectator regarding contemporary problems and to make the audience identify with the characters on stage. Ibsen produced a new genre of tragic the drama in theatre to show the problems and conflicts of everyday life of the common individual. Using state props and settings to give the illusion of reality in order to accomplish his mission was of infinite consideration for him and his theatrical productions. So, it will deal with how Ibsen learned this realistic technique from Meiningen Company and how he improved this theatrical style, for this company had undeniable contributions to Ibsen's realistic genre. Ibsen, by improving the technique he learned from this company, used realistic stages to give the impression of real rooms, houses, and environments. By implementing a realistic image and creating a modern environment ambiance, in *A Doll's House*, *Pillars of Society* and *An Enemy of the People*, Ibsen attempted to provide the audience with the illusion of reality. This chapter will present Ibsen's methods of characterization onstage as well. Since Ibsen was very meticulous and highly selective when choosing actors to perform in his plays, he set out some conditions to be applied in terms of quality on stage. He desired the actors for his plays to be natural and he required them to be sincere while performing. Ibsen required the actor to be capable of finding the subtext of the play, as well as identifying with his role as if he experienced the situation in order to give the illusion of reality.

The third chapter of my thesis will examine social inhibitions in *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House* and *An Enemy of the People*. Social inhibitions and pressures of bourgeois class created social traumas in the characters' lives. In *Pillar of Society*, Karsten Bernick and Rorlund as representatives of bourgeois class and capitalistic power, oppress innocent individuals such as Johan Betty, Dina and Lona. Particularly Bernick, having built a prosperous and respectable life through marrying Betty, becomes the most influential figure of the town. On behalf of the bourgeois values, Bernick and Rorlund exercise pressure on individuals in the community. Johan, Dina, Betty and Lona are exposed to psychological and sociological traumas. These characters' suffering prevails throughout their personal lives and alienates them from the community.

In *A Doll's House*, Nora's treatments by her husband and her father as a doll, rather than a mature and rational individual, generates unrecoverable damage to her personality. Because Torvald has to meet the conventions and expectations of bourgeois society; he almost never values Nora as an independent human being. In the name of bourgeois values, Torvald approaches Nora as if she were an inferior creature who does not deserve any respect. What the middle class community requires from her is just being a proper mother and wife. She is denied to live her freedom and she is kept away from being an independent figure. In *An Enemy of the People*, for the sake of material interest and financial desire, the patriot doctor Thomas Stockman is ensnared and he suffers both physically and spiritually. With the aim of protecting his townspeople and citizens from neighboring cities, he struggles to disinfect the productive baths but ends up demoralized and attacked both by the authorities and the townspeople. He and his family members are alienated and devastated by the capitalistic power.

The final chapter of my thesis will focus on some major characters' efforts to transcend their communities in order to escape from restraints of the bourgeois society. Dina, from *Pillars of Society*, defies both Rorlund and Bernick Karsten in a courageous way. She objects to the teachings of Rorlund and expresses disdain at the attitude he exhibits towards women. Apart from Rorlund, Lona does something that no one dares to do in the society; she exerts pressures on Bernick so as he confesses his wrong deeds. And his pressures and criticism yield fruit: Bernick confesses his

wrong deeds and he returns Johan's good name. In the same play, Dina acts bravely to escape the inconvenience that the bourgeois community causes. She rejects to marrying Rorlund who is a representative of social codes, thus, repudiates the requirements of the middle class. She intends to travel to America to be herself and to be freed from dominant values of society.

Nora, from *A Doll's House* acts in a way that people hearing it, end up with amazement. She abandons her husband and children in order to educate herself and be an unrestrained individual. She demonstrated the courage to decline being an obedient wife and a proper mother. Although her husband insists her on staying with him, she shows perseverance to leave the requirements of her society behind. She abandons Helmer for he is the representative of oppressing values in order to escape the despotic and hypocritical society. In *An Enemy of the People*, doctor Stockmann fights with the capitalistic system and opposes the demands of the hypocritical community all by himself. Even though he is left alone and deserted to live his unfortunate fate by the hypocritical press, he does not surrender to the authoritarian dominance; instead, he challenges both the leaders and the majority in a fearless manner. In spite of brutal suppression and intimidation, he tries to prove that he is right with his decision concerning the restoration of the baths and the majority is wrong in disagreeing with him.

By his middle plays, Henrik Ibsen reflected an unusual and attractive dramatic portrait of the everyday situations in impressive manner in his middle plays. The impression of his realistic plays did not only contribute to the individuals who sought a way to human liberation at his age but marked a new epoch in the world dramatic literature as well.

CHAPTER 1

IBSEN'S METAMORPHOSIS

Ibsen became well-known via his social plays such as *Pillars of Society*, *An Enemy of the People*, *Ghosts* and *A Doll's House*. These social plays not only generated a new era in drama but also contributed to changing the social thought of his generation. Before the above-mentioned plays, Ibsen's writing career was occupied with verse poems and plays which focused on mythology, the history of his nation and its folklore. In these works, Ibsen sought to satisfy the glory and pride of his motherland as an independent nation and this attitude carried on until he wrote his social plays.

In order to comprehend the social inhibitions on the characters of Ibsen's tragedies and discern some certain major characters' longing for transcending the community, we need to go over the transformation that Ibsen had within his writing career. We also ought to examine Ibsen's metamorphoses to grasp the idea of comparing these two different Ibsens before we can analyze his social plays dealing with communal restrictions and the desires of some of the major characters' in *Pillars of Society*, *An Enemy of the People* and *A Doll's House* to emancipate themselves by overcoming the pressures and oppression of society.

For the sake of critiquing social oppression of the modern community and establishing social liberty, Henrik Ibsen's concept of drama shifted from an idealistic to a realistic approach, from verse-written poems and plays to prose plays and from rhythmic and imagistic works to life-like stage and representation in tragedy. Prior to taking each transformation into consideration in Ibsen, first I will deal with the reasons why Ibsen needed these transformations in his career.

1.1 GROUNDS FOR IBSEN'S EVOLUTION

Before writing his social plays, which not only dealt with problems of society but also touched upon the necessity of an individual's re-identification of himself, Ibsen was deeply obsessed with philosophical, folkloric, historical and mythological matters in his verse plays and poems. His first period plays, which extend from *Catiline* (1850) to *Emperor and Galilean* (1873), exhibited the youthful experiments in which he strived, as Hartley and Ladu remark, "to dignify and popularize the

native Norwegian history and folklore that had been submerged by the influence of the Danish culture imposed upon Norway” (123). When we consider Ibsen’s pre-realistic works we can get an understanding why he abandoned his radical and nationalist concept of tragedy in order to follow a completely fresh path in his works. Ibsen changed his concept of tragedy and started his realistic plays because of the idea that he contemplated his nation was not struggling to adapt to the European countries in industrial and cultural revolution and they were to be warned: He was unsatisfied with his mythological and historical characters in his previous dramas: And as a last motive, he thought that the materialistic aspect of his nation went beyond the spiritual perspective.

Apparently, Ibsen was not optimistic about the future of Norwegians and he felt responsible in awakening the nation from engagement with outmoded notions of the past and the dilemma of numbness of the mind and this triggered a revolution that contributed to enlightening his nation both spiritually and psychologically. Schweizer suggests that Ibsen believed that the Norwegians had to be awakened from their outdated ideas, he not only desired an enlivening in the mind but the soul as well. Additionally, this new consciousness had to be a revolution which would go beyond political freedom and material satisfaction (51). Ibsen believed he was able to realize this process of stimulation and his nation was appropriate as a role model for his writings plus his performances to reflect the existing problems of the day.

Ibsen thought the implementation of mythological and historical characters in his early dramas and poems were out of date, and as a result, this was an instigator of the stylistic change in his writing career of tragedy. Characters from unknown and mysterious backgrounds did not satisfy Ibsen’s longing for naturalistic stage exhibition. J. L. Styan states that “the time had come for the stage to be peopled with creatures with genuine roots and authentic backgrounds. Causes and effects in society awaited an honest treatment, and vast new territories of theme and content lay open to the scientific explorer” (19). Stage characters from the country of nowhere and protagonists from the far away countries, which had no contribution to creating a naturalistic and realistic stage atmosphere, disturbed Ibsen a lot. This is why, Ibsen brought forth his own characters from his own world and time, with genuine backgrounds and original histories.

The last aspect that led to a transformation in Ibsen's works is the increase in materialism and the decrease in the spiritual practice in contemporary life. As the European world continued to develop, Ibsen believed it had some deficiencies in faith and the individual's vision concerning his relationship with environment and his concept of universal values. The reasons which might have triggered Ibsen's concept of tragedy to change to a more realistic style are complicated but there are some significant details which can be outlined. According to Charles Lyons, the philosophy of the nature-character relationship and the concept of a man-focused (rather than god-oriented) world affected writings in literature (146). Ibsen was aware that the function of the church and the teachings that it conveyed to mankind was attracting less followers. In the nineteenth century, as a materialistic side outweighed the spiritual perspective, according to Katarzyna and Emerson, concern to the values that the church proclaimed was less than the previous centuries. Thus, as the focus on the spirituality was reduced the attention to the products that mankind generated became more appealing and more popular (17). After a change in the perspective of the society of his time, Ibsen realized that it was inevitable to draw the attention of the people to a point that spirituality was not successful on, it was the role of writings in Literature.

All in all, some major factors such as Ibsen's effort to enlighten his nation from old-fashioned conceptions, his discontentedness with characters from history and mythology as well as materialistic attraction, which was replaced with spirituality, inspired an evolution in Ibsen's perception of tragedy.

1.2 TRANSITION FROM IDEALISM TO REALISM

Ibsen's social and realistic plays indicate a great many innovations from his earlier tragedies. One of the changes that he had in his drama was disposing of idealism and adopting realism in his works of tragedy.

Regarding an author's change from one state to another, E.M. Forster poses the question that "Can the habits of forty years be set aside?" (8) Of course he does not leave the question unanswered. He replies: "yes, most people are romantic at twenty, owing to lack of experience. As they grow older life offers various alternatives, such as worldliness or philosophy or the sense of humor, and they usually accept one of these... (8). Henrik Ibsen was also the above-mentioned type who leaped from one

stage to another. During the earlier periods of his life he was a poet, a lyricist. Although his poetic side is not so emphasized in his brilliant career, he wrote many satirical and philosophical poems which display his keenness for classical mythology. His outstanding philosophic poem *Balloon Letter to a Swedish Lady*, written in 1870, can be included as one such instance.

In the early part of his career, Henrik Ibsen seemed indifferent to utilize revolutionary reforms and innovations in his dramatic concept and technique. Paul M. Cubeta is of the view that “his first plays were experimental efforts to dignify Norwegian folklore and history, and here his bent was toward poetic and satiric dramas” (86). Norway needed artists who would glorify its history and national treasures, who would be bridges transporting its rich heritage to the future generations, would employ their fabulous artistic usage of satiric dramas, and make the culture and folklore of the Norwegian people known throughout the world. Ibsen assumed himself to be one of these artists, and he used his art to the service of his idealistic approach in his early periods of his career.

If his early three poetic dramas are taken into meticulous consideration, his nationalist idealism through nationalism in terms of glorifying royal sagas and elevating the folkloric scenes and making use of fjords¹, can be noticed easily. On decorating folklore and ballad in his philosophical and mythological instruments in *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, Haugen says; “*Brand* struck the keynote of life in the West Norwegian fjords, constricted, rugged, puritanical-as Ibsen had observed it on his folklore expedition” (41). Haugen also points to the fact that “in *Peer Gynt* Ibsen made extensive use of folklore and ballad material but he did not sentimentalize it or even take it seriously. He wove it into a rhapsody so philosophically skillfully that it has become a major symbol of Norwegian national identity” (41). Making use of balladic and folkloric motives, both extended the borders of Ibsen’s idealistic

¹ A fjord is a geological feature caused by glaciations, with distinctive examples of fjords being found in Norway, Greenland, Chile, parts of Alaska and Canada, the Arctic, and New Zealand. A fjord is caused by flooding of a glacial valley with sea water, and typically occurs on Western shores with highly durable rock which resists erosion by other forces, leaving the basic fjord shape intact over the centuries. Norway in particular is known for its fjords, which are a popular tourist attraction and summer retreat for Norwegians.

perspective broader in terms of introducing national heritage and supplied an international cultural value.

After his verse plays, Ibsen intended to use prose in his plays. With *The League of Youth* Ibsen lifted noneffective burden of using historical drama of the world and inaugurated writing his prose plays series about modern topics (Haugen 48). Some critics who are both in favor or against Ibsen's concept of tragedy claim that the real Ibsen comes into view after his prose play *The League of Youth*. Concerning the period after *The League of Youth*, E.M. Forster remarks that "the singer dies, the social castigator is born, the scene clarifies and darkens, and ideas come to the front... We pass from the epic to the domestic. *Peer Gynt* becomes Hjalmar Ekdal, and Brand as Gregers Werle tears the spectacles of illusion from his eyes..." (qtd. in Bloom 7). Since Ibsen was well-informed about domestic life of Norway and Europe through the newspaper conjecture, he noticed that long historical and mythological sagas, ballads and old-dated verse plays were of no use any more.

Rejecting verse style and adopting prose techniques, Ibsen desired to influence the reader by highlighting the significance of the individual. He left his idealism and radical nationalism aside; his new form attempted to dignify the individual, who Ibsen thought was despised and ignored by the oppression of modern society. Instead of ennobling Norwegian folklore, history, and sagas, he centered on the individual. Regarding this break from idealism and striving against the institutionalized values, in his book *Modern Drama in Theory and Practice*, J. L. Styan touches upon this subject, stating that "the nineteenth century had begun in the full flush of the romantic movement, which affected virtually every form of artistic expression by its mood of radical idealism, spontaneity of feeling and faith in the visionary imagination" (2). Ibsen acted as an initiator of escaping this process and he thought plays and performances had to be appealing and comprehensive to question the established values and codes.

Subsequent to writing his verse- plays which dealt with the social, ethical and contemporary matters of society- Ibsen needed a new style in his prose plays, a new way of communicating with his readers and audience. He thought the writer was distant from his reader, and the dramatist was detached from his spectators; he thought he needed something entirely new to help the spectator comprehend the actor

on stage. This instrument of communication with the reader or spectator was supposed to be in simple, everyday language. The initial significant products of his innovation – his breakdown with idealism, transferring to realism – were *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts* and *An Enemy of the People*. In these precious plays, Ibsen touched various controversial problems of society, topics that were sensitive to discuss and he touched upon matters that people dared not speak about. He brilliantly practiced them on his stage in simple everyday language.

In order to draw the spectator into the stage atmosphere and to give the illusion of peering into real events, Ibsen employed divergent situations of everyday life. Using a variety of subjects and examples to display a wide range of contemporary situations, Ibsen referred to a number of sensitive topics. In *Ibsen's Drama: Author to Audience*, Einar Haugen expresses: His plots are not all journalistic, of course, but they do include a great many situations that he had not experienced firsthand: divorce, incest, paresis, political corruption, suicide, poisoned drinking water, arson, murder, seduction, child neglect, and financial swindles. He used these themes, not for their own sakes, but because they gave his spectators the illusion of observing real events. (50)

Ibsen's social prose plays *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll House*, *An Enemy of the People* and other plays ushered a new age in both Ibsen's life and in the history of European stage. *Pillars of Society* contributed him to gain recognition in Scandinavia and *A Doll's House* brought him fame in the Anglo-Saxon world. These plays announced his disengagement from idealism and they were the first modern plays which endorsed Ibsen to be a world figure.

1.3 SPEAKING THE LANGUAGE OF GODS: IBSEN'S CONVERSION FROM VERSE TO PROSE

Ibsen had an aim and in order to get his target become fruitful, he wanted to implement a language style that would serve his ideal. Putting the illusion of reality on stage required a an effective and penetrating language and this language was prose. Ibsen, recognizing inadequacies in verse style, had to employ a new approach to address his reader. Ibsen realized that in order to generate characters who would produce the illusion of reality, he chose to use prose rather than verse in his middle plays. Dawn Jeannette Schweizer argues that for the sake of reflecting the illusion of

reality, Ibsen exercised a great effort to have his characters talk in a natural way. Apart from that, he wanted each of them to use the language in a distinguishable manner. To project his vision on the language regarding being natural and discernible, verse could not assist him as prose could and thereupon, he avoided using verse so that he would be able present his modern characters for his realistic plays (77).

Of course, giving up verse and using prose in his modern plays was not the only revolution Ibsen realized. He reshaped the content of his plays and decorated them with simple and ordinary events which would deeply penetrate the spectator's feelings. Many critics of drama debate that Ibsen modified the molecules of drama seriously when he applied prose instead of verse. On his transition from verse to prose, K. M. Newton suggests:

When Ibsen moved on from verse and the heightened form of drama associated with it to a drama that employed modern prose with characters and situation treated in accordance with this new form of dramatic language, a social and historical dimension was introduced that changed the nature of serious drama... . (10)

In addition to exercising prose on the stage, Ibsen fortified the role of actor by not only allowing him speak in a natural attitude but also providing him with the opportunity of giving naturalness from himself as a contribution to the dialogue so that it would make the performance more authentic.

Previous to writing his social plays, Ibsen dealt with either Norwegian or ancient history or mythological archetypes in his dramas. As it is obvious, he either used verse in many of these earlier plays or he used verse in some passages. Subsequent to *Emperor and Galilean* in the second half, Ibsen neither wrote in verse again, nor referred to historical motives but focused on topics concerning the contemporary Norway (Gray 2). Ibsen's modest and plain use of prose and his focus on contemporary topics and vital problems in society relating to the emancipation of the individual resounded for a long time both in the Scandinavian and European world. Ibsen's focus on the modern scene with brilliant clear topics and realism, without using poetic language, assisted greatly the literal influence that he aimed to give. Before Ibsen no other dramatist could integrate modern perspective and social

drawbacks with such perseverance (Gray 2). Before Ibsen, no any other dramatist was considered to have a deep impact on the genealogy of the advancement of modern drama. However, Ibsen's social works represented the literary history of the 19th century in an extraordinary way.

Ibsen's emphasis on the dialogue and speech on the stage can be noticed in many of his letters and statements. Ibsen required the reader or the spectator to feel the rhythm of realism both performed on stage and written in books. In one of his letters on the implementation of language, Ibsen regarded dialogue as one of the most substantial components of a play and he wished it to be as comprehensible to everyday language as possible. He thought the modulations and prosodies that exist only in books have to be dealt with carefully in plays, especially in his (Ibsen) plays since the reader or the audience has to be convinced that it is really experienced like something real from life (Letters 211).

Ibsen's evolution was not only stemmed from his rejection of verse in his plays but also his repudiating of the stage techniques and settings which would produce the illusion of reality. Replying to one of Edmund Gosse's questions concerning the writing method and style, Ibsen states:

The illusion I wish to produce is that of truth itself; I want to produce upon the reader the impression that what he is reading is actually taking place before him. If I were to use verse, I should by so doing be stultifying my own intention and the object which I placed before me. The variety of every-day and unimportant characters which I have intentionally introduced into the piece would be effaced and blended into one another if I had allowed them all to converse in a rhythmic movement.... My new drama is not indeed a tragedy in the old-world signification of the word, but what I have tried to depict in it is human beings, and for that very reason I have not allowed them to talk the language of the gods! (qtd in Egan 79)

Ibsen analyzed individual speech patterns of simple and ordinary life, and he depicted these patterns in his plays thoroughly. The characters he studied and their speech patterns which he employed, were ideal models and they were very appropriate instances to flash the illusion of reality in his works. Critics are in conflict on whether Ibsen's books or his plays performed on stage had deep

influences on the audiences of the time. Paul Johnson is one of the critics who thinks that his devotion to using prose in combination with staging them as theatrical performances effected the audience tremendously. Johnson proposes that by the virtue of *Brand*, Ibsen happened to be more dedicated to performances that reflected revolutionary messages. Additionally, Ibsen came to the conclusion that such plays would have more impact if exhibited on stage than if read in books. This idea made him reject poetry and adopt prose with a new type of dramaturgical realism. He embraced the idea that verse was for visions and prose was for ideas (85).

In order to communicate with the audience and convey his message of delivering liberty for the individual, Ibsen preferred prose rather than verse in his middle plays. He wanted something new which would trigger a desire in the minds of his audience to identify with incidents exhibited on the stage. The usage of prose generated naturalistic and realistic illusions on stage and this played an important role on Ibsen's dream of revolutionizing a transition from fantasy and mythology based works to everyday life situations in art and literature.

1.4 TRANSFORMATION IN FORM AND REPRESENTATION OF CHARACTERS

Apart from shifting his writing technique from verse to prose, and his stance from idealism to realism, Ibsen desired that his works reflect the atmosphere of the real in tragedy. He thought and created life-like plots, life-like characters and life-like stage design which would help the spectator grasp this tenet. Ibsen aimed to show that he was really different: His drama was diversified and the mythological and historical characters and plots would no longer occupy his stage. D. Jeannette Schweizer touches upon this situation in more details and says that "Ibsen's capacity to visualize his individual characters to the extent that he did surely is a large part of the reason that they seem so life-like. It is also clear that these physical descriptions fit with his intent of creating the illusion of reality on stage" (79). Additionally, on Ibsen's intention of disengagement from works that involved motives of the past, Schweizer advances that Ibsen wished not to deal with the theater of the past any longer and he knew that whether he wanted to create realistic images in drama, life-like protagonists were suitable to complete this task (79). Projecting a frame from

real life factors through his characters' performance was a noteworthy conduct that Ibsen aimed to display.

In early parts of his career, Ibsen dealt with themes of nationalism, mythology and so on. In these plays and poems, Ibsen's classic eulogistic method on his country was obvious. However, as soon as there was an evolution in his literary movement, his writing style and the content of his plays were reshaped as well. He wished his plays to reflect subjects from stories of real life, so, he pictured significant events that everyday life presented. In this way, his dramas displayed the sociological and psychological spirit of the time in which the audience was expected to identify with. One can easily recognize this distinguishable feature in his social plays and in the actions of his protagonists such as Nora, Dr. Stockmann, Karsten Bernick, and Mrs. Alving. In *Ibsen: A Dissenting View*, Ronald Gray supports this by uttering that "he made his plays tell by actions rather than words. Nora slams the door on her husband; Mrs. Alving holds in her own hand the poison with which she may have to end her son's life; Hedda Gabler almost visibly destroys Lavborg as she burns his manuscript in the stove" (3). Ibsen's characters, apart from mirroring genuine situations from daily life in their dialogues, endeavored to prove their mission via their actions on the life-like stage in his social plays. They bravely touched upon and exhibited the forbidden topics such as rights of women, forgery, and emancipation of women in *A Doll's House*, sexual diseases and incest in *Ghosts*, the power of money and press in *An Enemy of the People*, adultery, corruption and ignoring societal values in *Pillars of Society*.

Ibsen's transformation was obvious in vision and form as well. His usage of archetypes and other symbols to dignify the Norwegian treasures and his mythological notions to reflect sagas via verse came to a full stop. This break constitutes radical modifications in his prose plays. Lots of serious alterations were realized: Norwegian heroes, mythological warriors, green and outstanding landscapes of Norway, seas, and deserts were pushed aside and new notions regarding the naturalistic illusion of tragedy appeared on his stage. Ronald Gaskell argues the fact that in terms of appearance and style, the distance between Ibsen's *Peer Gynt* and his prose plays of modern life is clearly pointed out: An Oslo drawing room is preferred to mountains, sea and desert; Boyg, the swarming trolls and

German woman are replaced with Dr. Stockmann, Nora and Mrs. Alving. We feel ourselves as if we are in an everyday dialogue due to a casual conversation rather than a poetic or pompous dialogue (85).

Without a doubt, we can claim that language was a crucial element in the development of the form that Ibsen's plays would take. In addition to the functional role of the language Ibsen implemented, he gave prominence to the visual aspect of his stage settings and properties as well to make the audience identify with performance showed on stage.

To sum up, Ibsen's metamorphosis in terms of writing style, change from an idealistic approach to a realistic one, and character's representation in his tragedy brought a variety of innovations which enhanced his charismatic career in modern tragedy. Ibsen felt a shift and consequently he changed his style of writing and his writing ideology in his drama for the sake of individual freedom and social independence.

CHAPTER 2

THE ILLUSION OF REALITY: HENRIK IBSEN'S MEDIUM TO DISCLOSE HIS MISSION

Henrik Ibsen's dramas starting from *Pillars of Society* to *An Enemy of the People* explored topics that were contemporary and they dignified the individual rather than community. His famous plays, particularly, *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House* and *An Enemy of the People* were committed to paper with a great effort and care to achieve an unusual mission: to dignify the common individual and his rights, to reveal the pressures of the community, and to display how the individual struggled or had to struggle against society to overcome its restraints. To accomplish this undertaking, Ibsen utilized a revolutionary tool in his social dramas and this instrument was nothing else but the illusion of reality.

Prior to H. Ibsen, the notion of tragedy focused on a person of high social position: the Greek dramatists centered on heroes or gods; Shakespeare dealt with officials, kings or princes. In spite of their social rank, they were not exempt from exceptional suffering and misfortunes, but it should be born in mind that misfortunes in tragedy neither simply occur, nor are sent; rather, they originate from the deeds of the protagonist and are the product of imperfections and weaknesses in the character of the protagonist. This point takes us directly to Ibsen's concept of tragedy. Ibsen produced a new genre of tragic drama which, according to Harold Bloom, "combines his conversion of Shakespearean tragedy and Goethean fantasy into a new kind of Northern tragicomedy" (351). Apart from Bloom's approach toward Ibsen's genre, it can be noticed that Ibsen's concept of tragedy breaks away from the tragedy of the personage to the tragedy of the common individual. Concerning this point, George Bernard Shaw articulates that "whereas Shakespeare has put ourselves on the stage but not our situations, Ibsen gives not only ourselves, but ourselves in our own situations. The things that happen to his stage figures are things that happen to us" (200). Ibsen attempted to bring to the theatre the problems and conflicts of the everyday life of the common individual so as to show that these problems, solved or unsolved, had both the nobility and value of Greek or Shakespearean tragedy, together with being a part of the problem of the common individual.

Ibsen's concept of tragedy, which dealt with the common individual and set out to exhibit the problems of everyday life, was seen as an amazing step in the realm of drama. Why he chose to write his plays in this manner, and how the illusion of reality that he tried to produce contributed to the tragic quality of his plays are two key issues. Catharsis, which is the purging of the emotions of pity and fear, according to Aristotle, is one of the requirements of tragedy. Concerning these emotions, provided that they are to be purged, first they have to be activated in a way, and this requires that the spectator, to a certain extent, identify with the characters and conditions of drama (18). The successful tragedies of the past achieved this. Why, then, did Ibsen break with the forms of the past and employ new models of tragedy that would generate the illusion of reality? Probably, Ibsen deemed that the readers or audience reading his books or watching his plays would be better able to identify with the characters exhibited in them. It might be possible to identify with a character like Oedipus, who killed his father and married his mother, but how close does this come to real life. Regarding identification with the performance displayed on stage, I would like to refer to G.B. Shaw's famous quotation saying that "today our uncles seldom murder their fathers, and can not legally marry our mothers; our kings are not as a rule stabbed and succeeded by their stabbers; and when we raise money by bills we do not promise to pay pounds of flesh" (200). Ibsen's demonstration of contemporary social problems and issues probably affected his audience who had experienced similar situations. Many married women surely empathized with Nora and many men certainly put themselves in the places of characters who struggled with the attraction of material wealth and power. Ibsen's aptness and gift to present the universal tragic in the usual situations of life, as well as his competence in producing the illusion of reality on stage, provided a new type of drama for the European stage in the nineteenth century, and over time, refashioned the concept of tragedy.

The Danish critic and Ibsen's onetime friend, George Brandes, had an enormous effect on Ibsen's newly established concept, that is the illusion of reality. Brandes's proclamation to Ibsen was that what makes a literature gain a place in society is that it raises sensitive topics to be discussed. To set an example, George Sand raises the problem of relations between the sexes, Byron and Feuerbach touches upon the

topics of religion, John Stuart Mill and Proudhon debate property and Turgenev, Spielhagen and Emilie Augier refer to communal situations. A literature which does not bring problems up for discussion collapses with all its meaning (qtd. in Tennant 388). Ibsen, probably took his preacher's (Brandes) words into consideration and thought that his works had to achieve something else apart from entertaining and dealing with matters about his nation. He regarded that a play needed not be just entertainment, on the contrary, it had to be "an honest and penetrating inquiry into the way we live" (Gaskell 23).

In the light of Brandes' advice on the effect of literature and its mission to refresh the human soul, Ibsen turned his direction to topical situations, the situations that the common individual experienced in everyday life. In order to be aware of these common problems, Ibsen paid attention to newspapers and other readings that dealt with stories from real life. Newspapers conveyed information about contemporary life for which he looked for. The press extended its coverage to the whole world bringing to people the calamities and the comedies of mankind as never before. Ibsen and his generation were exposed to an explosion of information concerning incidents that were far from their personal lives. The contemporary issues he read and topical matters he heard were conveyed in his plays. Some of the issues he transformed into his works were discussed and they were sensational topics which newspapers wrote about again and again. For instance, the arguments in *Pillars of Society* were distinctly contemporary: in England unseaworthy ships were discussed, and in Norway this same problem was equivalently sensitive in ship owning and seafaring. The act of foreman Aune who symbolizes the working class, displays the rising discontent of the proletariat. It reminds us that the return of Johan Tenessen and Lona Hessel from America is a reflection of the late 1870s, which was an age of emigration from Norway to America. Young people in this period were keen on finding better possibilities and more freedom. The discussions in *A Doll's House* are similar incidents which are taken from real life: Nora's story was taken from the experience of Laura Kieler, who was an acquaintance of Ibsen. Thus, the experience of familiar individuals and real events that were reported to Ibsen from the contemporary day inspired Ibsen to reflect them in his plays. Apart from situations taken from real life, topics such as divorce, political corruption, suicide, arson,

murder, poisoned drinking water, child neglect and financial deceit were internationally sensational topics and these topics were skillfully embroidered in the art of Ibsen (Haugen 50). He implemented these brilliant themes not for their own sakes, but because they provided the spectators with the illusion of peering into real events.

Ibsen's implied assumption was that a play must not only give an aesthetic experience but also disturb people, and it should be able to induce the spectator to rethink. In order to cause his spectator to reevaluate and question, Ibsen considered absolute realism and paid much attention to it. He thought that to inject absolute reality, he had to produce a kind of life-like scene while the spectator was in the theater. As his stated philosophy was to endow the illusion of reality through his plays, by taking everyday topics from real life, he had to employ stage properties such as setting, character and dialogue meticulously in order to achieve his objective. Ibsen wanted his drama to be so close to actual life so that he could convince his audience to identify with what he/she saw on stage, and he thought the way to accomplish this was to use setting and stage props and methods of characterization in an impressive manner.

2.1 SETTING AND STAGE PROPS

Henrik Ibsen recognized the concept that there are two elements to consider in a play: the literary production and the theatrical performance. When one of the members of the Danish Royal Theatre asked to perform the *Pillars of Society* before the publishing of the work in the book form, Ibsen rejected this request. One important cause for his refusal was his aesthetic discontent. He was of the idea that the literary work and its theatrical production had to match up with each other, and since theatre goers would be more influenced by a book, acting on the stage had to be more concrete and penetrating. Concerning this he remarks: "As things stand now, a new play can never be considered and judged on its own, purely and simply as a literary work. The judgment will always include both the play and its performance. These two entirely different things are mixed up together; and as a rule the public is more interested in the acting and the actors than in the play itself" (Letters 169).

Ibsen designed the text to express itself as the actors did on stage. Yet, on account of writing most of his plays to be staged, he was keen on exerting a certain amount of

influence on how his works were to be performed. All the same, he was set on creating the illusion of reality, and this was not something that the Scandinavian theatres were doing when he was writing his realist plays.

The visual feature was essential in advancing Ibsen's realistic method, and his stage directions supply a vital means of influencing the theatrical side of his works. John Northam declares that "Ibsen presents his characters not only through dialogue but also through suggestiveness of visual details contained in his visually important stage-directions, which so many producers have perverted..." (11). The illustration that Ibsen draws with his stage directions shows the image of the characters and places that he had in mind when he produced his dramatic works. This was a conception that he used to construct the illusion of reality in the reading or observing of his plays.

From 1851 to 1862, Ibsen had an efficient apprenticeship in the classical type of professional theatre, creating works within the romantic tradition long before his evolution into realism with his first social play *Pillars of Society* in 1877. Of course, his mere realism was not a kind of gift from God, nor did it not emerge all of a sudden. His focus on reality and the illusion it could produce were influenced by other outside factors as well. According to Tennant, there were two outside factors that helped Ibsen's realistic technique improve: George Brandes, and the Meiningen Company (53). Brandes' critical and theoretical productions, along with his writings regarding Shakespeare's realism, probably had an influence on Ibsen's tragedies, especially his realistic works. Brandes realized Ibsen's gift as a young artist, but he also was critical of Ibsen's dialogues of the characters in his earlier works since they appeared to "come from a spectator rather than an actor...letting the characters utter sentences that are far too general, self-conscious and suitable to a thousand occasions" when the plays required the language to fit a particular situation (qtd. in Meyer 290). Brandes, who advanced his friendship with Ibsen, had a great impression on Ibsen via his individual comments, and uttering, enlightening him with new strategies and methods to use for his realistic dramas.

Ibsen, in 1876, got acquainted with the Meiningen players when he was invited to be the honored guest for their production of *The Pretenders*. The Meiningen Company, which was known for its realistic productions, paid specific attention to

particular issues and details in building historically accurate sets by carefully researching the time period of the work prior to starting the set design. In order to fashion the costumes, the company also used authentic materials, and even imported clothes if they were needed. Apart from that, furniture and props were sometimes manufactured by the Meiningen Company to create an illusionary atmosphere of a real place. The Meiningen Company had a strong impact on theatre, particularly Ibsen's theatrical directions, which "stemmed in large part from its ability to realize more fully than had any previous company the then-current ideal of absolute illusion" (Brockett and Findlay 37-38). Realizing the benefit of such sets, properties and costumes, Ibsen attempted to use them in his later productions in order to produce the illusion of reality. It appeared that Ibsen's contact with Meiningen Company, at this point in his career, affected the progress of his realistic stage technique immensely.

Ibsen's purpose was the dramatic illusion of reality in his theatrical productions and the way to this was the identification of the audience with what they saw on stage. Following his introduction to the Meiningen Company and acquaintance with Brandes, Ibsen preserved what he had experienced from the Meiningen and Brandes and he strived to improve his skill by paying more attention to stage and setting. Ibsen thought that stage and setting were capable of giving a perfect picture of life. What he expected from the stage was that it be effective and original; it ought to be constructed to reflect the visuality of the situation, both as an interior and a landscape. His opinion was that if it is an interior, it should be built with four sides and four walls, and one should not care about the fourth wall, since it would later disappear enabling the spectators to observe what is going on stage. By making use of a close to realistic ceiling, beams and overhead properties, an interior set must be styled as if the room or part of the living area were a section of a whole house in order to give the impression of reality. The decorator of the stage, then, should fill his stage with a number of props so as to give the atmosphere of inhabitation. The area had to give the impression of the illusion of the real thing (Styan 27).

Previous to the Ibsen's stage directions, flats on stage were painted and decorated to give the illusion of three dimensions, but the illusion failed since the performers had to walk up and down on a stage, which spoiled the ambiance. Doors and curtains

of the flats were painted and most of the props were shaped as two dimensional cut-outs. Having had a lot of experience, especially in the Meiningen Company, Ibsen later discovered that the traditional means of staging plays, particularly scenes where outdoor settings were contained, would not be suitable for the plays he was writing. On this point, Tennant states: “It was only the realization that the illusion was becoming insufficient that led him to his conventional realistic technique” (40). In order to reduce the inelegance and awkwardness of outdoor sceneries, Ibsen diverted his direction to interior settings for many of his works, and performance was often restricted to a single room. This strategy simplified the setting and helped to produce the illusion of reality.

From 1877, when *Pillars of Society* was published, until 1886, the date of publication of *Rosmerholm*, all of Ibsen’s plays were set indoors, with the first three of these plays taking place in one and the same room. Ibsen employed indoor setting as a result of his determined effort to generate the illusion of realism. In his first social drama, *Pillars of Society*, the first act occurs in Consul Bernick’s morning-room, the second one in the yard, the third one on the road by the shore, and the last one takes place in the woods. In all these settings, he implemented modern environmental ambiance, blending the interior with the fourth wall to reflect the illusion of reality. In *Pillars of Society*, the following setting is portrayed: we notice a vast morning-room in Consul Bernick’s house. In the front ground on the left we see a door moving towards the consul’s room; on the same wall there is a door in the back. There is a large entrance-door in the middle of the opposite wall. The wall in the backyard is almost completely made of mirrors, with an open door showing us the expansive garden steps. One can easily notice part of the garden at the bottom of steps which is surrounded by a fence with a small gate. On the other side of the fence, there is a street which is surrounded by small brightly-colored wooden houses. The season is summer and the sun is shining. People, from time to time, pass by in the street; they stop and have conversations, sometimes, they walk to the shop on the corner to do their shopping (Tennant 52). Similar scenes from daily life are abundant in the setting of *Pillars of Society* and we realize that Ibsen for the first time gives directions for a realistic setting to manipulate the stage in order to create an atmosphere so that the audience can identify with the events going on the stage. In

regard to the setting of the houses and their influence on the spectator, P.F.D Tennant adds that “with *Pillars of Society*, Ibsen inaugurates his series of modern indoor plays, and he becomes a master in electrifying these settings with dramatic potentiality. The dramatic importance of the ground plan and elevation of the houses in which his plays are set, together very often with the locality in which the houses stand, is very great in Ibsen’s work” (56).

Ibsen’s stable determination proceeds with *A Doll’s House* to project the illusion of realism through setting and stage. In *A Doll’s House*, all the actions take place in one single room. The Helmers’ living room is characteristic of any middle class room that was found at the time. The room has four doors and each door has its significant function. Especially the door leading to the hall is of great value in term of dramatic tension. This dramatic tension is supplied when Krogstad’s letter to Nora lies in the hall letter box. The tension in this letter is enhanced by off stage noises and talking (Tennant 59). Ibsen’s consideration and his significance of the dramatic merit is well portrayed in *A Doll’s House* as well as *Pillars of Society*. The choice of setting in *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll’s House* and other social plays is outstanding as it gave the opportunity to the audience to superimpose their own lives onto the lives of the performers in these plays. The restricted space of the rooms where Ibsen’s realistic dramas are performed turns out to be a limited area in which each essential object gains significance; these rooms and the characters in these spaces evolve into a unique place where the basic drama of consciousness expresses itself. Ibsen reshaped setting and stage properties in a skillful way starting from *Pillars of Society* so as to give a perfect picture of life in his dramas. By using topics from experiences that took place at the heart of society, or specific real situations happening in the homes of people in the contemporary life, Ibsen, with the help of three dimensional rooms, aimed at removing the fourth wall within the play and he tried to make the audience identify with situations occurring on stage. His purpose was not to create reality on stage, but to give the illusion of reality, which he succeeded in most of his dramas.

2.2 IBSEN'S METHOD OF CHARACTERIZATION

Not only was Ibsen interested in the set and stage design in constituting the illusion of reality on stage, but he also had some recommendations concerning the acting for the characters of his plays. When the director of one of the theatres at the time was preparing for a production of *The Wild Duck*, he wrote to Ibsen asking for advice because characters in this play created a problem for him and for the actors. Although Ibsen responds to the letter by asserting that he has “no desire to cast” this new play, he continues to recommend specific actors and actresses for different parts (Letters 242). Commenting on one of the actors’ lack of characterization for the performance, Ibsen prefers to “get rid of Isachsen, because he always carries on like a strange actor and not like an ordinary man,” whereas concerning another actor he explains that “I do not know if he is capable of evoking what I want in the way I want it evoked” (Letters 242). He sums up his preferences by stating: “In both the ensemble acting and in the stage setting, this play demands truth to nature and a touch of reality in every respect” (Letters 242). Ibsen’s opinion discloses his emphasis on the illusion of reality in both setting and action. In a letter to Sofie Reimers, replying to her question as to how Rebecca in *Rosmersholm* should be represented, Ibsen highlights the importance of true to life characterization:

You should bring to your assistance your studies and observations of real life. No declamation! No theatrical emphases! No pomposity at all! Give each mood credible, true to life expression. Do not ever think of this or that actress you may have seen. But stick to the life that is going on around you, and give us a true, living character... only take real life, and exclusively that, as the basis and point of departure for creating Rebecca ... (Letters 265-66)

Ibsen’s reminder to Reimers to refrain from pretension, extravagance and exaggeration and to dismiss from her mind all memories of performances by other actresses, shows us his discontent for the forms and posturing of the traditional drama. He wishes the depiction of his characters to be founded on the naturalness of real life, since this is the most effective way to inject the illusion of reality.

Ibsen urged an actor that would perform in his drama to adopt a new manner toward the script and character in order to generate a new type of kinship with his character. Then he required him to find out a new method of realizing that character

on stage. Therefore, Ibsen not only changed the acting method that was demanded by his own plays, but the way in which actors tackled other playwright's scenarios as well. Apart from this particular analytical proficiency in finding the subtext, the Ibsen performers had to have unbiased attitudes toward their characters' virtues. Any actress, for instance, not able to discern a justification for Nora's abandoning Torvald, or for Hedda's suicide, would not be able to personate either character. In the earlier nineteenth century, the style of acting, the relationship between the actor and his role during staging was perceived quite simply and most of the critics and performers thought alike during a performance: the actor had "a dual consciousness, with one part of his mind focused on his character, and one part on himself, his emotions or technique"(Cima,18). The Ibsenian actors, with Ibsen's recommendations and stage directions, approached their characters in many different ways to sound realistic. They approached character not from the perspective of type but of action as well. They contributed to the elaborate consciousness of plays by playing characters that could assist to create the illusion of the reality; and they brought forth new styles of gesture to assist them in their portrayals. On the part of actor's representation and aiding the role of character, Gibson Cima reveals: "while the creative freedom accompanying these changes was vast, the new responsibilities facing the actor were overwhelming nothing less than the representation of reality" (22)., The Ibsenian actor faced a challenging effort to satisfy Ibsen in terms of representing and portraying a thorough and concrete characterization to reflect the illusion of reality onstage.

In addition to the above-mentioned qualities and efforts of attempt to visualize a character who would produce a vivid impression on stage in order to contribute to Ibsen's mission, there are other features about Ibsen's characters to consider. In his youth, Ibsen made an attempt to paint and draw caricatures which were not thoroughly professional but published in some local newspapers. Such artistic pursuits contributed to a certain extent to the evolution of his dramatic works. Subsequent to his experience in Meiningen Company, his experience and his detailed visions on his character made him look at the events on stage from many perspectives. His character had to be as realistic as they could when on stage to depict the reality of everyday life. That's why he gave his attention to every detail

about characterization. This detail is noticed in the descriptions of costume and physical appearance of his characters as well. Ibsen makes the process clear by which he created his works:

I always proceed from the individual; the stage setting, the dramatic ensemble, all of that comes naturally and causes me no worry, as soon as I am certain of the individual in every aspect of his humanity. But I have to have his exterior in mind also, down to the last button, how he stands and walks, how he bears himself, what his voice sounds like (qtd. in Meyer 560)

Indeed, Ibsen even visualized his character's clothes before he put them on stage so as to make a complete entity in the light of realism. For instance, he determined his character Nora from *A Doll's House* so well that one day he informed his wife Suzannah about her, "Now I have seen Nora. She came right up to me and put her hand on my shoulder." When Suzannah required the description of Nora's clothes, Ibsen replied, "she was wearing a blue woolen dress"(qtd. in Meyer 447).

Ibsen's employment of character description is consistent throughout his career. He describes many of his characters beforehand. For instance, Hedda Gabler shows an elaborate portrayal of its characters. Ibsen even defines the mood that the eyes of Hedda and Thea have to picture. Hedda's "steel grey eyes express a cool unruffled calm," (Plays 702) inasmuch as Thea's "are light-blue, large, round, and somewhat prominent, with a startled, questioning look" (Plays 707). His subsequent plays proceed with the addition of these details, something that Tennant points out that "soon overestimated the capacity of any stage or the attention of any audience" (77).

Ibsen's capability to imagine his characters at length and his visual art of shaping their roles in a realistic approach is a significant reason why they seem so life-like. It is also obvious that these physical descriptions comply with his purpose of creating the illusion of reality onstage. Although some characters created by Ibsen were modeled after real-life personages, Ibsen formed many of his characters by his vision as in the same way that he created the image of Nora. Ibsen longed to depart from the theater of the past, and therefore his tragedy was to be modern. These life-like protagonists were the characters for such an endeavor.

In conclusion, the word realism ought to be used carefully when it is related to Ibsen since he never copied reality. He was not keen on using merely raw material

from life as a copier of facts and conveying these facts, but only as a re-creative craftsman and a brilliant artist to blend these every day topics so as they not only make the spectators think but also display a literary artistic scene.

Skillfully establishing a stage with the inclusion of almost every detail to give the atmosphere of reality and his meticulous selection and elimination of theater characters, made Ibsen portray the illusion of reality. Ibsen's stages and plays, which were orientated in the light of Ibsen's directions and recommendation, influenced the audience deeply. Theatergoers all over the world were able to identify with the sorrowed and distressed sufferers and the tortured oppressed. His attack and strong criticisms of established values, his effort to shed light on personal independence and his message that all human beings ought to have the possibility to realize themselves, had influence all over the world. His plays dealing with contemporary community, the stress of human emancipation, the individualization of even unimportant figures and implementation of everyday language combined with an appealing setting stage props and a perfect representation of characterization contributed to his realistic plays so that they could achieve their target, that is, to give the illusion of reality.

CHAPTER 3

SOCIAL INHIBITIONS IN IBSEN'S MIDDLE PLAYS

Ibsen, for the good-will and liberation of individual, tried to focus on the subjects such as better social conditions, relationship between spouses, marriage, religion and other contemporary pivotal topics in his dramas. Ibsen desired to make the individual the principle figure, an unconstrained self element in society, thus, remove rigid and moral conditions of the bourgeois norms as principle priorities of society.

Individuals who live in the society of Ibsen's social plays *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House* and *An Enemy of People* are exposed to oppressing public opinion, rigid rules of freedom restricting society and all the mechanisms which maintain law and order. Moral values, norms, traditions and conventions which essentially take root from the past but permeate the present and thereby destroy the liberty of individual in a psycho-sociological perspective. Karsten Bernick and Rorlund in *Pillars of Society*, the bank manager Torvald Helmer in *A Doll's House*, Peter Stockmann and journalists in *An Enemy of People* have all recognized the premises for such a type of bourgeois² life and have adjusted to the demands and rules of ruling society. Without being aware of the damage they cause to the individual and without the awareness of harming spiritual and emotional environment of the society, they cast their roles in helping the bourgeois code to proceed.

3.1 PILLARS OF SOCIETY

Among the long cast list of characters, two oppressors and two oppressed as representatives of society will be discussed in detail to reflect the social inhibitions. The first representative of social injunctions and bourgeois society to restrict individuals' freedom is Karsten Bernick. He is a father, a husband, and a powerful pillar of society. In communal perceptions he behaves well, enjoying both high

² Even though bourgeois is a French word, referring to the class of people between the aristocratic group and peasants, and inasmuch as this class has no limits for national identification, it is occasionally implemented so as to denote the middle class in other countries as well. In spite of the little difference in the social sphere from one country to another, nonetheless it displays a common peculiarity, that is, possession of means of production. In this respect, this term might be employed in terms of principal protagonists' environment in the three plays under consideration. Thereby, the term bourgeois, in the following synthesis of the plays, will signify an individual who belongs to this particular social class, a person whose manners and actions are determined by submission to traditions and morals of the middle class.

esteem and wealth. His youth was spent in a cultured and wealthy family and he enjoyed the best opportunities and the best training available. As the only heir to his family fortune he was, this supplied him a privileged social position early in his life. He was recognized as being “a perfect gentleman and the darling of all the girls” (Plays 17).

When ended up under difficult financial circumstances, Bernick decided to save his family and himself by marrying a wealthy woman. Although Lona was a better choice and more attractive than her half sister Betty, she didn't have the money that Betty had. Betty inherited a large amount of money from her aunt. This substantial sum of money was large enough to get Bernick's firm out of financial crisis; therefore he made his preference and chose Betty over his love Lona. Betty Tonnesen was a beautiful young woman of a noble family, both dependable and traditional, and Bernick's and Betty's marriage was accepted unanimously.

After this rational marriage, Bernick proved himself a highly responsible son of the family and a talented businessman who saved his family from both financial and societal crisis. By doing this task he confirmed societal expectation of what a man's assignment was in the family. For these reasons, Bernick initiates both his business life and the process of marriage in shrewd, skillful and rational manner, leaving his irresponsible adolescence behind him. His approach to Betty is a dual process. An outsider would appreciate his behavior as a respectful husband and a good householder, an appropriate family patriarch. Bernick does not only take advantage of his wife's wealth, but of her love for him as well. His relation with Betty seems reciprocal as he gets a well-to-do life style, social respectability, and faithfulness, but not with love, benevolence and compassion. Their house is regarded as a model for the residents of the little town. This notion is fortified repeatedly by other characters in the play as well. To quote Lona:

You are the richest and most influential man in the town; nobody in it dares do otherwise than defer to your will, because you are looked upon as a man without spot or blemish; your home is regarded as a model home, and your conduct as model of conduct. But all this grandeur, and you with it, is founded on a treacherous morass... (Plays 23)

With the wealth and power borrowed from Betty Tonnesen, Karsten Bernick becomes more and more powerful and esteemed. By the projects he works for and charities he supports, he turns out to be a worthwhile figure in the town. Lona and Johan praise him as:

Lona: "The gift of Karsten Bernick," as it says over the gateway. You seem to be responsible for the whole place here.

Johan: Splendid ships you have got too, I met my old school fellow, the captain of the "Palm Tree."

Lona: And you have built a new school-house too; and I hear that the town has to thank you for both the gas supply and water supply.

Bernick: Well, one ought to work for the good of the community one lives in.
(Plays 26)

In this dialogue it is noticed how Bernick becomes a contributor to his community, thus resulting with the gratitude of the society for him. He became the richest and most powerful citizen of the town, with a spotless reputation and the highest authority and decision maker. His public performances have confirmed not only everybody's approval, but even thankfulness towards him.

Karsten Bernick is good at making money and benefits from each situation financially. An outstanding and brilliant example of this is his secret affairs with the new railroad. In the past years Bernick announced that a railroad would not benefit the town and he rejected this idea. Now in the town, there is a rumor that the real estate along the branch-line of the route has been purchased. Bernick secretly did it, when the land for the railroad branch was considered to be worthless and inexpensive. If the branch line goes through the land that Bernick bought, the purchase will turn Bernick into a millionaire. Bernick's strong aspiration for more power and more wealth is stemmed from the expectation of respectability which is an expectation for society. He feels himself pushed into being richer and more powerful because without power and wealth he would not be counted as a pillar and contributor of society. Even Bernick himself confesses this: "Isn't it society itself that forces us into these devious ways?..." (Plays 97). Karsten Bernick represents his society and its merciless rules and in this sense, he shapes and influences the lives of other people around him. He becomes gradually corrupted by the same outside forces

that affect the lives of many other men of his class. He becomes progressively more conservative (almost all cultural life disappears in his town), greedier (he becomes the richest man in the town) and ruthless (he would send an unseaworthy ship to sea to continue his business without any worries).

There are no indications in the text to support Bernick's regret for ruining Betty's brother's reputation and making him go away. When Johan requires his good name to be restored in town which was important in that culture and necessary to help him to get married, Bernick's reaction is quite selfish: "And to sacrifice my own!" (Plays 74). He is completely out of compassion and any feeling of justice:

Bernick: You are driving me to desperation! But if you open your mouth, I'll deny everything! I'll say it's a part of a plot against me...revenge... That you've come across here to blackmail me!

Lona: For shame, Karsten!

Bernick: I'm desperate. I tell you! And I'm fighting for my life. I'll deny everything, everything! (Plays 48)

In this scene, Bernick seems like an animal that is stuck in a corner without any power, he may do anything to protect himself to continue his life. Any sense of justice, family solidarity, feelings of regret or compassion for a human being deserted him long ago. Indeed, Bernick became a dishonest person even with his friends and love and compassion no longer exist in him. He lost all those humanly feelings and virtues for the sake of being a pillar of society. He confesses to Lona that "do you know what we are... those of us who count as pillars of society? We are society's tools, neither more or less" (Plays 116). Although Bernick seems to act on his own, actually he is in a mode of representation of society's conscience. He is forced by the traditions and rules of society to behave accordingly. He is aware of the power of the society on his shoulders. In order to support this he says:

You can't imagine how dreadfully alone I'm in this narrow, stunted society... what have I accomplished? It seems a lot but really it's nothing- a patchwork for trivialities. But they wouldn't tolerate anything else here, anything bigger. If I tried to move a step outside their conception of right and wrong, my power would vanish... (Plays 76)

He seems to resist the bourgeois society in order to avoid acting in the directions of it; however it appears to be challenging to stay away from the orders of society.

The second major character voicing the bourgeois society and acting accordingly is the school teacher Rorlund. He symbolizes the christian viewpoint, that woman's role in family and society should be stable and must not be changed or even modified. Rorlund, who is portrayed as more of a preacher or priest than an ordinary school instructor, is the symbolic protector and orator of values on which their lives are built.

In the play, Mrs. Bernick, Martha, Dina, and their guests are carrying out a communal service that is expected of them. The aim of charitable work was consequently not only regarded as the production of a religious assignment, but also as a social necessity. These women felt social pressure to do charitable deeds and behaved as they were supposed to in order to conserve their image as appropriate women of their class. Charitable duty, in contrast to man's occupations, was one of women's socially imposed assignments. Rorlund's attitude towards these people is extremely condescending while simultaneously restating the ideal of woman's self-sacrifice:

Don't speak of it my dear lady. Are you not all of you making some sacrifice in a good cause? - and that willingly and gladly? These poor fallen creatures for whose rescue we are working may be compared to soldiers wounded on the field of battle; you, ladies, are the kind-hearted sisters of mercy who prepare the lint for these stricken ones, lay the bandages softly on their wounds, heal them and cure them. (Plays 16)

Rorlund's examples are so striking that they are a potential motivation to trigger the ladies to stick to the rules. When Rorlund says "What matters, my ladies, is to keep our community pure", he displays not necessarily the reality of the time, but its ideal (Plays 16). The purity of thought and deeds that Rorlund mentions is a desperate effort of the bourgeois class to maintain the old ideals and to protect the status quo. New ideas were considered to be evil and they were approached with suspicion. For Rorlund - more generally for the decision makers- these new ideas were labeled as 'impure' and dangerous. The existing social class which restricted individuals' freedom to live humanly felt threatened with new ideas, new world and

its values; for this reason they were called as immoral by Rorlund and the sphere he belonged to.

Under Rorlund's influence, the women have no time for their own activities. In fact, Rorlund's preaching keeps them away from any type of individual life. They are deprived of any cultural activities and they are so strong under the influence of Rorlund's pieces of advice on serving the community, that they have little choice but to perform as obedient wives and daughters of the pillars of community. As portrayed in the play there is no drama group, dance club or musical society. The theater does not function as well. Social gatherings are not more than charitable works. As Mrs. Bernick emphasized that in the old days everything centered on pleasure and spending good time, the conclusion is that in the present it evolves around duty, service and self-sacrifice.

The role of the church is represented in the character of the teacher-preacher Rorlund. Through Rorlund's imperatives and teachings, rigid norms of conduct and unquestionable moral values which took power from middle class established more pressure on the individual and gradually their social and individual lifestyles were restricted. The whole social system where they live, denies them their own identity and they are linked to men in their lives both financially and legally.

Rorlund is not only a representative of society to set inhibitions on individuals (especially women) but also a great contributor to help Bernick to maintain his fake kingdom. Rorlund repeatedly attempts to support Bernick in the play to show him as a (role) model for society. For instance in Act I turning to Mrs. Bernick he says: "And in a house like this, in a good a pure home, where family life show in its fairest colors –where peace and harmony rule..." (Plays 21). He tries to glorify Bernick's house so as it can be a sample for the community. In Act IV he states:

You, sir, have for many years been a shining example in our midst. This is not a place for me to speak of your family life, which has been a model to us all; ... I am here to speak of your public life as a citizen, as it lies open to all men's eyes. Well-equipped vessels sail away from your shipyard and carry our flag far and wide over the seas. A numerous and happy band of workmen look up to you as to a father. ...you have laid the foundations of the welfare

of hundreds of families. ...you are, in the fullest sense of the term, the mainstay of our community. (Plays 103)

Since Bernick has to be looked up to and his extraordinary sides are to be mentioned to society, the most persistent supporter of him is Rorlund because they have to reciprocally confirm each other's attitude so as to influence the community. Rorlund's fanatic support of Bernick has one significant target; that is to help him increase his reputation as much as possible so as he (Bernick) can make advantage of the lower class which will make Bernick and Rorlund, symbolically, progress the status quo over the individuals.

Social prohibitions by the medium of the representatives of the oppressing class (Bernick and Rorlund) affect the lives of individuals deeply and these victims feel being exposed to a sort of freedom restricting based atmosphere. One example of these major individuals is Betty Bernick, Karsten Bernick's wife. Bernick succeeded in saving the family business at a woman's expense, Betty. Even though Bernick married Betty on false preferences for financial gain, Betty had a genuine love for him. In spite of the sincere love, a happy home and a successful business life that was supplied by Betty for Bernick, his thankfulness is not mentioned anywhere until the last scene.

Betty is a traditional wife and caring mother, a contrary character to her half-sister Lona. Since she is an ideal wife, she is highly contributory to Bernick's efforts and she exerts the same convictions that Bernick does. For instance, when Rorlund refers to the fact that he considers Bernick as an instrument of higher power in his struggle to hinder the structure of the railroad, she swiftly adds: "Yes, they said such nasty things about him in the papers" (Plays 28). Although certainly cordial and faithful to her family, Betty is nonetheless innocent and idealistic in her apprehension of those around her. A sound example of these peculiarities is her attitude to Rorlund. She discerns his reading to the women as benevolence and a kind of sacrifice on his part, and consents to his teaching with an unconditional loyalty. In the first scene she says: "What a great blessing it must be able to see everything in such a beautiful light" (Plays 31). Betty's manner to Rorlund during the first scene reveals her to be obedient, a persevering follower of tradition, and accepting of the status quo. When Hilmar ridicules Rorlund's teaching calling it "sludder", Betty expresses strong

displeasure: “Good Heavens, Hilmar! You mustn’t say that. I’m sure you haven’t read the book” (Plays 32). Mrs. Bernick exhibits another submissive feature: keeping silent about sensitive facts. When the sewing women start conversing with Rorlund about the actress, Mrs. Dorf, Dina’s mother, Betty immediately finds an excuse to send the girls away from the room. Since it was her brother who was rumored to have an affair with the girl’s mother, the topic is regarded as a taboo in the household.

Despite Betty’s interest in her husband’s assignments and projects, Bernick neither entrusts his work to her nor discusses private matters with her and his manner towards his wife is thoroughly patronizing. When Betty shows interest in the subject of her husband’s new business project, Bernick says; “My dear Betty, it is not a thing for ladies to worry their heads about.” (Plays 17). In this respect, Bernick’s behavior towards his wife is certainly representative of bourgeois society. His way of communication and approach towards his wife reflect the custom of the times: In his approach to Betty, Bernick is an unscrupulous and conscienceless person, but in public he never moves beyond the bounds of propriety. Bernick may have united with Betty for her money; he might have been indicative in manner; but he is also a suitable provider for his wife and family, and he, indeed, pursues the accepted code of social behavior. Bernick is a model husband in the eyes of society, and in consequence of that, Betty treats him as such.

Betty is one of the most dedicated and enduring wives ever portrayed by Ibsen, and Bernick’s emotional domination and psychological tyranny is laid open to view as an instance of the unjust treatment of women. The wrong application of treatment by Bernick towards his wife is most visible in the scene where Betty expresses remorse for her hasty outburst and her tears, even stating: “Really you had every reason to...” to which Bernick reacts: “I said enough! Drop it!” (Plays 63). In this dialogue, Betty’s submissive attitude shows how she is psychologically taken under control and how she is emotionally broken and her self is despised.

To strengthen the image of Betty as an appropriate and fitting middle-class wife, the character is depicted sewing in most scenes, either on the terrace or in the conservatory. It is her duty, her comfort and her socially imposed assignment or task. Ibsen, by linking her with the action of sewing, generates a character whose social

occasion and employment is to serve as a model wife and a typical model mother of the time, one whose life is dedicated to service for others in society. Inasmuch as Betty's character functions for Ibsen's play in this capacity, her emotional distress and suffering is a revealing mode of other women of the age. Betty tolerates Bernick to use and victimize her, supposing that according to the society she has grown up, he has right to do so. Her tears declare her emotional suffering and even so, Betty feels pressure sociologically and emotionally to stand by her husband and idealize him.

The other victim of society who is as a representative in the play, mistreated and permeated by social injunctions of bourgeois community is Johan Tonnesen, Mrs. Bernick's younger brother. Johan is one of the most emotionally injured men by Bernick (essentially by the community) in the play. Caught in an actress's bedroom (Mrs. Dorf, Dina's mother) while still engaged (fifteen years before the play opens), Bernick allowed his fiancée's brother Johan to take the blame. Bernick not only made Johan take the blame of adultery but also made him to have "absconded with funds –another false rumor which Bernick allows passing in order to cover some of his own shady dealings" (Clurman 101). After Johan was defamed by Karsten's unjust blame, he ran overseas and lived there in exile for a long period of time. About this Lowenthal says that "Consul Bernick can conduct his financial transactions successfully only at the price of slandering his brother-in-law..." (169). Johan committed this societal crime in order to save Bernick, he says: "We agreed that it should be so; you had to be saved..." (Plays 16). Johan was an easy prey for Bernick to assume the guilt and no one would doubt Bernick if he put the blame on a young boy's shoulders: "Johan: ...and you chose me for your own chum, although I was four years younger than you –it is true it was because you were courting Betty, I understand that now. ...who would not have sacrificed himself for you?" (Plays 16). Johan was aware that his sister was going to get married to Bernick and it was a significant breakthrough for Betty. Johan had no other alternative but accepting the crime committed by Bernick. His lovely sister's marriage was of great importance and marriage with a scoundrel and a dishonest man would damage their engagement and put it into a stake. The society's expectation of them was that Bernick and Betty would have a spotless life and they would make a model marriage

for the whole town. In that respect, Johan sacrificed himself by becoming an adulterer, a thief and a dishonest man in the eyes of the whole town.

Johan's perception towards the problem was that it would result with a short-term gossip, but it turned out that undertaking Bernick's disgraceful offence caused Johan a long exile. He says: "...especially as it only meant a month's talk in the town and it enabled me to get away into the wide world" (Plays 17). Johan's only place to shelter was somewhere outside of the town and he was exposed of homesickness just because of a self sacrificing step. When Johan comes back to the town after a long time, most of the people are not surprised because they actually have been expecting him to correct the wrong and clarify what he did. Martha is one these people who expected Johan to return:

Martha: I have waited so long, Johan –too long.

Johan: Waited? For me to come?

Martha: Yes.

Johan: And why did you think I would come?

Martha: To atone for the wrong you had done. (Plays 98)

Martha and people of the town like Martha are of the idea that there is no escape from the crime and he has to fix his misdeed no matter how long has passed. Social doctrines of community necessitate the criminal (Johan) to obey the rules and do his duty to satisfy people with a sound pretext why he misbehaved.

Johan's life is so surrounded by social repressive orders that he is pointed as if he is the cause of many main troubles in the town. Once Rorlund points to Johan and says to Dina: "Dina, this is the man who was the cause of all your mother's misery and shame. ...is this true? ...Then it's true" (Plays 73). Johan is known as the main motive of Dina's mother's devastation and suffering and he is kept responsible for her death. Each time he struggles to express himself about his innocence, he is obstructed by Bernick or the topic of the conversation is changed:

Dina: Is this true?

Johan: Karsten, you answer.

Bernick: Not a word more! Do not let us say another word about it today. (Plays 73)

Bernick's strategy of keeping the sensitive matter under control is so skillful that Johan's effort to cure the bleeding wound is not sufficient.

The rumor about Johan's guilt spread in the whole town and it was gossiped everywhere. In reality, Bernick's contribution to expand the gossip was of great value. When Lona asks him his reaction towards the spread of rumor he says:

Lona: You helped to spread it?

Bernick: I did not contradict it. ... Yes, Lona, that rumor saved our house and made me the man I now am. (Plays 109)

Bernick used Johan and Johan's valuable youth as a stair to climb to the top of his goals. He never listened to his conscience to block the rumors; no one expected him to confess the guilt but at least he could have put a stop to what was being said about Johan since Bernick was regarded as a respectable man in the society.

At the end of the last scene Bernick confesses his guilt by saying: "For fifteen years I have climbed up the ladder of success by the help of those rumors. ..." (Plays 109). Although he tells the community the truth and removes the spot on Johan, he can not bring back Johan's wasted years. Johan's life was ruined on account of no one in the town but Bernick. Bernick's pretext for doing so is his motive to satisfy the society as being a respectable man. He feared that if he was an ordinary person without wealth and power he would be perished in the societal system. On this he says: "What I charge myself with is that I have often been weak enough to resort to deceitfulness, because I knew and feared the tendency of the community to espy unclean motives behind everything a prominent man here undertakes" (Plays 109). All the lies he says, all the swindles he accomplishes and all the lives that destroyed by him are originated from the pressure of society and the hypocritical and repressive bourgeois values.

3.2 A DOLL'S HOUSE

Nora and Helmer are the principal protagonists in the play and the dispute between these two characters is analyzed in the scope of the social reality of the time. Thinking back on the general portrait of the community of the period depicted in *Pillars of society*, the spectator, or audience is endowed the opportunity of observing a specific couple in a well-acquainted bourgeois setting.

The play is about Nora Helmer, a house wife who has been obliged to forge her father's signature. When her husband, Helmer, uncovers this truth he gets furious and criticizes her severely for being morally decayed which brings about a crisis in their marriage. Prior to dealing with the conflicting topic between Nora and Helmer, it is vital to keep in mind that according to the socio economic conditions of the time they are both traditional bourgeois couples. They approach and act in a manner in which society has instructed them. The environmental factors and forces train Helmer so that he can be a proper husband and a good provider for his family and be a respectful citizen for the social code. As for Nora, she is unconditionally expected to be a loyal and affectionate wife and a dedicated and caring mother to her husband's desires. Neither of them challenges the existing order until there is a hard dilemma in their marriage.

At the beginning of the play Nora is presented as a tender loving, quite spoiled, but nonetheless cute and a happy child who becomes a victim of the strict and demanding bourgeois social code. Nora's child-like and immature qualities are demonstrated in the play in many ways; for example her naivety and weakness for candies is one of them. However, her relationship with her children is one of the significant indications declared to the audience at the beginning of the play. In a scene in Act I, Nora is seen playing with her children enthusiastically as if she were one of the kids: she and the children play; laughing and shrieking, in this room and in the adjacent room on the right. Finally Nora hides under the table; the children come rushing in to look for her but can not find her; they hear her stifled laughter, rush to table lift up the tablecloth and find her. There are tremendous shouts of delight. She creeps out and pretends to frighten them. There are more shouts. Meanwhile there has been a knock at the door, which nobody has heard (Plays 120). Not only her behavior but also her standpoint of life is child-like and in most cases, naive. She sincerely attaches importance to the people in her life with goodness and safety. Nora regards both her father and her husband as ideal and loves them sincerely. In their presence she feels secure and safe. Both her father and her husband are embodiment of nobility and love in her imagination. They are source of financial support and they are rule makers , whose authority ought to be respected. Their tastes in life for

every respect and for every material is of importance for her. In the final scene Nora expresses to Helmer:

When I lived at home with Papa, he told me all his opinions, so I had the same ones too, or If they were different I hid them, since he wouldn't have cared for that. He used to call me his doll-child and he played with me the way I played with my dolls. Then I came into your house ...I mean then I went from Papa's hands into yours. (Plays 191)

Even though she is a grown up she is still treated like a child and apparently nothing has changed because she is "exchanging a practical doll's role for an impractical one (qtd in Templeton 30).

Helmer and Nora's father practice the existing conventional code by treating Nora like a child even a doll without a mind of her own. They both neither educated her nor did they show respect that she needed as an individual. Rather than treating her like an independent human being, they enjoyed being entertained by a charming young woman, over whom they imposed unlimited legal and financial power. There isn't any evidence in the play that they do not love her, however, their way of exercising love is expressed according to the nature of the time period. In spite of their strange way of displaying love towards Nora, she respects and loves them sincerely and deeply. Nora's act of forging of a check to save Helmer's life was a sort of joy, sense of love and a feeling of self-satisfaction. This attitude of forging in order to help Helmer supplied Nora with the feeling of being industrious and beneficial because she committed this crime for the man she loves. As an individual, naturally, Nora acts out of love and hopes Helmer to behave in the same humane manner. Nora's reproach on the rigid society represented by Helmer and her husband seems reasonable and sound. Her father's approach towards her is so despising and condescending, and his treatment of Nora damages her emotional world deeply. She might have preferred to be treated as a human being rather than a doll and she might have felt the lack of compassion and care by her father which triggers an emotional trauma in Nora. Marrying Helmer with the dream of a real lover, care taker and someone having valuable opinions of her feelings and her way of approaching the world, Helmer turns out to be another instrument of society who

merely applies the rules and doctrines of rigid community. Nora goes on talking about the dictated rules of her husband :

You arranged everything to your own taste and so I got the same taste as you or I pretended to; I can't remember. I guess a little of both first one, then the other. Now when I look back it seems as if I'd lived here like a beggar just from hand to mouth. I've lived doing tricks for you, Torvald. But that's the way you wanted it. It is a great sin what you and papa did to me. (Plays 192)

Helmer, like any other member of patriarchal class, had an intention to show his superiority in any situation. Since he was a male and he was a more intellectual person than the untrained Nora, he knew the best for himself and his wife. His taste of preference could not be open to discussion and it wasn't supposed to be questioned. In the patriarchal system of Torvald and Nora, she was forbidden to take an active part in the choices of family decisions. By being forced to behave in the way, she was expected and yielding to Torvald's never-ending wishes. Nora feels safe and happy with the life that Helmer provides. Unlike an adult, she agrees with everything Torvald expresses and accepts everything that Helmer, as a representative of social code, dictates.

Although Nora has deep respect and love for Helmer, his behavior and reactions do not confirm that Helmer has the same feelings. Their conversations as years pass, become more superficial and false and the gap between them in most aspects grows bigger and bigger. The worst thing is that neither of them realizes this important fact. Though they have had an eight year marriage and three children, they seem not to know each other enough and the relation between them appears sexual more than spiritual. In order to satisfy her husband's thirst for entertainment, she performs tricks for him just as she did for her father prior to her wedding. Both her husband and her father love her not because she is a genuine individual but because she is charming, cute and playful, which are the qualities of an entertaining image. Both Helmer and Nora's father had a deep influence on shaping her emotional personality. They are both powerful and morally penetrating instruments of society who would create socially accepted codes at their homes and apply the practical taboos that imposed by the hypocritical bourgeois society.

Nora is never endowed an opportunity to educate herself under the existing and rigid rules of marriage. Mandatory education aside, Nora doesn't have much chance to train herself at home. Helmer is the one who makes use of books, household bills and periodicals in the study, not Nora. Not even one time can we see Nora going into the study and educating herself. Rather than that, she is usually busy with Christmas packages, Christmas trees and the children's care.

When Ibsen mentions society and its power and dominance he does not imply only its official institutions, but also the unauthorized, complicated network of relations and influences: social class, marriage, child training, education, parenthood, religious training, etc. Apparently, Nora is ensnared in her home, in her marriage and in the social system. According to James McFarlane, not only Nora's doll house but any house of the period was dominated by the conventional moral norms and it is portrayed by Ibsen in his plays as it was. He says that any home is seen by Ibsen to be an institution that serves to restrain the development of the real self. Possessiveness is the essence of such homes. And it seems that crisis aids to identify it. Marriage turns out to be a microcosm of the predominant male-oriented society at large, in which, as the preliminary notes to *A Doll's House* put it – a woman is not able to be herself (242). Not only women but no individual can be themselves in a bourgeois and capitalistic society. Seeking civic liberty estranges an individual from his society and incites a conflict with the conventional norms and values.

The issue of money and Nora's financial dependence on Helmer is also of great importance since Nora has no education and has no basic skill to take care of herself economically. Although Nora loves spending money on presents on Christmas and other special occasions and also for the housekeeping, she dares to ask for money from Helmer as if she were begging from someone outside the home:

Helmer: Nora, what do you think I have got here? Nora: Money!

Helmer: There. Good Heavens, I know too well how Christmas runs away with the housekeeping...

Nora: Ten, twenty, thirty, forty. Oh, thank you Torvald! This will see me quite a long way.

Helmer: Yes it will have to. Nora: Oh please, Torvald dear! Please! I beg you. Then I'd wrap the money in some pretty gilt paper and hang it on the Christmas tree. Wouldn't that be fun? (Plays 135)

Nora's need for money from any source is obvious, but the only provider for this is only her husband. Her longing for money is not only for personal spending and preparation for Christmas organizations but using it to pay the debt she borrowed to help Torvald to take to him to Italy for treatment as well.

Actually Nora sacrificed herself to help Torvald to improve his health, however, Torvald's way of treating her was always ungrateful. While talking to Mrs. Linde, she declares that she has worked hard to pay the installments of the debt and she sacrificed all these years. Her self-sacrifice and altruism saved her husband from a vital ailment. She tells Mrs. Linde how she borrowed the money when Helmer's health was in danger and he was supposed to go to a southern climate to be treated. She depicts how she paid her debts in a hidden manner by reducing her personal expenses and doing copying work at nights. When Mrs. Linde is surprised how she didn't tell Torvald about this, she explains his rejection to borrowing money: "How painful and humiliating it would be for Torvald, with his manly independence, to know that he owed me anything. He would upset our mutual relations altogether; our beautiful happy home would no longer be what it is now" (Plays 149). Mrs. Linde is amazed at what she hears concerning Torvald's approach to such a financial situation. Nora's duty is to give something from herself rather than taking help and support from Helmer. Expectations of society shape Torvald's ideas regarding mistreating his wife, and in order to satisfy society's aspirations of applying rigid and moral values. Nora is oppressed emotionally in any circumstance by Helmer as a representative of bigoted society.

Helmer is clearly portrayed as the champion and representative for the bourgeois values. He is firmly convinced that woman's position in society is to be a wife and a mother. Helmer serves as an implementer of values and rules of despotic conduct, dictating Nora what is right and what is wrong, as for instance in the first scene of Act I:

Helmer: Nora, Nora how like a woman! Seriously, Nora, you know what I think about these things. No debts! Never borrow! There is always something

inhibited , something unpleasant, about a home built on credit and borrowed money. We two have managed to stick it out so far, and that is the way we will go on for the little time that remains. (Plays 122)

Torvald behaves as a decision maker, aside from Nora's use of money on candies; no essential decision is made by her. Helmer decides on almost everything in the home, for example his aesthetic taste is expressed by the preference for furniture and household ornaments, which is unquestionably accepted and adopted by his wife. Even though Nora attempts to buy macaroons or save some of household money by purchasing herself cheaper clothes, or saves the leftover money to pay the installments, it is obviously displayed that Helmer functions as the head of the family and he takes decisions all by himself. Naturally, as a financial provider, Helmer, runs the family. Like any other middle-class family, the amount of daily allotted money handed to Nora is determined according to his temper of the moment.

As a husband, Helmer is certainly in a position of infinite power. He implements his right to make decisions in Nora's name almost in all parts of life. The minor instance of banning Nora to eat macaroons is employed by Ibsen to exhibit the extent of authority and despotism exercised by Helmer. Taking power from societal mechanism gives him right to judge what is bad or good for Nora, restrain her partial actions and support the others. Since he is a male, a provider, a husband, an educated member of society and a successful lawyer he is determined to act on behalf of both in the family. As this is an accepted value in the society, Nora has to adapt to these morals unconditionally. Actually Nora demonstrated her submissiveness in the period of transition of moving from her father's hand to Helmer's. Nora's only advantage to serve Helmer generously, except her unconditional duty as a wife, is her femaleness in the family. The discussion of sexual behavior and the matter of sexual involvement between spouses were regarded as taboo among members of middle-class, especially in Norway when *A Doll's House* was performed on stage. The Norwegian middle-class which Nora and Helmer belonged to was nonreactive to such issues. Nonetheless, Ibsen ventured this undertaking issue and made Nora use her charm and sexuality to get her simple requests done by both from Dr. Rank and Helmer.

Although sometimes accepted as a behavior of endearment, the pet names that Helmer enjoys using to address his wife can be considered as patronizing. Helmer refers to his wife as 'squirrel', 'lark' and so on. Using certain animals names to call his wife is a kind of game or it is fun for Helmer, but they surely are humiliating for Nora to be addressed in this way since she calls her husband only by his name Torvald, not by animal names as he does. This is a sort of fact to indicate Torvald's active part in their sexual contact and Nora's passive approval. However, when Torvald rebukes Nora for even prompting the idea of loaning money, Nora tries to calm him down by "putting her hand on his mouth" (Plays 202). In the same scene, Nora inquires for money "fumbling at his coat buttons, without looking at him" (Plays 215). After a short time, Helmer smiles and puts his arm around her waist and when Nora goes around the room, we notice Helmer going over to her. This frame from the stage is beyond just bodily relationship between the characters, there is an obvious sexual process between these spouses. Nora's only way of handling the tough situations in the family and overcome Helmer's rage towards sensitive conditions at home is her charming and seducing behavior. This undoubtedly proves Nora's submission to Helmer in virtually every aspect. Helmer's unceasing reactions are not suppressed except Nora's using her femininity in certain situations. Helmer, as a representative of bourgeois code, owns the infinite power to control Nora and restrict her demands and desires as an individual. Nora virtually obeys Helmer's wishes and she responds to his desires in life. By behaving in this attitude she does what is expected of her. Her husband has the legal right to her, to her body, her money and even her soul. According to the morally superior society, a man's wife is not merely his possession, but also creation. G. Bernard Shaw refers to this manner as:

It is not surprising that our society, being directly dominated by men, comes to regard woman, not as an end in herself like man, but solely as a means of ministering to his appetite. The ideal wife is one who does everything that the ideal husband likes, and nothing else. Now to treat a person as a means, instead of an end is to deny that person's right to live. And to be treated as means to such an end as sexual intercourse with those who deny one's right to live is insufferable to any human being. Woman, if she dares face the fact

that she is being so treated, must either loathe herself or else rebel. The sum of the matters 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. (52)

Ibsen surely reveals the truth that Nora's and Helmer's relationship is demoted to sexuality. In their relationship, it is evident that there is a lack of reciprocal understanding, no tradition of sharing ideas and grief and no emotional friendship. Both of them use their sexual attitudes to satisfy their needs. Helmer's passion is suppressed by Nora's charming behavior and Nora approaches Helmer by using her beauty and sexuality. Nora's use of her sexuality in a successful way is not effective only on her husband but Dr. Rank as well. She manages to borrow the sum of money from him to pay off Krogstad in a short period of time. In this scene in the drawing room, it is getting dark but Nora does not switch on the lights. Nora's behavior is so sympathetic and seducing that Dr. Rank refers to her as a tease. When Dr. Rank starts to talk about his inevitable death, she approaches him, smiles to him and puts her both hands on his shoulders trying to prevent him from talking in such a sad way. While taking out the items from the bag containing her Italian clothes and stockings to show him, she attempts to flirt and charm with him. She especially shows her seduction while showing him the flesh-colored stockings which she just bought. Aside from showing him the stockings, she softly hits him on the ear with these stockings. Prior to requesting a favor from Dr. Rank, Nora acts like a skillful seductress and tease in this scene, manifesting that she has done this role before. Since the society denies her role as an independent and free individual, she refers to other strategies to contact people in order to exercise the desired necessity in her life.

The crucial issue which caused the conflict between Nora and Helmer is the process of forging a check to take her husband to Italy so as to save his life. Nora's behavior to forge the check stems from her lack of knowledge of law since she is an uneducated person and while committing this crime, she behaves naively and had good intentions: She wishes to be a good wife, a compassionate mother and a loving daughter. It is an undeniable fact that the forgery of the check is a criminal offense, but Nora's aim is not to do something illegal; rather, to help her ailing husband. Helmer gets furious at Nora's illegal conduct, but he doesn't try to give some effort

to think about why she could have committed this crime. Her act of forging justifies the evidence of Nora's naivety, yet, it is an implication of her genuine dedication to the loving people in her life as well. On this, McFarlane states that Nora's offense is in reality a legal crime; it isn't an embarrassing thing to be silenced like Bernick does, but a cause of pride and joy to her, a source of shelter even against the day when she is not any more young and attractive, a lien on Torvald's interest and concern. (236). That is the ground for Nora to be both discouraged and confused when in place of receiving thankfulness and appreciation, or at least mutually tolerant relations, she is approached as a common convict by Helmer. She is unable to perceive the idea that her husband, Helmer, a lawyer forced by the values and rules of the social code, responds only to potential legal social effects of her conducts, and absolutely disregards her intentions. He doesn't wish to encounter any scandals at all costs, knowing what the possible consequences mean to him and his family: social isolation, unemployment, financial destruction and dishonesty. Harold Clurman supports this idea by saying that he was so discouraged and scared at the idea of public disgrace (111).

Ibsen utilizes parallel characters to reflect the dilemma of the protagonist. Nora is compared and contrasted with the other female character named Mrs. Linde in the play. Whereas Nora admits that "Oh believe me these last eight years have been such a happy time" (Plays 207). Mrs. Linde's life has undoubtedly been more painful. Mrs. Linde looks quite old for her age as Nora finds it difficult to recognize her: "But you are a little paler Kristine... and perhaps even a bit thinner!" (Plays 207). In comparison to Mrs. Linde's life, Nora has felt happy and she has had three children whom she loves deeply. However, Mrs. Linde got married with an older person because she and especially her family were badly in need of money and they had to find financial sources, but her marriage was not a hope for her bliss:

Nora: Oh, you poor thing, what you must have gone through. And didn't he leave you anything?

Mrs. Linde: No.

Nora: And no children?

Mrs. Linde: No.

Nora: Absolutely nothing?

Mrs. Linde: Nothing at all... not even a broken heart to grieve over. (Plays 208)

Ibsen tries to make the audience aware of the fact that Nora and Mrs. Linde have diverse values. Mrs. Linde is apparently very conscious of family responsibilities and is familiar with self-sacrifice. She ended up with a loveless marriage on account of her disabled mother and younger brothers. On the other hand, apart from taking care of Helmer, Nora is able to please herself in daily issues. For instance, being able to eat macaroons, even secretly, can be shown as Nora's self-serving character. Unlike Nora, Mrs. Linde doesn't have a self-caring life, her values are traditional and she symbolizes sanctioned values of the community: she knows the value of money, she respects the family, she doesn't like debts and she is frightened of immoral actions.

Mrs. Linde has become an experienced woman through unhappiness and misfortune. She has lived not only to take care of herself but other people in her life as well:

Mrs. Linde: Well I had to fend for myself, opening a little shop running a little school, anything I could turn my hand to. These last three years have been one long relentless drudge. But now it's finished, Nora. My poor dear mother doesn't need me anymore, she's passed away. Nor the boys either: they are at work now, they can look after themselves.

Nora: What a relief you must find it...

Mrs. Linde: No, Nora. Just unutterably empty. Nobody to live for anymore. (Plays 209)

By exhibiting this situation and by combining Mrs. Linde with the concept of female self-sacrifice, Ibsen shows the audience this character as someone representing the bourgeois ideal. Mrs. Linde is not contented because she has not someone to look after and care, on the contrary, she is desperate since she has no aim of giving her support as a care-taker. Her spiritual needs are more dominant than material requirements; her inward need is to share a life with others and be useful to them. The significant matter of serving others, so clearly and repeatedly emphasized by Mrs. Linde is a vital theme in Ibsen's writing career. In *Pillars of Society* the bigoted character Rorlund reads from the book, '*Woman as a servant of Society*', and the character Martha can be juxtaposed in this context. When compared with each

other, Mrs. Linde and Martha, both characters show a number of similarities. They both devote their lives, particularly to people who are in need of others. They both experience hard work, monetary problems, childlessness and lonesomeness. They both do their moral duties by unselfishly serving others which the bourgeois lifestyle expects from them. These two figures symbolize female self-sacrifice and altruistic love. They are both submissive to traditions of so-called pillars of society and their role is to pursue the destiny that the societal mechanism has composed for them.

In the last Act, Mrs. Linde tells Nora openly that she is eager to marry Krogstad since he had children to take care of, and she would willingly accept this duty: “How things change! How things change! Somebody to work for... to live for. A home to bring happiness into (Plays 266). Mrs. Linde’s relief to find someone to look after certainly reveals her representation of the sanctioned values and restraining values of bourgeois society. Mrs. Linde and in particular Nora, cannot go beyond their capacities to be mature individuals and perform their genuine roles because their steps which they take or their deeds which they commit, have to be approved by the ruling society. The bourgeois community casts a role for them and they are forced to yield to the rigid laws of community.

3.3 AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

The essential protagonist of *An Enemy of People* is Dr. Thomas Stockmann, Medical Officer of the Municipal Baths of the town. He has a happy life with his wife, Katherine, their daughter, Petra, who is a teacher, and two young sons. The doctor’s elder brother, named Peter Stockmann, is a leading citizen of the town, its mayor, chief constable, and the administrative head of the Baths’ committee. He is the representative of the constitution, the authority in the community. Apart from him, there are two journalists, Hovstad and Billing, editors of the *People’s Messenger* which is a liberal paper. Aslaksen is the director of the home owners’ association and an effective member of the wealthy class.

The play centers on the municipal baths. The baths have been founded under Dr. Stockmann’s supervision with the backing of his prominent brother who has made great Contributions to it. The baths are like a fortune to support the town financially and they have played a major role in tourism and many visitors, including invalids, come to the town to improve themselves. They believe the baths are a good source to

cure their ailments and help them to relax. Referring to the baths, Peter Stockmann, the wise and benevolent citizen mentions the crucial role and the undeniable contributions of them to all members of the town:

Taking one thing with another, there is an excellent spirit of toleration in the Town-an admirable municipal spirit. And it all springs from the fact of our having a great common interest to unite us-an interest that is in an equally high degree the concern of every right-minded citizen.... Think how extraordinarily the place has developed within the last year or two! Money has been flowing in. ...Houses and landed property are rising in value every day. (Plays 286)

So as to fortify the mayor's considerable speech on the baths, Hovstad who is a liberal journalist links to his idea that unemployment is also reducing. The mayor interrupts and adds that the diminishing of the unemployment helps the taxation load of the propertied classes to lighten as well. In brief, everyone in the town makes use of the advantages and benefits of the baths and they are like a blessing from god for them and they, as Mordecai Roshwald says "are the rock on which the bliss of the town is being erected" (228). The happiness and wealth of the town lies in the maintenance and continuance of the baths.

The prolific edifice, the baths, which Mayor Stockmann and Hovstad praise are suddenly touched by the evil eye because a number of deaths by typhoid are exposed and after a careful investigation the source of the deaths are recognized; the baths. It turns out that they are contaminated by a leak from a close tannery. After Dr. Stocmann finds out the danger which threatens people's health, he expresses his harsh comments as:

The whole Bath establishment is a whited, poisoned sepulchre, I tell you—the gravest possible danger to the public health! All...that stinking filth is infecting the water in the conduit— pipes leading to the reservoir; and the same cursed, filthy poison oozes out on the shore too... (Plays 279)

Dr. Stockmann discloses his critical conclusions to his brother, as he is the mayor and the chairman of the board in charge of the baths, and to the representatives of the press. His recommendation for this threatening situation is rather concrete; the baths must be out of use and the pipe system in them are to be replaced before they are put

into service. Certainly, he is joyful because he has discovered something that puts not only the visitors' but also the residents' lives at stake. He feels satisfaction and pleasure since he thinks he has been useful and benevolent to the community. He imagines that his work on baths has been a great contribution to the society and even he expects them to be grateful and to appreciate what he has brought out.

Yet, the doctor receives great disappointment. Mayor Stockmann, following calculations of installing new pipes, draws attention to the high expenses of replacement. Furthermore, the reconstruction of the piping system would take more than two years. After a simple calculation, the board in charge of the baths get depressing results. For them and for the town Dr. Stockmann's shocking discovery brings a number of challenging consequences: The cost of new pipes is quite high and the citizens of the town would be unable to pay this amount of money. Apart from this disadvantageous situation, the other towns would take advantage of the situation and would attract visitors for bathing purposes. Taking into consideration these simple costs, the committee has a dilemma. Provided that this plan be followed, says the mayor to his brother, "you would have ruined your native town" (Plays 301). This moment is the breaking point for the doctor, from being a dedicated citizen, a person working for the well-being of citizens of his town, the doctor is suddenly transformed into a potential threat and a traitor. When the doctor asks his brother the solution concerning the vital problem, the mayor, a man who does not possess the integrity of Dr. Stockmann, responds that "your report has not convinced me that the condition of the water at the Baths is as bad as you represent it to be" (302). The mayor's doubtful approach to the report shows that he not only intends to ignore the threat and danger to invalids and visitors but also clearly displays moral and ethical fallacy. The mayor doesn't want to perceive it as serious situation and he tries to convince Dr. Stockmann of the inconsistency of the report about the contamination of the baths though he is aware of the seriousness of situation.

Peter Stockmann is aware of the importance of the role of the baths on his career and reputation as a mayor, the chief constable and the chairman of the baths. For his own benefit, not for the town's, he has to find a way to persuade his brother to give up his decision. But apparently, the doctor seems to be determined to complete his mission as he says to the mayor: "I am afraid you will not be able to prevent that

now, my dear Peter.” (Plays 303). Without the qualifications that the baths supply for Peter, he is nothing but an ordinary individual. All his power would vanish and the townspeople would not respect him anymore. That is why, he attempts to convince Dr. Stockmann that all what he does is in the interest of the public and none of the terrible news regarding the contamination of the baths must come to the ears of public.

As a representative of morally corrupted and hypocritical society, Peter Stockmann tries to conceal a fact that would endanger the lives of many people. Dr. Stockmann is aware of the severity of the dilemma and he reveals his brother’s hypocritical face: “You cannot put up with any authority over you. You look askance at anyone who occupies a superior official position; you regard him as a personal enemy...” (Plays 303). And so, Dr. Stockmann is also announced as an enemy, even an enemy of the whole town. The social doctrines of repressive society have affected his life negatively and he is aware that it is a chance for him to stand up against bourgeois values. In the light of this idea, Dr. Stockmann increases the dose of his criticism when he expresses his rage towards his dishonest brother: “ We are making our living by retailing filth and corruption! The whole of our flourishing municipal life derives its sustenance from a lie!” (Plays 306). Dr. Stockmann does not imply that only the baths are polluted but the conscience and morals of the society are contaminated as well. The physical filth is obvious and the moral filth exists too. Actually, in the light of Dr. Stockmann’s report- ethical and moral report as well- one might perceive that the environmental poison can be a symbol for moral corruption. The lack of ethical responsibility and the existence of dishonesty decays this society.

Although criticized strictly and threatened to lose everything he owns by his brother, the doctor has full assurance on the support of the liberal newspaper and the proprietor of the newspaper Aslaksen. The doctor inquires that his report be put in publication by the newspaper. Even though all the editors agree on bringing the problem to the public, their approach and perception is not consistent as is Dr. Stockmann’s. Their main benefit is to tip the scales in their favor, thus, prolonging the dispute on the contamination of the baths and showing the mayor’s weaknesses and failure and gaining power against the conservative Peter Stockmann. As

hypocritical and socially corrupted members of bourgeois society, they acquire political advantage over the party governing the town. On this, Hovstad, the editor of the People's Messenger states:

And in this way the ring will be broken up... and then in every issue of the paper we will enlighten the public on the mayor's incapability on one point and another, and make it clear that all the positions of trust in the town, the whole control of municipal affairs, ought to be put in the hands of the liberals. (Plays 301)

Actually, Aslaksen and Hovstad promise Dr Stockmann to support him in every way, even make the majority back him as Aslaksen is in view of the idea that he has certain influence in the town. To his naivety, Dr. Stockmann believes as if they were going to support him so as to do a favor to the society. Their stand exhibits the discrepancy between Dr. Stockmann and them. The doctor focuses on the prosperity of the people in the town and visitors from neighboring places; they are concerned in gaining political advantage. For Dr. Stockmann the subject is the health and lives of people; for them the political strength is the concern. He is devoted to equality but they adore might. Hovstad and Aslaksen are hungry for a kind of revolution in the town. Aslaksen, as the chairman of the *Home Owners' Association*, enjoys a stance of authority through diverse official positions. He would do anything to acquire power and influence financial and intellectual means at his service to his own advantage.

Hovstad, devoted to, as he says "the fight for freedom and justice and the education of man through self-government" wants to attract his readers (Plays 289). Both Aslaksen and Hovstad mask their real faces, they look like the forerunners of individual rights but they are not more than contributors of the predominant forms of social life and thought.

Obviously, the mayor is also aware of the weakness in the editors' principles. Before they publish the doctor's report, the mayor pays a visit to them and manages to establish an alliance with them, as well as with Aslaksen, who is the spokesman and chief agent of the majority. Peter Stockmann uses various motives to persuade them to repudiate the doctor's offer: He tells them that the shutting down of the baths would cause serious economic damage, it would have an impact on middle class

people as well as the wealthy ones, and the town would lose reputation which would influence the members of the press most. Following the mayor's warnings, the doctor struggles to make his article published but it is all in vain since he encounters with an emphatic refusal. As Gray says Hovstad acts evasively in order to avoid an argument with the doctor because he has to sell his newspaper (89). Socially indoctrinated and might-adoring Aslaksen-as society trained him to be as powerful as possible and since society would not value someone without certain authority- shows an effort to explain his patterns of refusal. He says: "It is not the editor who is in control of the paper, but the subscriber, the public opinion; and it would mean the absolute ruin of the community if your article were to appear" (Plays 321). All the doctor's efforts to publicize his discoveries about the baths are blocked. Thus, in spite of the idea to be benevolent to his community the doctor is alienated from the society by only a single individual. A researcher supports this idea by stating that Dr. Stockmann happens to be isolated from his brother and the social class he represents, as well as from the politicized liberal wing, and from the usual gray mass of the people represented by the Householder' Association (Roshwald 232).

In the last two acts Ibsen displays how the characters happen to be more and more enmeshed in the roles they assumed. Ibsen clearly shows the psychology of an estranged doctor and his family, raged and hated by the compact majority. Doctor Stockmann manifests his attack on the corrupt social order. Since labeled as an enemy of the social order, the doctor tries to prove that he is right. He faces the majority of people openly, in spite of their hostility and resentment. He faces the society to reveal the truth but unfortunately the situation gets worse.

The society, rigid in traditions and ideologies or concerned with their moral and economical benefits, is against an individual who is eager to support his mission. He is not trusted and embraced like the mayor because he does not possess the authority and might. Aside from being cherished by the majority, he and his daughter lose their posts, his lease is Blocked and his children are expelled from school. Demonstrators damage his house by throwing stones and he is threatened to abandon the town. The majority of the town manifests not only emotional pressure; they impose a physical despotism as well. Oppression by society's decisions and its institutions restrict the doctor's and his family's lives. Hypocritical and repressive bourgeois values

dominate reasonable and sound recommendations and the good-will based efforts of a humanitarian doctor.

In conclusion, Ibsen's social works *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House* and *An Enemy of the People* explicitly characterize the protagonists' social environment psycho-sociologically as they experience the inescapable and unavoidable force of their society. In *Pillars of Society* Karsten Bernick is able to manage his enterprise merely at the cost of defaming Johan's name and ruining his most valuable parts of life; suppressing his love for Lona, his future sister-in-law. Betty Bernick is both oppressed by her husband and Rorlund, as representatives of social doctrines. In *A Doll's House*, Nora is first condemned to a house and is treated by her father like a little toy, then passed from her father's hands to Helmer's hands to be ignored and played with. Her confinement to house as a mother and a wife who is humiliated and blamed for forgery makes her get emotional traumas. She is treated like commodity and her individuality is restricted both spiritually and emotionally by Helmer on behalf of the repressive society. In *An Enemy of People*, Dr. Stockmann, although with the intention of purifying physical and moral values, is alienated and dismissed from community. His dishonest brother who is the mayor of the town and the hypocritical journalists suppress him by turning him from a devoted citizen into an evil figure in order to reach their targets. Finally they declare him an enemy in the eyes of society which brings social traumas both for him and his family. In all these situations, the oppressive role of society in restricting individuals' freedom is undeniable. Ibsen skillfully portrayed emotional and spiritual sorrows of individuals engendered by other characters, who represent the bourgeois values in his middle plays *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House* and *An Enemy of People*.

CHAPTER 4

THE DESIRE TO TRANSCEND COMMUNITY IN IBSEN'S MIDDLE PLAYS

In almost all of the social plays of Ibsen, the individual is reflected as a servant of social codes. In these social plays, the individual is oppressed in the network of societal relationships. For the majority of individuals this repressive network of relationships of societal codes, terms and circumstances that are perceived as ordinary and conventional. Yet, only a few of them are brave enough to escape this challenging environment and take certain steps to demand emancipation and self-empowerment.

In order to interfere with the dominant norms and codes of bourgeois community in pursuit of truth and freedom, the characters Lona and Dina from *Pillars of Society*, Nora from *A Doll's House* and Dr. Stockmann from *An Enemy of the People* act courageously and attempt to transcend their societies.

4.1 'I WILL LET SOME FRESH AIR INTO THE SOCIETY': PILLARS OF SOCIETY

In *Pillars of Society*, Lona is the symbol of new world and is representative of new ideas and new prospects in life. She is the first heroine who embodies the notion of awakening, one who becomes aware of her capacity and who is conscious of potential alterations in the status quo.

Since Rorlund plays an important role on the continuance of the moral code, Lona tries to act against him from the very beginning of the play. Though Rorlund is introduced as the school master, Lona insists on calling him the Pastor because she thinks that he is a conservative, rigid operator of bigoted ideas of church and bourgeois community. All the ladies in Betty Bernick's sphere, except Dina, unconditionally obey the messages and conform to the demands that Rorlund preaches. Lona is the only individual who bravely rejects his demands and expectations. She is in such an opposition that once Rorlund burst out questioning her existence in the society:

Rorlund: You will forgive me, madam, but what can you want in our society?

Lona: I want to let in some fresh air, my dear Pastor. (Plays 37)

Actually, Rorlund behaves with a harsh reaction against Lona, because she is a threat for him and for the values, codes and beliefs he represents.

In the play, Henrik Ibsen juxtaposes Rorlund and Lona in a number of aspects: Rorlund is a spokesperson for stable dogmatic beliefs and values whereas Lona comes from America by the ship 'the Indian girl' which is a metaphor for new world and new ideas; Rorlund prefers to be called the school master, however Lona addresses him as the Pastor; he thinks he is a secular person, however Lona perceives him as a severe maintainer of hypocrisy and despotism. Certainly, Lona is not a challenge for Rorlund merely because she rebels against the system he protects. Also, it is the fear that she would initiate to bring a change in the societal mechanism. That is why, Lona's arrival with Johan from America and her questioning the current values creates a conflict between her and Rorlund.

Before having Bernick face his hypocrisy and dishonesty in the town, Lona perceives Rorlund as the first menace to challenge. Without struggling against taboos and dominant societal values that Rorlund imposes on the individuals on behalf of the society, she would not succeed in "letting in some fresh air." Rorlund's unyielding imposition about the rules- especially for women- to serve men unconditionally is to be weakened and the only way through this, for the time being, is just to resist him and try to act in a contrasting way. Thus, in this play, Rorlund is a spokesperson of institutions such as church and school. Lona stands up against the dominance of these two institutions by contradicting Rorlund:

Lona: How do you read your Bible Mr.Parson?

Rorlund: I am not a Parson.

Lona: Oh,you will grow into one, then. But-faugh!-this moral linen of yours smells tainted, just like a winding-sheet. I am accustomed to the air of the prairies, let me tell you.

Bernick: Yes, it certainly is rather close in here.

Lona: ... We'll resurrect ourselves from this vault. (Plays 36)

Rather than yielding to the general norms of proper behavior, Lona followed her heart and she struggled to be an emancipated individual in the society. The particular details that show her rebellious youth proves her contrast to the traditional woman. Lona, in the youth, cut her hair short and walked around in the rain in men's boots.

By this unusual attitude she managed to shock the entire population of her little town. After the announcement of Bernick's and Betty's engagement, she left for America with Johan. Unlike other traditional women who accepted the rigid expectations of society, she left the town to live in America. Of course, standing by Johan during his illness was a reason why she traveled to America, but mainly, she abandoned the town to seek independence and emancipation.

After several years, Lona returns from America with an important responsibility to perform. From the new world, which her society condemns and labels as evil, she returns with the ideals of freedom into the restrictive community of her town. Lona's sudden arrival from America brings action to the play. Her explicit attitude and direct questions and her new outlook about life create a different and noticeable atmosphere. From the beginning, she displays her unusual attitude towards the representatives of bourgeois society. Her outspoken manner towards Rorlund initiates the first conflict which is an indication for further types of defiance:

Rorlund : I don't think, ladies, that the mood is right for any further work today. But we will be meeting again tomorrow?

Lona: Yes, let us. I shall be on the spot.

Rorlund: You? Pardon me Miss. Hessel, but what do you propose to do in our society?

Lona : I will let some fresh air into it, Mr. Parson. (Plays 36)

Even Rorlund encounters Lona for the first time, he wishes to escape her presence by leaving the house and takes his book reflecting his ideals of 'Woman as the servant of the society.'

After returning from America, Lona adopted the ideal of unmasking the truth about lies that dominate the society. She looks determined to show the real face of society that is built on lies and corruption. Subsequent to lessening the despotic impact injected by Rorlund, she attempts to take care of Bernick. She endeavors to be a representative of moral strength, and an ethical contrast to Bernick. It is Brencik who is rendered as a pillar of society by the bourgeois. However, Lona believes that he is the wrong person who dwells in the ivory tower of wealth and esteem:

Lona: And you call yourself pillars of society!

Bernick: Society has none better.

Lona: And of what consequence is it whether such a society be propped up or not? What does it all consist of? Show and lies-and nothing else. Here are you, the first man in the town, living in a grandeur and luxury, powerful and respected... (Plays 61)

Bernick has lived in wealth and luxury for so many years and he has the respect of everyone in the town except Lona. She is aware of the throne of might and credit that Bernick occupies. However, she thinks that he has not obtained all this strength and respectability on his own but manipulating business in his environment.

Lona believes there must be a change in the town. After all years of despotism and unjust enrichment, Bernick has to be dethroned. It is high time to pay his debt of honesty and honor to Johan and individuals mistreated like Johan. Lona believes if Bernick accepts the change, the whole town will be restored. Her first action is to make Bernick accept his guilt and return the good name of Johan. She tells Bernick: "You, who have branded an innocent man as a criminal" (Plays 63). Lona is of the idea that if she convinces Bernick to reveal his guilt and confess that he is the black sheep of the family, not Johan, she will have the power not only to amend Bernick but the whole society as well. That is why, she approaches Bernick in a friendly manner. She expresses that "I want to help you to get firm ground under your feet, Karsten" (Plays 62). Although Bernick resists Lona's admonition of confessing the truth that has been kept from the society for fifteen years, he can not resist Lona and his conscience any more. He knows that "exposure means the collapse of his career" (Clurman 101) but finally he admits the truth about Johan and his crime:

Fifteen years ago; I was the guilty man... Yes, friends, I was the guilty one, and he went away. The vile and lying rumours that were spread abroad afterwards, it is beyond human power to refute now; but I have no right to complain of that. For fifteen years I have climbed up the ladder of success by the help of those rumours. (Plays 98)

By the assistance that Lona supplies, Bernick confesses all his sins and he reveals how he had ruined Johan's all those fruitful years of his adolescence. Even though he is unable to bring back Johan's past years that had to be spent in the town within his own society, he displays a bit of regret for it.

Lona's inspiring and enlightening recommendations guide Benick to make public his deception of railway properties too. Subsequent to Lona's endless pressures on Bernick to disclose all his secrets, he can not endure but to manifest his swindle about buying property : "There have been rumours of extensive purchases of property outside the town. These purchases have been made by me-by me alone, and by no one else... The properties are, for the time being, in my hands" (Plays 96). By Lona's support and her directions he feels that his conscience disturbs him and he becomes aware of the notion that to become a human being in this society and to get over the responsibility of representing bourgeois society, he has to accept and reveal the misdeeds he has committed. And he certainly does it at the end. By revealing his crimes, in a way, he injects a sort of antidote into his soul which would be a remedy against the poison that bourgeois community placed in him. Lona not only reconciles Bernick's conscience with his humanity but also she serves her role to make Bernick love his wife and his child in a natural and sincere way. It seems as if Bernick and his wife are able to communicate with each other sincerely for the first time:

Mrs. Bernick: For many years, I have felt that once you were mine and that I had lost you. Now I know that you never have been mine yet; but I shall win you.

Bernick: Oh, Betty, you have won me. It was through Lona that I first learned really to know you. But now let Olaf come to me. (Plays 98-99)

As Bernick is the most respectful and one of the most valuable pioneers of the hypocritical society, by deciphering Bernick she both gives a good lesson to the folks of the town and she reveals the hypocrisy of the despotic community. By Bernick's case, she teaches people not just to follow leaders of community unconditionally, but question their actions, interrogate their leadership and challenge them if necessary. Moreover, by Bernick's complete confession of his faults, she defeats the bourgeois society since Bernick is a representative of them. Lona's incredible resisting attitude to take a big risk and challenge the middle is a heroic pattern that deserves admiration. She re-creates a community all by herself. Without worrying about her own life, she accepts a quite weary responsibility to struggle against an oppressive society.

Dina is the second protagonist who demonstrates the notion of awakening, who becomes aware of her limitations and is able to show her potentials to approach the resisting status quo. Dina Dorf, a foster child in Bernick's family, who is thought to be the illegitimate child of Karsten Bernick, represents the younger generation in the play. As Dina was not a legal member of the family, she was expected to do household chores like servants in Bernick's house. Although this was the case for Dina, and was mostly ignored by Mrs. Bernick, she was lucky because she was primarily nurtured by Martha. Martha took care of her and taught her to stand on her feet in such a difficult society. Apart from that, Martha was the one in Bernick's family who helped Dina to minimize her alienation from the community.

At the outset, being friendly and open with the school master Rorlund, whom she sees as an instructor and whom she confides in, over a period of time Dina learns to contradict him with bravery that her youth supplies her. Ibsen makes it obvious from the very beginning of the play that Dina longs for an idealistic image of America: "But plenty of great things to get done, don't they?" (Plays 27). Via asking this question, "Dina gives the ideal of woman's emancipation its pointed formulation" (Balice 137). Dina's strong aspiration for America is motivated by many instigators and one of these is her position in Bernick's house. She perceives that she is unlike her peers and she resents the discussions made behind her both in Bernick's house and outside. On taking good examples of her peers she tells Rorlund: "...Hilda and Netta come here every day, to be exhibited to me as good examples. I can never be so beautifully behaved as they; I don't want to be. If only I were right away from it all, I should grow to be worth something" (Plays 26). Although she is not directly exposed to rumors about her unfortunate mother, by her intelligence and perception she is able to grasp the story about her mother through whispers and hints of people in the town. Actually, no one reveals their feelings honestly or expresses in a frank attitude in her environment—a manner which Dina hates so much. In a resentful way she enunciates her feelings to Rorlund:

Dina: No one; they never do. Why don't they? They all handle me in such a gingerly fashion, as if they thought I should go to pieces if they—. Oh, how I hate all this kind-heartedness.

Rorlund: My dear Dina, I can quite understand that you feel repressed here, but-

Dina: Yes; if only I could get right away from here. I could make my own way quite well, if only I did not live amongst people who are so-so-

Rorlund: So what?

Dina: So proper and so moral.

Rorlund: Oh but, Dina, you don't mean that.

Dina: You know quite well in what sense I mean it. (Plays 26)

The gossip and unpleasant conversations about Dina's mother alienate her from the community, thus, she does not want to become as proper as the citizens of the community. These feelings give her the desire to run away from the current situation and abandon her society as soon as possible. She desires to live in a place where people are not judged by their past, a place where she can survive without the moral codes of the bourgeois hegemony. In fact, it is Rorlund who inspires in her such ideas, who indirectly encourages her to dream about a better world.

Dina's quest for a better place results from the fantasy of escaping to America. She believes she is strong enough to take a risk to travel to America and work there to continue her life. Martha is the only person who supported her sincerely and taught her to face difficulties. She perceives that she has the power to control her fate; and consequently, she takes her destiny in her own hands rather than leaving it to Rorlund by marrying him. In the following dialogue with Johan, she discloses her idealism to escape from this society:

Oh these women- you just don't know... they have also written to me today; they tell me I ought to count myself very lucky... they point out how magnanimous he is being. Tomorrow and everyday they will be watching and watching to see if I am proving myself worthy of it all. I am terrified of all this respectability. (Plays 47)

Just a few days earlier she had promised to get married to the school master and now she has already made up her mind to travel to America, demonstrating that the idea of marriage to Rorlund was merely a social force by the bourgeois values.

In reality, Dina wants to put an end to the social forces that confine her in a marriage that she does not wish. She realizes that she does not have to get married

with a man just to satisfy the society in terms of being a proper wife. She tells Johan: I have never loved that man! I would rather drown myself in the fjord than be engaged to him! Oh, how he humiliated me yesterday with his condescending manner! How clear he made it that he felt he was lifting up a poor despised creature to his own level! I do not mean to be despised any longer. I mean to go away. May I go with you? (Plays 82). She is one of the rarest people to reject the role that society casts her. She thinks there are other ways to escape hypocrisy and social oppression of the community, and she does not desire to be Rorlund's wife who is a spokesperson of dominant values. Rather than surrendering to Rorlund she wishes to search for her emancipation through other means.

After getting to know Johan more closely, she perceives that she has someone to share her feelings and her bitter experiences concerning alienation from the community. Following close interaction, she falls in love with Johan who is not merely a charming man but also an individual belonging to a different world, a world that is much more different from hers. She believes this gentleman can save her from this morally corrupted society and supply her the opportunity of being herself. Although she agrees to get married with Johan, she stipulates certain conditions: She wants to work and get her independence in order to be equal with Johan, and only then she would marry him. If she had accepted to get married to Rorlund, she would have become a traditional, submissive middle class wife. However, with Johan, she wants to be equal and she wants to have a partnership. By this attitude, not only does she learn to question and assess the status quo but also to fight for her independence as well. Her determination to depart to America with Johan signifies her emancipation from the hypocritical and biased community.

In the last Act, Dina's determination to leave her homeland and make preparations to travel to America with particular goals in her mind is brightly disclosed. The idea of escape is a promise for her as a kind of re-creation or rebirth. As Hermann Weigand says "she is a spirited young blood, eager to test her resources" (7). Her sound decision to depart exemplifies courage and a firm intention that is indicative of an individual who has learned to stand up against a society of repressive bourgeois values. The freedom that Martha-who is her spiritual mother and number one supporter in life- did not experience because of the bigoted customs and traditions,

will be tasted by Dina. Her quest to look for a new society that is not moral and a society that does not torture her psychologically, because of her background and her dishonored mother, is revealed in the conversation between Johan:

Dina: But what I wanted to know is if people are so very—so very moral over there?

Johan: Moral?

Dina: Yes; I mean are they as—as proper and as wellbehaved as they are here?... You don't understand me. What I want to hear is just that they are not so proper and so moral.

Johan: Not? What would you wish them to be, then?

Dina: I would wish them to be natural. (Plays 40)

Unlike other submissive generations of the town, she is dedicated to to keep herself away from this 'moral' sciety. By travelling to another world she is inclined to resist traditions and rigid rules that society attempts to impose on her. Nonetheless, Dina perseveres to be the one among her young generation to violate these rules and be herself. Moreover, she knows that staying in the town means consent to the merciless rules and exhausting values of the bourgeois class forever. She is deeply aware of it and she plays with the codes of her destiny and she defeats her society by leaving all unpleasant experiences behind her through desertion.

4.2 'I MUST STAND QUITE ALONE, IF I AM TO UNDERSTANDMYSELF AND EVERYTHING ABOUT ME': A DOLL'S HOUSE

In *A Doll's House*, the protagonist, Nora Helmer abandons her husband and her three children after eight years of marriage so as to find out whether she or the society is right, thus realizing her rebellion against bourgeois society.

At the beginning of third act, when the dance is over, Nora and Helmer return home. Nora feels that she has had a spectacular dance that night. On their return they see Mrs. Linde waiting for them. Mrs. Linde is of view that Nora's husband must learn the truth about her so that they would have an honest life. Mrs. Linde warns Nora to tell the truth to her husband. When Helmer checks his mailbox he realizes that Dr. Rank has left two cards, one with a black cross on it. They conclude that Dr. Rank is about to die. After they conserve on Rank's situation, Nora encourages Helmer to open his letters. Helmer takes the letters to his study to read. While

Helmer is busy in his room reading letters Nora's mind is full of thoughts: She understands that this night is a last day for her in Helmer's house, and this is a new era in her life. As soon as Helmer reads the letter, the dominant bourgeois values will investigate her existence in society. She utters to herself: "Never to see him again. Never! Never! Never to see my children again either- never again. Never! Never! – Ah! The icy, black water – the unfathomable depths- if only it were over!" (Plays 191). She is so desperate about her future but she is sure she will never see neither her husband nor her children.

Learning from Nora that the accusations on forgery are true about her, Helmer makes no effort to understand her patterns but to label her as a criminal. Actually, Nora does not expect a positive result after Helmer's learning the truth about her conduct but his strict attitude disappoints her. With amazement "she sees her husband's real character, and all the masquerade of her married life appears to her in its true light" (Lavrín 78). In the middle of a harsh conversation the maid brings a letter from Krogstad with her bond on it. Reading Krogstad's letter, Helmer becomes happy: "He says he regrets and repents that a happy change in his life... No one can do anything to you. We are saved Nora!" (Plays 191). After positive change in Helmer's mood, he thinks more rationally and he understands how painful life must have been during the past three years for Nora. Helmer shows a magnanimous behavior and forgives her, and she thanks him for being merciful. After Nora changes her dress, rather than going to sleep, she decides to have a serious talk with Helmer. She tells Helmer that they have many things to clear out this night. She thinks after all these years they can have a frank talk with each other: "We have been married now eight years. Does it not occur to you that this is the first time we two, you and I, husband and wife, have a serious conversation?" (Plays 193). This statement of Nora's is an initial procedure of Nora's awakening of her self. She is conscious of the situation and she wants to remind her husband that she has been ignored for eight years. She has not even been worthy to a mutual sincere dialogue by her husband. When she was with her father she was despised and this attitude disturbed her but she was in hope of better conduct after marriage. However, the result was disappointing; she was neither treated humanly by her father nor her husband.

Nora's aim at having a serious discussion with Helmer reminds one of many grounds about her hurt feelings; she knows that Helmer has ignored her and she thinks Helmer has never loved her and all these years have not been happy but only cheerful:

Nora: I have never been happy. I thought I was, but it has never really been so.

Helmer: Not – not happy!

Nora: No, only merry. And you have always been so kind to me. But our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have been your doll-wife, just as at home I was papa's doll-child; and here the children have been my dolls. I thought it great fun when you played with me, just as they thought it great fun when I play with them. That is what our marriage has been, Torvald. (Plays 194)

Nora's role to act as a doll on Helmer's laps for eight years has been a great pain in terms of husband-wife relations. She cannot endure it any more. She would no more stand being his entertainer, that's why, she thinks it is high time to change her role from being a doll to an individual.

In spite of Helmer's effort to convince Nora that "there is some truth in what you say –exaggerated and stained as your view of it is. But for the future it shall be different. Playtime shall be over, and lesson-time shall begin"(Plays 195). Nora is not satisfied by his consolation. Nora is not certain what kind of lesson he would take. She thinks during all these eight years of marriage he has not been a good model for him, and his attitude towards her has always been wrong. He is not a man that she would take a lesson from. Nora goes further and says that "Alas Torvald, you are not the man to educate me into being a proper wife for you" (Plays 196). Since Nora thinks she has been wronged and she has suffered during all years of her marriage, Torvald, who is a representative of bourgeois values, is not able to shape her into being a proper woman. The oppressing society is the one that expected Torvald to mistreat his wife, and how come, on behalf of ruling hypocritical system he may dare try to instruct her, modify her entity and change her structure. All these ideas drive her crazy. She expects no one to guide her and instruct her to become a better mother, wife or a more sophisticated member of society. She considers only herself

to be her teacher. On this she says to Helmer: “Indeed you were perfectly right. I am not fit for the task. There is another task I must undertake first. I must try to educate myself –you are not the man to help me in that. I must do that for myself. And that is why I am going to leave you now” (Plays 197). She knows that if she leaves her husband, the bigoted society would condemn her to worse conditions in life, but for her there is no other alternative but to desert her husband, her children and her home. If she doesn’t take this step now, she will remain a doll under the hegemony of the patriarchal power till the end of her life because she believes that “modern society is not a human society; it is only a society of males” (qtd. in Lowenthal 183). And she does not intend to stay that way, she will desert Helmer, who represents social forces and morality, and she will leave all the unhappily spent years behind. Abandoning Helmer means getting rid of the hard responsibilities expected from her by society and rejecting despotic ruling of the ones who decide on behalf of the innocent individuals and repudiating all these extreme values.

Social doctrines of bourgeois society and disfranchising methods of the social code have alienated and despised her so far. She doesn’t want to be indoctrinated any more, she wants to explore her own world. She talks to Helmer that “I must stand quite alone, if I am to understand myself and everything about me” (Plays 196). Understanding oneself is not easy unless one is endowed the possibility to question one’s existence and function in life. Nora thinks that she has been left dysfunctional and useless by Helmer who functions as an authority of society. She had to be a loving and a loved mother and wife, an active participator of a well-managed mechanism but the suppressing society expected her to do the task of being proper and loyal to her husband. Now, she rejects all these responsibilities by leaving Helmer without a wife, that is, without a doll.

Helmer, by Nora’s attitude to leave home is so deeply shocked that he can not accept her departure. He blames her by being mad. For him, her manner was nothing but just being mad. It was a sort of suicide to leave home, that is why, it is equal to being mad according to Helmer when he screams “What sort of madness is this!” (Plays 198). By abandoning her husband and children, Nora denies what is regarded as woman’s most essential task: being a mother and wife. By choosing separation from her husband, Nora knows that she would become the target of social hostility,

alienation and potential misery. Helmer is aware of this as well. For Torvald, taking all these risks is nothing else but madness; no one would do it but someone who would commit suicide. Ended up in both personal and family crisis, she investigates a value system beyond the moral code of this certain society. In Ibsen's dramatic stage, as John Northam expresses that "society is not the prime source of value. His heroes share their world with a decaying structure that is hostile to perfection; and it is upon his individual that the burden is thrown of creating living value" (226). Ibsen puts Nora in a circumstance that requires an ethical evaluation and questioning of the status quo and a determined decision. She doesn't care about what judgment the society would make about her or what sort of unfair rumor would be produced:

Helmer: To desert your home, your husband and your children! And you don't consider what people will say!

Nora: I can not consider that at all. I only know that it is necessary for me.
(Plays 198)

Whatever they speak about her is not of value, the only thing she values is merely to get her emancipation by escaping the tortuous conventions and rigid norms of marriage and patriarchal superiority.

When Helmer blames Nora for neglecting her most sacred duties, that is taking care of her husband and her children, which is a must for a mother and a wife, she reacts that "I have other duties just as sacred... Duties to myself. I must think over things for myself and get to understand them" (Plays 199). Nora thinks that being an individual and an emancipated person from the chains of oppressing social code is more significant than everything in life. For the sake of this sacred assignment husband, children, marriages and homes can be deserted.

Before Nora is able to become a true mother and a wife she feels that she must be free. According to her motives, she is not given freedom by Helmer therefore she intends to leave him. Vincent Balice touches upon a valuable point defending that "the miracle she looks for is a change of roles. She has to be a giver now, and Helmer's role to be a receiver" (146). He displays Nora as a passive individual and claims that both Helmer and Nora should struggle to grasp their new roles –which is significant to enlighten us about both the necessity of change in the codes of society. Nora's attitude is about breaking the structured and solid codes of dominant society.

She demands a dramatic innovation, a kind of revolution in community: equality between husband and wife. Even more of that, the husband must put aside his absolute duty of taking decisions, as the woman is to be able to take decisions as well. Her aspiration is not only to be accepted as a wife in their family but to be valued as an individual who acts independently in their marriage, thus in the most important institution of the bourgeois society.

Nora believes there is an inequality in the whole system and she is treated unfairly in the whole mechanism of the society. One example of this is the inequality of law. She is of the view that she has never been accepted as a member of community and the law has not been in favor of her. She says that “I am learning too, that the law is quite another thing from what I supposed; but I find it impossible to convince myself that the law is right. According to it a woman has no right to spare her old dying father, or to save her husband’s life. I can’t believe that” (Plays 199). Although it is open to debate whether she has the right to forge her dying father’s signature, and if it is considered ethical, she is certain that she should be able to manipulate this in case it were needed, and the law should not hinder her in such cases. In the notes for his plays, Ibsen touches on this controversial topic as:

A woman cannot be herself in today’s society, which is an exclusively male society, with laws written by men and with prosecutor and judge who judge women’s conduct from a male point of view. She has committed forgery, and this is her pride, for she has done so from love of her husband, to save his life. But this man with his everyday honesty, stands firmly planted on the law’s foundations, and regards the matter with a male eye. (qtd. in Heiberg 204)

According to her, what she did to save her husband’s life is to be rewarded rather than be punished. She finds her husband’s treatment unfair and weird since her aim was to help someone survive in the society. At this point, Nora can not accept why she is convicted as she has not done wrong but showed a noble behavior. For Nora, the practice of forgery is not a crime but a praised conduct. For her, the real crime is her being left at the service of her husband, thus, being obliged to obey the patriarchal rules. That is the actual crime as it is the men who manage society and who make Nora have an exhausting life. The actual corruption is, as she believes, is

not her forgery, but devaluation of female honor and self emancipation (Fjelde 107). Helmer is unable to perceive Nora's patterns to defend herself in terms of law and equality. He accuses Nora as "you are ill, Nora; you are delirious; I almost think you are out of your mind" (Plays 199). Neither Helmer nor the society he represents has ever encountered such a courageous behavior in the sphere of the sacred institutions of a moral community. As an authoritative of the valuable moral system he is unable to comprehend what she demands. Actually, her statements are a kind of dynamite to explode the whole value system of society, a sort of earthquake to destroy the stable and unchangeable might of bourgeois codes. For this reason, Helmer blames Nora for being mad and ill for what she expresses. Nora's reaction to Helmer's response is "I have never felt my mind so clear and certain as tonight." (Plays 200). She seems fully aware of what she says, she is not drunk and she is not saying these words because she is hysterical. She has thought over this and at last she has made her mind to express what she has in her mind. Though Helmer accuses her of being crazy, she is so determined to achieve her mission to face him, and to face society. She wants to prove that this conversation is not an instantly and hysterically taken decision; on the contrary, it has been done after experiencing a one-sided relationship and a one dimensional process of love.

Nora's life, of lacking respect and love comes to an end and Helmer's overreaction to Krogstad's letter is the last straw to break the camel's back. This attitude, according to Nora, is a kind of inference that Helmer proves that he does not love and care about her:

Helmer: You do not love me anymore.

Nora: No, that is just it.

Helmer: Nora!—and you can say that?

Nora: It gives me great pain, Torvald, for you have always been so kind to me, but I cannot help it. I do not love you any more. (Plays 201)

Nora's loveless home and marriage is like a tomb rather than a family. She can not bear it any more. She has forced herself to love Helmer sincerely in spite of his wrong attitudes and his careless manner. But she feels there is no way to force herself any more to love him since she thinks that she should seek love and happiness

somewhere else. Whatever Helmer does to stop Nora from leaving, is useless. She rejects being his wife and she repudiates belonging to that home any more:

Nora: As I am now, I am no wife for you.

Helmer: I have it in me to become a different man.

Nora: Perhaps— if your doll is taken away from you. (Plays 201)

Nora hints that the expectations of society turned their family into a doll's house. Helmer followed a path that was appropriate for the morals of bourgeois values. In fact, Nora does not have faith in Helmer's change. She believes his change in character to become a responsible husband and a loving father is a matter of time. Nora is not so patient to wait and hope for his change, since he is dependant on the morals and expectations of bourgeois codes, changing himself means desiring a transformation from society, which seems not possible. Thus, she does not rely on the promises that Helmer expresses about being a new person.

When Helmer requires Nora at least to spend that night at home, her reaction is that "I can not spend the night in a strange man's room" (Plays 202). This first and last serious conversation seals the official separation between them. She can not even endure to have one more single night with him. She has been a caterpillar and she is in the development of metamorphoses, she is going to become a butterfly and no one can stop her from developing this process. If she takes a concrete step to break from those rigid rules of Helmer and the bourgeois society, she might be able fly and live her independence like a butterfly. She hopes to recreate herself, to amend her inner self, to play with the codes of her inner characteristics. Her slamming the door behind her, deserting Helmer and oppressive norms are an indication of her rebirth. She longs to take a heroic path, a tough road to liberate herself. Without being free, without getting her emancipation she would live a prisoner's life. But her dedication to the ideal of awakening signals that she ignores everything she has, even her children, for the sake of being herself. Helmer and particularly the despotic and hypocritical society are left behind with their rigid and stable customs and morals. She rejects them all by not letting them destroy her individual and liberal life. She helps herself by avoiding the destructive social forces of community.

4.3 ‘I AM THE STRONGEST MAN IN THE WHOLE WORLD’: AN ENEMY OF THE PEOPLE

In *An Enemy of the People*, Dr. Thomas Stockmann opposes community on account of his moral convictions, and thereupon suffers for his brave and challenging stance. Initially, in the play, Dr. Stockmann gives a view of a hopeful servant of society who behaves kindly and converses with his friends and the leading citizens of society in hope of high expectations. He welcomes every member of community and he tells them how he is satisfied with the circumstances in the town: “I am so heartily happy and contented, you know. I think it is such an extraordinary piece of good fortune to be in the middle of all this growing, germinating life. It is a splendid time to live in! It is as if a whole new world were being created around one” (Plays 286). Dr. Stockmann, in comparison to other citizens, and comparing his town with other places, is so lively to be with these people and happy to interact with townspeople. He does not even imagine living in another place because this town and these people are the source of his hopes that will carry him and the generation that comes after him.

The great respect and friendly approach between Dr. Stockmann and townspeople are reciprocal. Just as Dr. Stockmann cares for and respects them, they treat him in the same way as well. As he is the medical officer of the Baths, he is approached with high esteem. He is the one who cares for and gives a brilliant image to the Baths, which is like an honor and a means of livelihood for the people of the town. The dialogue between Hovstad and Peter Stockmann exhibits why the doctor is so popular:

Hovstad: Yes, Thomas is really indefatigable when it is a question of the Baths.

Peter Stockmann: Well remember, he is the Medical Officer to the Baths.

Hovstad: Yes, and what is more, they owe their existence to him. (Plays 284)

If their town is so popular and wealthy, it is because of the Baths. They are like a huge petroleum well which brings a lot of money to the town. They are an extremely valuable and priceless source of finance that contributes wealth and prosperity to most members of society. And of course there is an officer who plays a substantial role in terms of taking care of these valuable assets-Baths-in the town; it is Dr.

Stockmann. By managing the medical process and maintaining hygiene and purity of the Baths, the doctor serves his town in many ways: In this respect, the cleaner and healthier the baths are, the more popular they become. More tourists from other towns and cities would visit their town, consequently, leaving more money to the members of the community. Taking all these into consideration, the townspeople know it a debt to respect Dr Stockmann for their own benefits.

Apart from citizens of the moral community, members of the press focus on his role as a medical officer and give him as many opportunities as possible to take advantage of the press for his articles to be printed. In his conversation with the mayor Hovstad displays how they value his ideas: “Well, the doctor’s article will come in very suitably” (Plays 283). And in the dialogue between Dr. Stockmann and Hovstad, the editor of the ‘People’s Messenger’, clearly exhibits how they are in favor of him in any circumstance: “But the day after tomorrow I was thinking of printing your article...We had just got convenient space for it, and I thought it was just the opportune moment...” (Plays 291). They are prepared to give him any chance to print his articles and their papers are at his service so as he can feel comfortable to publish anything beneficial for the advantage of the Baths and the town.

Every single individual in the town considers the Baths priceless and precious in terms of the financial prosperity to the town. They never dare to criticize or despise advantages that the Baths supply. As long as the Baths retain the role of attracting tourists from neighboring cities and they make the townspeople richer and richer, no one is to attack them and perceive them worthless. There is one man in the town that would do the contrary, Dr. Stockmann:

Dr. Stockmann: Well, now the town will have something new to talk about, I can tell you!

Billing: Something new?

Mrs. Stockmann: What is this?

Dr. Stockmann: A great discovery, Katherine.

Hovstad: Really?

Mrs. Stockmann: A discovery of yours?

Dr. Stockmann: A discovery of mine... Yes, yes—only give me time, and you shall know all about it. If only I had Peter here now! It just shows how we

men can go about forming our judgments, when in reality we are as blind as any moles... (Plays 294)

So far, Dr. Stockmann has been a care taker of the Baths in order to help the town because they haven't posed any danger to anyone. However, as soon as he finds out the truth about their risk of threatening people's lives, he forms his opinion; he is going to reveal the truth to every single individual in the town in order to protect them from deaths. He is aware that he will face the merciless bourgeois obstacles. He will have to fight against the representatives of bourgeois codes but he seems determined to proceed with his mission. Though he has not shared the truth about the baths with authorities of the town he plans what to be done in order to get rid of vital danger in the Baths. He says to Hovstad that "all the conduit-pipes will have to be re-laid... The intake is too low down; it will have to be lifted to a position much higher up" (Plays 297). He thinks whatever it costs, the Baths must be disinfected as soon as possible. If people's lives are at stake, some plans are supposed to be prepared and some certain steps should be taken in order to solve the problem. For this, Dr. Stockmann believes he is the leading individual to initiate this controversial matter. He is ready to sacrifice himself to stand up to any opposer among the administrators of the town.

Indeed, one might wonder why Dr. Stockmann attempts to reveal the situation concerning the Baths so hastily and so directly. Without predicting the destructive outcome triggered by the pollution of the Baths, he is eager to perform his role to assist his townspeople without any expectations. After his outstanding discovery is disclosed to members of press, Billing and Hovstad and his wife discuss a reward he would get after exhibition of the pollution of the Baths. He rejects this idea and says: "No, my good friends, don't let us have any of that nonsense. I won't hear anything of the kind. And if the Baths Committee should think of voting me an increase of salary, I will not accept it" (Plays 298). His aim of disclosure of the problem regarding the Baths is merely a responsibility that a patriot would do for his homeland. He has no expectations, or any promotion or any rise in the salary; he just desires to solve a problem which can spare innocent people. He is conscious of the bourgeois capitalism and he is alert to how this brutal mechanism ruins people's

lives, including exposing them to filthy and poisoned water of the baths. Therefore, he is prepared to do anything he can.

Just after the mayor of the town (and his brother) Peter Stockmann finds out news in the report about the pollution of the Baths, he pays a visit to Dr. Stockmann to discuss the credibility of it. No matter how sound and concrete Dr. Stockmann's investigations are, Peter Stockmann forces the doctor to withdraw from his plan. Yet, the doctor does not intend to retreat, instead, he challenges the mayor:

Dr. Stockmann: I am afraid you will not be able to prevent that now, my dear Peter.

Peter Stockmann: It must and shall be prevented.

Dr. Stockmann: It is no use, I tell you. There are too many people that know about it. (Plays 312)

Even though his brother is the mayor of the town and manages certain power in his hands, the doctor dares to face him and show his perseverance on what he believes right.

As a member of ruling bourgeois power, Peter Stockmann is in favor of status quo. He would do anything to sustain traditional ways and outdated ideas to keep the townspeople ignorant. As a result, he blames the doctor for producing new ideas and informing people about his discoveries:

Dr. Stockmann: Well, but is it not the duty of a citizen to let the public share in any new ideas he may have?

Peter Stockmann: Oh, the public doesn't require any new ideas. The public is best served by the good, old established ideas it already has. (Plays 313)

The mayor expects the doctor to maintain the values that bourgeois class dictates and he, on behalf of the hypocritical and repressive code of dominant institutions, forces the doctor to stay away from enlightening the public.

Peter Stockmann uses his piece of mind to convince the doctor to give up and manipulate the truth; however, it is not that easy to persuade the devoted doctor to step back from his mission. When Peter Stockmann comprehends that there is no way to renounce the doctor from his claim, he finds the way to threaten the doctor to dismiss him from his position as a medical officer. The doctor's reaction after the mayor leaves is quite clear, he says to his wife: "Just give me time, and you will se

how I will carry the war into their camp” (Plays 318). Rather than being anxious about his career and the risk of dismissal, he becomes more ignited and he is more hearted to fight with the mayor and the bourgeois class in the battle ground. He thinks it is a chance to revenge the social codes and he believes he will prove right in the end. Apart from that, he assumes that it is high time to bring innovations to the town. The town has to be reformed in terms of mentality and perspectives in order to adapt to the developing system in the world. Unless he takes these steps to enlighten the townspeople about the wrongly managed system, he thinks, no one would be able to succeed in accomplishing this task. Therefore, he sacrifices himself, his family, and his future to take responsibility to amend the administration, thus, opposing bourgeois values.

Against Peter Stockmann and the support for him from the bourgeois power, Dr. Stockmann has a single alternative to employ. That is, using his pen, he desires to write as many articles as possible to defend his vision. While considering printing his articles to attack the bourgeois power, he tells Hovstad and Billing: “I shall consider the “People’s Messenger” my sheet-anchor now, and every single day I will bombard them with one article after another, like bombshells... I shall smite them to the ground—I shall crush them—I shall break down all their defenses, before the eyes of the honest public!” (Plays 323). Dr. Stockmann, with the help of liberal minds, considers defeating them with revealing the corruption by publishing his would be effective articles. The press seems to be on his side for the moment and he looks very confident of himself. Moreover, he wishes a revolution in the town and if the press stands by him, he thinks that this revolution will be launched very easily.

Dr. Stockmann is assured that the press will help him to voice his victory to the public. However, following a conversation on the closure of the Baths and the expenses, they change their minds immediately and stand on the mayor’s side. On hearing Aslaksen’s and Hovstad’s partnership with Peter Stockmann, the doctor gets furious and says: “It shall be public all the same. I will read it out at a mass meeting of the townspeople. All my fellow-citizens shall hear the voice of the truth!” (Plays 340). Though he is disappointed with Aslaksen’s and Hovstad’s selling him out, he does not surrender, rather, he desires to address the townspeople and share what he has experienced on the Baths.

After being rejected from publishing his sensational articles, he consults public opinion in a mass meeting. As soon as he initiates addressing the public, he delivers his critics both literally and metaphorically: “I have already told you that what I want to speak about is the great discovery I have made lately- the discovery that all the sources of our moral life are poisoned and that the whole fabric of our civic community is founded on the pestiferous soil of falsehood” (Plays 346). Here it seems that using the Baths as an instrument, the doctor wants to bring forth the subject that he has been thinking over and over: the corrupted conscience of the community. He dares to touch upon this sensitive matter openly, and wants to create an inquiry in people’s minds. Then, he carries on the conversation to the majority of the townspeople. He says that “The most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom amongst us is the compact majority-yes, the damned compact Liberal majority-that is it!” (Plays 348). He wants to express that truth is an indispensable and significant value in a society, without truth and trust a community is like an abandoned building, deserted to death. The baths are an important source and an invaluable asset for the town. Their being poisoned is a threat for the popularity and maintenance of the town; however, there is a more vital matter that is worth attention: truth. He desires to say that without truth and dependence, whatever wealth and richness a town has is worth nothing since the minds of community are full of lies and the corruption is considered a gift. That is why, more than speaking directly about the baths he initiates his attacks to the compact liberal majority as they cheat him and deny him his freedom to prevent speaking the truth.

Dr. Stockmann, as a representative of the oppressed conscience, goes on speaking about the trauma that lies cause in the community. The baths case is the final straw that makes him explode. As a scientist and a medical officer, he can not bear the destruction of the community that lies cause. Although they label him as a traitor since his ideas may create some financial crisis because of the temporary closure, and high expenses of restoration, he introduces himself as a genuine patriot: “Yes, my native town is so dear to me that I would rather ruin it than see it flourishing upon a lie” (Plays 354). Apparently, his philosophy is to work and even sacrifice himself to maintain his homeland as a purified place. A town purified from evil deeds is a utopian concept for him. He thinks that those who are involved in lies have

no place in this town and he will stand up to them and fight them until his last breath. For him, “it becomes a question of cleaning the whole community” (Clurman 132).

With the aim of inaugurating a revolution in the town to reveal the truth and make truth a major pillar of community, Dr. Stockmann ends up as an enemy and a traitor in the society. He wants to influence public opinion on a new perspective that would open a window to better and a more peaceful world. Nevertheless, he fails to convince the public and their precious outlook. When he comprehends that he would not be able to persuade them, he grasps that this society is out of control and they all comply with the despotic power and bourgeois values.

After being marginalized, the doctor does not intend to let his children to grow up in such a society and he tells his wife to get ready to move: “We won’t live in such a disgusting hole any longer. Pack up as quickly as you can, Katherine; the sooner we can get away, the better” (Plays 361). He is attacked by townspeople and he is declared as an unwanted person in the town. So, staying there to fight back seems meaningless for him at first. Later, since he is an obstinate follower of liberalism, he decides to stay and struggle against bigotry and dominant bourgeois values: “Well, I think I have had a visit from every one of the devil’s messenger’s to-day! But now I am going to sharpen my pen till they can feel its point; I shall dip it in venom and gall; I shall hurl my inkpot at their heads!” (Plays 374). Still, for him the only alternative appears to be writing articles to defend that he is right despite the majority. The compact majority’s physical and spiritual intimidation does not seem to discourage him, he wants to use his pen to revenge them.

In the last part, Dr. Stockmann desires to demonstrate that he is still powerful against the hypocritical and oppressive bourgeois values and he has confidence to maintain his family values by himself. He tells his children, after being dismissed from school, not to set foot in the public school again as he would teach them himself: “I will educate you myself; that is to say, you shan’t learn a blessed thing... but I will make liberal-minded and high minded men of you. You must help me with that, Petra” (Plays 376). He perceives his values as more sublime than that of the society’s. He thinks he does not need institutional support to raise and educate his children. His principles and self-established rituals are sufficient to take care of his children and his family. Einar Haugen expresses that “Stockmann’s house is stoned

but he decides to stay in the town and open a school for the “mongrels” whom he had just condemned. He believes that in the long run he can make “free and high-minded men” out of them” (80).

At the end, Dr. Stockmann makes his philosophical comment: “I am the strongest man in the town”, and then he adds “I am the strongest man in the whole world” (Plays 376-377). Accordingly, the doctor struggles as an insubordinate Prometheus. Furthermore, like Prometheus, he is condemned to suffer, but encounters the enemy, the compact and despotic public opinion (Roshwald 232). He endeavors to demonstrate that he is right and the majority is wrong. He is alienated from his townspeople, but he is devoted to his commitment to do what is right. He insists that a society is to form its existence on truth and right, rather than wickedness and self-deception.

All in all, in Ibsen’s middle plays certain protagonists repudiate surrendering to customary bourgeois dominance. They rebel against the power and orders that it exerts. Lona and Dina Dorf in *Pillars of Society* first make Rorlund less influential and then decipher Karsten Bernick, who are the representatives of hypocritical values. In *A Doll’s House*, Nora deserts Helmer who perceives his wife as a means of entertainment. And finally, in *An Enemy of the People*, Dr. Thomas Stockmann, all by himself, faces the compact majority to reveal the vital truth. In all these cases, protagonists exhibit a heroic demonstration to transcend their communities.

FINAL DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSION

By writing a succession of social plays which are still of great value, Ibsen not only founded the base of modern drama but he contributed to solving the problems of mankind via his realistic modern plays as well. Ibsen is considered as a memorable person in modern dramatic literature since he was the first to generate the modern problem play, which was set in a realistic environment. He initiated a type of serious and thought-provoking drama in order to replace the old-fashioned plays which merely aimed at entertaining and flattering their Victorian audience. After spending some years with works that centered on mythological and historical patterns, he shifted his literal and philosophical perspective to one of a supporter of individual liberty. Via his plays, he taught human beings, particularly women, that their personal emancipation and individual conscience were far more important than the expectations and requirements of bourgeois society.

Instead of using a traditional stage, Ibsen created his own realistic stage and he had his plays performed on these realistic and life-like stages so as to give the illusion of reality. The audience of these realistic performances identified themselves with the characters in these social plays and shared these characters' problems displayed on stage.

From Pillars of Society (1877) to *Hedda Gabler* (1890), Ibsen touched upon many moral and social problems which were sensitive to most people. By dealing with these contemporary topics, he tried to show his contemporaries that the theater was not only to entertain the audience but inform them about the serious events that took place at the time. Ibsen demonstrated that apart from entertaining the audience, works on stage, had to focus on more important subjects such as the dignity of the individual and the pressures of bourgeois society on individuals.

Pillars of society (1877) is the first play of his social series and it deals with a powerful criticism of the hypocrisy and lies which shape the morals of the town, as well as those in the institution of marriage. In this play, Henrik Ibsen exhibits the passion of a man (Bernick Karsten) which goes beyond the ethics and bliss of other individuals by destroying their lives just for a successful career and financial benefits. Bernick's capitalistic target to climb the ladder of success through

oppressing innocent individuals like Johan, Betty, and Lona was not only viewed in the theater but followed with admiration throughout Europe as well.

Ibsen's strong criticism on the conventional behavior towards the women in *A Doll's House* (1879) made the play a landmark in dramatic literature, indicating the introduction of the modern play. In *A Doll's House*, for the sake of emancipation and self-education, Nora rejects to staying with her family, as well as rejecting to being a slave of bourgeois hegemony. She slams the door behind her, a slam which was heard all around the world. The audience that watched Nora and the people who heard about her performance from others considered her as a real figure, more than a fictional personality. "Nora was discussed as a real person, a tribute to Ibsen's stagecraft. He had given a social problem flesh and blood in a female part that actresses have stood in line to play ever since" (Haugen 10). Ibsen brought a social problem into existence via *A Doll's House* and it was regarded as a milestone in the realm of dramatic history.

Finally, in *An Enemy of the People*, Ibsen's defiant character Dr. Stockmann, dares to shake the kingdom of capitalistic entrepreneurs. Dr. Stockmann discloses the material interests and insincerity of the bourgeois community by investigating and revealing the contaminated baths which require the replacement of the pipe system. Although most critics regard him as unable to understand the social reality in which wealth and property are essential targets and conflicts of interest for capitalistic middle class people, he reflects a tough stance both against the authorities of the town and the majority of the townspeople.

In all these motives, Ibsen uses his prominent plays to help oppressed individuals from the chains and restrictions of bourgeois society. As Paul Johnson expresses, he "was the great liberator, the man who studied and penetrated mankind, wept for it, and whose works taught it how to free itself from the fetters of convention and suffy prejudice " (87). He chose his patterns from everyday situations. Topics chiefly concerning inhibitions of bourgeois community and subjects restricting the emancipation of individuals were the focus of Ibsen's social plays. He struggled to convey these situations onto his realistic stage so as not to remain insensitive to the cries of human beings for the sake of liberty and self-realization.

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