

How to Cite (APA Style):

Uddin, M. A. S. N. (2022). From home to homelessness: A reflection on Nora's possible post-departure feminist life in A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 7 (2), 296-310. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.7.2.296-310>

From home to homelessness: A reflection on Nora's possible post-departure feminist life in A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen

Md. Abu Saleh Nizam Uddin

*Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts and Humanities,
International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), Bangladesh*

Corresponding Author

Email: nizam_cu13@iiuc.ac.bd

Received:
21 October 2021

Revised:
19 June 2022

Accepted:
28 August 2022

Published:
31 August 2022

Abstract

In Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House, Nora's departure from home being hurt by her husband's behavior appears to be the most important event of the drama igniting so far a wide critical parlances of Feminist array that appreciate the departure as Nora's freedom from male-dominated society. But Nora's success in having a home of comfort and happiness in her post-departure future life in Feminist world deserves critical attention too. We may posit Nora will shift to a Feminist world considering the departure as the manifestation of her newly imbibed Feminist spirit because the first wave Feminism of her time is either indifferent about or antagonistic to family life by being politics-centric. However, when Nora has within her a woman's indispensable family-centric female construction to face nonfamilial politics-centric first wave feminism, she is sure to find no home in that Feminist world. Thus, this paper aims at examining how Nora, with her declared departure from home, is going to shift to the world of first wave Feminism which, by being nonfamilial and politics-centric, works against the very family-centric construction of Nora's female construction and offers homelessness to her.

Keywords: *family life; first wave feminism; Nora*

INTRODUCTION

On *A Doll's House* (1879) by Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906), almost the whole range of discussion includes Feminist and psycho-analytical observations on protagonist Nora's departure from home as salvation gained by shattering the gender construct of the society and breaking free from male-dominated familial domain. Nora's shift from one misery to another through her shift from pain-laden home to a lonely life of anguish outside and Krogstad's villainy are also there in the discussion.

However, from the point of Nora's departure from family and home, her possible future life deserves our critical attention too. As Nora's departure matches with the nonfamilial or family-reluctant Feminism to which "Intact families, married mothers and especially stay-at-home-married-moms are ... [the] number one enemy", the departure may be deemed as the impact of growing Feminist trends in Nora's late 19th century Norway (Coulombe, 2017, para. 15). Thus, Nora will surely switch over to a Feminist life in a Feminist

circle. But the question is - Can she get a home in that world? This may become clear if we analyze the success of Feminism in providing the mental and physical shelter of home to women. When we do the analysis, we find that Feminism, more precisely the politics-centric first wave Feminism of the late 19th century Nora is going to be involved in, operates against a woman's biological, psychological, historical, traditional, moral, spiritual and religious construction of remaining in family. Thus, Nora or any woman in her position will suffer from homelessness in that world. Her home remains where she has three minor children and her husband Helmer. Notably, Helmer is not all bad. Nora took loan to save his life. He was also giving his life to help Nora survive. This he did just after marriage when his income was very little, and had to work day and night to help his family survive. Extremely hard toil caused him to fall into sickness which jeopardized his life. Yet Helmer does hurt the inmost feeling of Nora every moment which culminates toward the end of the drama prompting her to leave home seemingly forever. She could stay for the sake of her three minor children and to change Helmer. Changing the decision of departure, she could stay because it is her home. Feminist world outside is homelessness.

Coward mentions that the place where one can fulfill both physiological and psychological requirements is one's home. Acknowledging one's warm relationship with others in the family as facilitated by home, Coward designates home as a place of constructive emotion. She (2018) writes,

Home is widely used to describe a positive experience of a dwelling place (shelter). It is about a positive emotional connection to a dwelling place, feeling at 'home' in a dwelling place, where both physiological and psychological needs can be fulfilled (p. 1).

If one lacks home, it is called homelessness. Despite having a place to live in, one can suffer from homelessness. American Psychological Association (2022) writes, "Homelessness exists when people lack safe, stable and appropriate places to live" (para 1). It may be considered mental homelessness. As it is in the physical one, definitely in mental homelessness as well people suffer because of failing to fulfill "both physiological and psychological needs". Nora's plight is concerned with these issues related to home and homelessness.

This is how this paper, analyzing the nature of the world of first wave Feminism Nora is going to take refuge in, finds that it is opposed to the very family-centric construction of Nora or any lady by being nonfamilial in nature and prone to family-reluctant politics that results in a harrowing sense of homelessness for her. Thus, it becomes clear that Nora shifts from home to homelessness.

Literature review

If the review of literature relating *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen is done, we see research concentrations to explore masculinity and femininity in the drama as a social construct where women like Nora suffers, and later struggles for her freedom. Thus, a research hails Nora for having "a vision of the need for a new-found freedom for women amid a suffocating society governed wholly by unsympathetic and insensitive men" (Mohammed, 2014, p. 59). Similarly, another research explains masculinity and femininity as social

How to Cite (APA Style):

Uddin, M. A. S. N. (2022). From home to homelessness: A reflection on Nora's possible post-departure feminist life in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 7 (2), 296-310. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.7.2.296-310>

construct and greets Nora's effort because of which "at the end of the play, all the walls have been razed, leaving [her] free" (Wiseman, 2010, para. 24). In line with Feminist views, Nora is critiqued and greeted for breaking "the shackles and restraints of male-dominated society" (Yeasmin, 2018, p. 337). For examining the character of Nora, Harry Sullivan's theory of interpersonal relation of analyzing psychological aspects is also used, and thus Nora is acknowledged because "[s]he ...decides to leave the dress of a doll and live as a human being with dignity and esteem" (Kurrucz, 2020, p. 58).

In the drama the role of Krogstad is also analyzed, and it is so explored that he achieves the status of a full villain. The research states, "Regardless of the fact that Krogstad is a victim of circumstances and the unforgiving society where he suffers, he actually appears as a villain who causes [Nora] many troubles, and the main reason for destroying the Helmer's family" (Oruq & Tariq, 2019, p. 35).

It is also critiqued that Nora may be freed from the subjugation of Helmer, but outside her home she will be subjugated by a new type of aggressive disintegrating forces which "...concentrate more on individual isolation, wage earning and abstract rationalization than on communality, interdependence and recognition of sexuality" (Ahmed & Gawel, 1990, p. 185). Likewise, Nora is looked at as a failure in adaptation and evolution to her situation in a post-feminist perspective (Finch & Park, 2011).

But bearing in mind that Nora's departure from family and home accommodates or indicates Feminist solution to women's misery, perhaps no research has been done so far concentrating on her in relation to the possible social scenario and personal condition in a Feminist world after her departure from home. In this manner, whether her wellbeing will be ensured in a homely setting in that new Feminist condition, more specifically in the world of first wave Feminism, is perhaps unexplored till date. This research gaps the present study addresses.

METHOD

In the present research, the methodology of thematic analysis was followed. As the focus was on post-departure Nora, we at first tried to see how in the story of *A Doll's House* the departure took place and how it indicated a wider scenario of women's physical and mental departure from family. Then, we gave effort to understand the factor which worked as catalyst behind Nora's departure from family and home, and we found the capitalism- and modernism-generated Feministic environment of the late 19th century Norway as catalyst proving that family life is directly or indirectly opposed by Feminism. In the next step, we endeavored to find out how much family-centric the first wave Feminism was; the first wave Feminism being the stage of feminism Nora belonged to, and was shifting to. Here we tried to see the condition of all women in Nora's position. We found that the first wave Feminism was family-reluctant and politics-centric which is why Nora would suffer from a severe sense of homelessness in that Feminist world because she, as it is the case with all women, was family-centric whether she outwardly agreed or not.

As we are in support of the homeliness of family life for the wellbeing of individuals and society, we found Bowen's Family Systems Theory suitable to analyze the post-departure Feminist life of Nora. The suitability of the theory became clear as it was seen "conceptualizing the family as one emotional unit and the individual as part of that unit rather than as an autonomous psychological entity" (Bowen Theory, 2021, para. 3). But as family is a place of moral, human and spiritual bonding as well besides being an emotional one, we found Bowen's theory insufficient. Nor did we find any literary theory to look at family bonding with morality, humanity and spirituality. Here our feeling resembled Nora Hamalainen's. But later in her write-up Hamalainen does express the optimism asserting,

I would like to picture the individual moral philosopher in a free and open relationship to a vast tradition, not only of philosophy, but, more generally, of thought, texts and various human practices that can tell us something about ourselves as valuing beings (2021, "Where is this heading", para. 9).

So, relying on Hamalainen's viewpoint, we added to our analytical tools the common understandings of morality, humanity and spirituality while critiquing Nora's post-departure Feminist life of future time. We also applied Religious Humanism which permitted us to include the Biblical and the Qur'anic perspectives.

While in this process the research was done, we used as materials relevant books, articles and essays collected from internet sources. We collected those materials in printed form as well. Then necessary data were obtained and duly analyzed to reach our findings and draw a conclusion.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Nora's departure in the drama

In a late 19th century Norwegian setting, the drama *A Doll's House* shows that Nora has sincerely lived her conjugal life. In retrospect, she saved the life of her husband Helmer when he was critically sick. To save him, she needed money which she managed by taking loan from bank making her father the guarantor. As at that time her father was in deathbed, she copied the sign of her father on the loan form. But problem occurs when a man named Krogstad serving in a position subordinate to Helmer in the same bank has been caught for his corruption, and is on the verge of losing his job. He wants that Nora will influence her husband to save his job. As Nora refuses to do it, he blackmails her. He has the chance of doing it because he was the person through whom Nora took the loan helplessly copying the signature of her father without putting the date. Nora could not take her father's signature because he was in his death bed. However, to blackmail Nora, Krogstad, below the copied signature, puts a date later than the day of her father's death in order to give a look of signature forgery to the committed mistakes. Afterwards, Krogstad makes Helmer see the form that contains the signature. Seeing the form, and assuming it as Nora's corruption, Helmer gives an outburst of anger saying "you wretched woman - what have you done?" (p.76), and insultingly calls her "a liar, a hypocrite - even worse - a criminal!" (p. 77). Remaining calm and quiet and having firm confidence in Nora, Helmer does

How to Cite (APA Style):

Uddin, M. A. S. N. (2022). From home to homelessness: A reflection on Nora's possible post-departure feminist life in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 7 (2), 296-310. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.7.2.296-310>

not try to know the fact. While it is expected that he will be beside Nora even at the cost of his life, he rather insults her in every way possible breaking the commitment of love which he has always expressed to her.

Helmer's behavior stuns Nora. She understands Helmer's claim of love and care has been hollow. She instantly decides to leave her home and family. The closing part of the drama includes the following conversation between the protagonist Nora and her husband:

Nora [picking up her bag]: Oh, Torvald – there would have to be the greatest miracle of all ...

Helmer: What would that be – the greatest miracle of all?

Nora: Both of us would have to be so changed that – Oh, Torvald, I don't believe in miracle any longer.

Helmer: But I'll believe. Tell me: 'so changed that ...'?

Nora: That our life together could be a real marriage. Good-bye (p. 88).

By "miracle", Nora wants to mean that Helmer's ability to hold a heart with true love for her is as impossible as "miracle", the way in her case to remain ignorant about Helmer's falsehood is a "miracle". It means she will not return even for the sake of her three children.

Nora's departure into the homelessness of family-reluctant Feminism***The Capitalism-generated Feminist world of late 19th century Norway***

As shown in the drama, Nora is one of the late 19th century city-dwellers of Norway. About the Norwegian society's shift to be a modern society, it is so stated that "[i]n Norway there was a relatively smooth and peaceful transition from a traditional to a modern society, by the end of the 18th century into the 19th" (Skirbekk, 2016, p.7). If inquiry is done about how a modern society is like, the definition of modernism becomes relevant. In that definition we see it suggests men to be disconnected from their past, and to start life autonomously and materialistically. But past consists of essential morality, humanity and religiosity as well. Here the definition of Modernism we can look at. Though the definition addresses arts, it applies in case of society too. It states

Modernism in the arts refers to the rejections of the Victorian era's traditions and the exploration of industrial-age, real-life issues, and combines a rejection of the past with experimentation, sometimes for political purposes. Stretching from the late 19th century to the middle of the 20th century, Modernism reached its peak in the 1960s (History.com Editors, 2018, para. 1).

The modernism or modernization was brought to Norway by capitalism. About the arrival of Capitalism into Norway and other Scandinavian countries, it is so stated that "[i]n fact, these countries had been ultra-capitalist from around 1870 to the 1960s" (as cited in Uddin, 2021, p. 533). Meanwhile the link between Modernism and Capitalism strongly exists because, as viewed by Marx and Weber, "capitalism's colonization of global economic life is a crucial agency of 'modernization'" (Sayer, 1991, p.1). In economy "Capitalism is a system of largely private ownership that is open to new ideas, new firms and new owners" where we see "the presence of many buyers and many sellers

competing with one another in the marketplace” (The Center on Capitalism and Society, n.d. para. 1). Clearly, the system propounds that money must be earned at any cost with no regard for morality, humanity and religiosity. It means “Capitalism does not contain an inherent tendency to civilize itself” (Graever, 2014, para. 8). Such tendency in the field of economy influences other spheres of life. As society comes under its impact, people in family and society suffer. Likewise, women were suffering at the hands of their capitalist husbands in various Norwegian cities in the late 19th century. But women, instead of holding on to truth and giving effort to have a holistic solution, gave priority to their feeling that they were left “with a demoralizing choice between a mercenary marriage or penury as a single woman trying to earn a living” (as cited in Azam, 2014, p. 16). The question is who or what was “a mercenary”? Was it the husband or the marriage? Surely, it was the money-minded capitalist husband? Then why marriage is blamed and thus mentioned “a mercenary marriage”? Or, why will a woman have the feeling of “penury as a single woman trying to earn a living”? This is how why will a woman consider herself weak and feel detached with or leave family only for the sake of the husband? Family does not only mean the husband; it is the perpetuation of human existence, commitment to future generation, contribution to the nation, linkage with human tradition and history, and fulfillment of the most important duty as a human being. Actually, to talk about the late 19th century Norwegian context, the truth is that humans cannot always act according to their feeling because the action might be an injustice. But the victimized women in that social context were taking steps being guided by their feeling and thus the steps were against the very structure of family system. For those women in misery, anti-familial motivation came from Feminist trends pertaining to Feminism that was yet to be conceptualized. As its definition states, “[F]eminism is both an intellectual commitment and a political movement that seeks justice for women and the end of sexism [gender-based discrimination] in all forms” (McAfee, 2018, Introduction, para. 1). The very definition indicates its limitation because it does not link women with family proving the approach to be self-centric leading to a family- and society- reluctant stance. However, for the suffering women of the late 19th century Norway, Feminist trends were available because Feminism-supportive Modernism was already existing in that society, being introduced by Capitalism. Modernism is supportive to Feminist trends or Feminism because “the essence of feminism is actually a commence from the modernism and postmodernism worldview” (Karim & Azlan, 2019, p. 2). Besides, the first Feminist write-up Wollstonecraft’s *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792), with its self-centric ideas, was also available for those suffering Norwegian women, having a Capitalism-generated favorable atmosphere for Feminist trends. Thus, the Feminist trends of the late 19th century Norway had impact on Nora’s departure from home.

The first wave feminism and its politics-centric dimension

It is necessary now to shed light on the nature of the first wave Feminism Nora belongs to. To signify various developmental levels of the history of Feminism, the metaphor of wave is used. Though there are claims that the fourth wave Feminism has arrived, it is still widely acknowledged that there have been

How to Cite (APA Style):

Uddin, M. A. S. N. (2022). From home to homelessness: A reflection on Nora's possible post-departure feminist life in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 7 (2), 296-310. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.7.2.296-310>

three waves of Feminism so far. McAfee (2018) concisely gives a comprehensive view on all the waves of Feminism by writing,

[T]he period from the mid-nineteenth century until ... 1920 counts as "First Wave" feminism. Feminism waned between the two world wars, to be "revived" in the late 1960s and early 1970s as "Second Wave" feminism. In this second wave, feminists pushed beyond the early quest for political rights to fight for greater equality across the board, e.g., in education, the workplace, and at home. More recent transformations of feminism have resulted in a "Third Wave". Third Wave feminists often critique Second Wave feminism for its lack of attention to the differences among women due to race, ethnicity, class, nationality, religion (para. 3).

The first wave feminism "dealt mainly with the Suffrage movement" and brought success (Robertson, 2019, p. 1). Here the fruits of the movement were of course essential for entire humanity but the process of achieving them could have been an all-embracing movement assuming a similar name instead of parochialized "Feminism". Besides, the whole history of Feminism seems to deal with the external affairs of a woman, not the inner ones. It hardly addresses the inner affairs of a woman that include her selfhood and role in family among others. If at all it sheds light on family and home, it emphasizes "greater equality", not husband-wife mutual dependency and harmony (McAfee, 2018, "What is feminism?", para. 3)

In her research, Robertson (2019) wants to "explore development of the various waves of feminism, pertaining specifically to western culture" (p. 1). Robertson (2019) examines 'key works including Nancy Fraser's "From Recognition to Redistribution", Judith Butler's "Merely Cultural", and Iris Marion Young's "Unruly Categories: A Critique of Nancy Fraser's Dual Systems Theory"' to figure out how the write-ups contribute "to feminist theory and provide insight into the most effective way to proceed in the struggle against oppression and succeed in the creation of one's own identity" (p. 1). Robertson does not wish to see what the Feminist writers have to say about essential family life of a woman because those write-ups hardly include any such element and Robertson is not interested for it either. So, in any discussion on Feminism, no space is given to the necessity of family for a woman.

Actually, the first women's convention to have given rise to the first wave Feminism that was held in the USA was the decision of some women activists among whom almost all were Quaker, a group of Protestant Christian. Britannica (2021) writes,

[T]he first women's rights convention, [was] held in July 1848 in the small town of Seneca Falls, New York. It was a spur-of-the-moment idea that sprang up during a social gathering of Lucretia Mott, a Quaker preacher and veteran social activist, Martha Wright (Mott's sister), Mary Ann McClintock, Jane Hunt, and Elizabeth Cady Stanton, the wife of an abolitionist and the only non-Quaker in the group (para. 1).

So, the decision of the first convention was the brainchild of some Quaker women whose identity itself was indicating the disintegration they did in Christianity. So how they, when simply unable to venture the integration of Christianity, would contribute to the integration of humanity while solving the crisis of women?

In the Seneca Falls Convention, “Stanton drew up the “Declaration of Sentiments”, based on “the Declaration of Independence ...to proclaim that “all men and women [had been] created equal,” and thus “she drafted 11 resolutions, including the most radical demand—the right to the vote” (Britannica, para. 2). Here women’s right to vote is of course undeniably essential but Stanton’s inclusion of God-given equality between men and women with reference to the God-given equality among men as mentioned in the American Declaration of Independence is noteworthy. What is interesting is that Stanton was referring to religion through state or politics. She could have directly referred to religion and given effort to understand what type of equality between men and women God mentions in *The Holy Bible*. God, in Timothy 5:8 of the Holy Text, utters, “But if someone doesn’t provide for their own family, and especially for a member of their household, they have denied the faith. They are worse than those who have no faith” (Schumann, 2020). God, in Psalm 133:1, also indicates “Look at how good and pleasing it is when family live together as one” (Schumann, 2020). Here, teachings of Islam are also relevant. The instructions which Prophet Mohammad (pbuh) has given for mankind based on *The Holy Qur’an* are called Hadith. In the Hadith collection called *Sahih Muslim*, book 32, Hadith no. 6181 narrates,

Abu Huraira reported that a person said: Allah's Messenger, who amongst the people is most deserving of my good treatment? He said: Your mother, again your mother, again your mother, then your father, then your nearest relatives according to the order (of nearness) (Translation of *Sahih Muslim*, n.d.).

It means that to a child, his mother is three times more important than his father. So, a woman enjoys this right and satisfaction only when she is in the family. Thus, for mankind, God has made family a domain of crucial importance which men and women will give first priority to. In family, men and women play their respective roles indicating that men and women are great in their respective spheres. This is how God’s implication is such that in the same sphere men and women do not have to compete with each other to be quantitatively equal as they are already made qualitatively equal being great in their exclusive spheres. This truth Stanton could have understood if she had tried to understand religion religiously, not politically. Thus, she could have reiterated the need of family before mentioning suffrage understanding the already existing qualitative equality between men and women. But Feminism seems to use religion, instead of following it. This is how when it requires for them, they can show the gut to destroy it. The hidden destructive force can even make any liberal Feminist radical at any moment. Accordingly, Emma Goldman, a leading first wave Feminist, not supporting suffrage or ballot-based emancipation of women, told that women would achieve freedom “by refusing the right to anyone over her body...by refusing to be a servant to God, the state, society, the husband, the family, etc., by making her life simpler but deeper and richer.” (as cited in Britannica, 2021, para. 7). Then, going against God-instructed family system, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, another first wave Feminist, ‘insisted that women would not be liberated until they were freed from the “domestic mythology” of home and family that kept them dependent on men’ (Britannica, 2021, para. 7).

How to Cite (APA Style):

Uddin, M. A. S. N. (2022). From home to homelessness: A reflection on Nora's possible post-departure feminist life in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 7 (2), 296-310. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.7.2.296-310>

The success of the Seneca convention was that it set “a goal [of suffrage] that would dominate international feminism for almost 70 years” (Britannica, 2021, para. 3). Thus, the first wave Feminism ranging from the middle of 19th century until 1920 established women's right to vote and education in America and Europe. But when the first wave Feminists themselves were reluctant to family, they were predictably looking for similar politics and education. When in ancient Athens moral degeneration among people was unbridled and horrible, Plato at first thought of amending the constitution as the solution “[b]ut soon he realized that the breakdown of private and public morals was widespread and not confined to the political problems of the city of Athens” (Lavine, 1984, p. 20). Thus, Plato came up with the concept of the Philosopher-King, that is, whoever would be the king would be a philosopher at the same time. Plato wanted that the king, if required, would be able to address an issue with his philosophical aptitude besides the administrative one. Similarly, the crisis of women in family, as represented by Nora in *A Doll's House* by Ibsen, was supposed to be addressed from the familial and social paradigms available in tradition, religions and human-centric intellectual efforts, not from the paradigms of politics directly or indirectly contributing to the abolition of family structure or disintegration of the existing ones.

Besides, if at all there was any philosophical attempt to address women's emancipation, it was done by the British Feminist Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* (1792). In her book, Wollstonecraft wrote, “But, whether she be loved or neglected, her first wish should be to make herself respectable, and not to rely for all her happiness on a being subject to like infirmities with herself” (p. 28). Here, the writer ridiculously articulates “a being” to identify a man and, to the writer, such “a being” will surely oppose a woman and love to see her “infirmities”. Thus, Wollstonecraft appealed to a woman “to make herself respectable” not depending on men who, according to the author, were unjust. But a conscious mind likes to ask whether or not for the publication of the book, as in other important areas of life, Wollstonecraft only depended on women. The author perhaps saw only the unjust men of English society where she belonged to, and doing an overgeneralization, imposed the negative attribute over all the men of the world. Wollstonecraft's placement of all men in a negative position in relation to women was threatening to family life. So, it was a sheer insensibility.

The time range of the first wave Feminism being from mid-19th to 1920 coincided with the peak of Euro-colonialism across the whole world. Euro-colonialism signifies one of the biggest human catastrophes in the history of mankind, yet Feminists of that time had nothing to say against the colonial oppressors. Neither the Feminists of America spoke against the British colonial occupation and torture on the native Americans nor did the Feminists of Europe raise voice against Euro-colonialism in the whole world. Actually, the first wave Feminists, like the imperialist men of Europe and those in America, were rather interested in hegemonic politics against the women of the colonized nations with the help of their Feminist message. Thus Mohanty (1984) duly states, “Western feminist writing on women in the third world must be considered in the context of the global hegemony of Western scholarship” (p. 55). Interestingly, the same scholar (1984) says,

In the context of an overwhelming silence about the experiences of women in [third world] countries, as well as the need to forge international links between women's political struggles, such work [as linking women of those countries in a worldwide economic and political structure] is both pathbreaking and absolutely essential (p. 336).

Mohanty wants a hegemony-free Feminism for all the women of the world where women of the third world countries will be connected with the global economic and political structure. But what about the rest of the populations in those countries who are also in abject sufferings? Mohanty talks of the hegemony of “Western feminist writing” shown on the women of third world countries but she herself, by not including the non-woman of those countries into her concern, reveals discrimination to them.

This is how first wave feminism had its centrality or first priority in politics, not in family life. It aimed at seeing “women as legal and legitimate citizens”, without first emphasizing their need to be good human beings involved with duties and rights in family (Robertson, 2019, p. 6). The nature of politics was not only family- and human-reluctant, but also hegemonic like the concomitant intellectual effort of tiny magnitude as shown by Wollstonecraft.

Wilson states, “Human social existence, unlike animal sociality, is based on the genetic propensity to form long-term contracts that evolve by culture into moral precepts and law” (1998, p. 325). Here “long-term contracts” indicates marriage and “moral precepts and law” hint at sacred principles that govern family members to remain united with love and care. Thus, family is the proper place for a woman as well as a man. So, when Nora is to shift both physically and mentally to a nonfamilial feminist sphere, she will not feel homely thereby. She will rather suffer from a sheer sense of homelessness.

The nature of the homelessness for Nora in feminist world

Nora initially thinks her future life in Feminist world will give her liberty. But from the discussion which has been done so far, we may say she is going to have more pain of varied nature than she has had in her family mainly because of loneliness. As fiction reflects facts, Miss Brill of the short story “Miss Brill” by Katherine Mansfield represents the lonely life of a woman who cannot have any mental peace in her life. In the short story, Miss Brill, a middle-aged woman, lives a lonely life which puts her into deep sufferings. She has her own income, but no husband and children or family. Thus, her life conforms to marriage- and family-reluctant viewpoints of the first wave Feminism or Feminism in general. But she suffers “in her pathetic solitude” (Xiao-yan, 2014, p. 4). Miss Brill’s condition is so tragic. Xiao-yan (2014) writes,

Even in her most vivid imaginings, Miss Brill can find no understanding or communication with others and with the outside world. She finds herself completely alone, yet she denies or fails to understand or to confront her position (p.3).

So, the fiction, reflecting fact, clarifies that the family-reluctant solution which Feminism proffers rather increases the misery of women. That world of

How to Cite (APA Style):

Uddin, M. A. S. N. (2022). From home to homelessness: A reflection on Nora's possible post-departure feminist life in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 7 (2), 296-310. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.7.2.296-310>

homelessness Nora is going to enter. And mending the homeless condition in the vast intricate Feminist world is beyond the capacity of Nora.

Even while remaining in family if a woman is family-reluctant, she has to meet her catastrophe because she functions against her family-centric construction. Lady Macbeth in *Macbeth* by Shakespeare remains in family but to make her husband Macbeth the King of Scotland and herself queen by removing the legitimate King Duncan from throne, she wishes the components of her soul-love, affection and sympathy for her children and husband- to be replaced with selfishness, cruelty and corrupted ambition. Eventually, she succeeds in the rejection of her soul or self but paying a very high price – her life. Uddin (2014) writes,

The components that make up the self of a human being are denied by Lady Macbeth. Miserably enough, she even destroys them all. Consequently, herself makes an exit from life. Retaliation of life is easily predictable. She meets a tragic catastrophe, an exit of life from self (p. 230).

When this is the true scenario reflected by the fiction, Feminism or the first wave Feminism in Nora's case, by openly declaring its standpoint against family-centric female mental construction, may offer fatal end besides homelessness.

Nora's homeliness with her family at her home

The residence of her family is the home to Nora, where, besides her husband, she has three children with whom she at first had connection of physical umbilical cord, later that of the spiritual one. Only with the children, only their mother can have this peculiarly delightful and exclusively glorious relationship. God declares in Psalm 127:3-5 of *The Holy Bible*, "Children are a heritage from the Lord, offspring a reward from him" (Schumann, 2020). Why a mother will be away from this humanistic and nectar-like relationship only because of the mental pain given by her husband, the father of the children? Besides, when Nora is no more at home after her departure, Helmer may manage the new scenario for himself. But those little children will definitely look for their mother. The youngest one will surely be crying for the mother to sleep at night in her warm bosom. Actually, Nora's action is like transferring the pain given by Helmer to the innocent minor children. They are made mother-deserted refugees by Nora. No matter how severe the mental pain is for a mother, the pain should be nothing in front of her motherly love and affection. In nature there are many instances to clarify that a mother figure even risks her life for her young ones. Here we are not equating human beings with creatures. We are indicating the positive constructive lesson men can have from nature like inventing airplane seeing birds. However, for the love of the children, Nora could stay at home. She could give effort to change Helmer. After all, Helmer was not all bad. Because of the inhuman hard work for the family, he became severely sick for which Nora had to take loan to do the treatment. The severe hard work was not meant for himself alone. Actually, in the family, both Nora and Helmer had equal contributions in their respective fields indicating interdependency. God declares in Galatians 6:2 of *The Holy Bible*, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Schumann, 2020). Here the concerned truth is befittingly available in *The Holy Qur'an*. Doi writes "The Qur'an, in addressing the believers, often

uses the expression, 'believing men and women' to emphasize the equality of men and women with regard to their respective duties, rights, virtues and merits" (n.d.). Here "equality" in "respective" areas expresses the insight that men and women will be happily interdependent in family and society. But Feminism emphasizes equality between men and women in every sphere rejecting interdependency which ultimately contributes to the disintegration of interdependent and harmonious family life. This critical understanding Nora could form instead of behaving like a child from the beginning of their conjugal life. Allowing some moments of a day to Helmer to treat her like a child which is sometimes a form of the male expression of love, for the rest of the day she could behave with her real mature self. As "Nora forms a good mental image of Linde", she could learn from the latter (Kurraz, 2020, p. 54). On Linde, Uddin (2021) writes,

By being concerned with her inner urge, Linde sustains essential properties of heart in nurturing love, affection, sympathy, kindness, longing, gratitude, *onuragh* (a Bangla word with no English parallel expressing a tender feeling between anger and love happily nurtured by a romantic couple), honor, awe etc. (pp. 528-529).

Nora could learn the above virtues from ineffable Linde. Linde has been able to change Krogstad's corrupted way of life. About Linde's success in bringing about change in Krogstad, Uddin (2021) views, "As Linde is human-centric and selfless, she can positively make use of the experience of her life, and thus, she knows how to manage and guide someone to doing good to others" (p. 533). May be Linde's character is drawn in this manner by Ibsen to propose the proper means to Nora and the readers that both men and women will solve their family problems remaining within the family.

As in her society many other women suffer from the same problem, Nora, including those women as well as men with proper understanding, could think of a movement for raising awareness. Nora could do it keeping her intimacy and involvement in family undisturbed. The movement could be a humanity-centric one unlike Feminism. Mother, namely Pelaguiya Nilovna, had remarkable achievement in her Marxist movement in *Mother* by Maxim Gorky. Nora could do the same that could replace the capitalistic system of the country with a human-centric one. Thus, Helmer could have a social impact for a positive change. So, Nora could go on remaining human-centric by being with her family at her home. The truth is home is home; it is not located anywhere else.

CONCLUSION

In fine, Nora's departure from home to the world of Feminism, more specifically to that of the first wave Feminism, is her shift to homelessness because she will not find peace there. The reason is the world of Feminism depreciates or opposes family life, remains politics-prone and hater of men while the very female-construction is family-centric. So, the Feminist world Nora is shifting to is nothing but homelessness. Her home remains where her three minor children and husband are available. Staying at home, she could try to change Helmer so that he could start considering her as a mature potential personality like him. Nora should have felt the truth that true human

How to Cite (APA Style):

Uddin, M. A. S. N. (2022). From home to homelessness: A reflection on Nora's possible post-departure feminist life in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 7 (2), 296-310. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.7.2.296-310>

identity required her and her husband to sacrifice their entire life for the wellbeing of their children. Finding of this research may contribute to building an ideal scenario where women will solve their conjugal problems remaining rooted in their families, among men those who are unjust will be just, and thus those just men will be full of true love for their beloved wives and vice versa.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to extend his highest appreciations to Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, International Islamic University Chittagong (IIUC), Bangladesh for the support.

REFERENCES

- Ahmad, S., & Gawel, A. (1990). The politics of money: Incomplete feminism in *A Doll's House*. *Dalhousie Review*, 70(2), 170-190. https://dalspace.library.dal.ca/bitstream/handle/10222/61064/dalrev_vol70_iss2_pp170_190.pdf?sequence=1
- American Psychological Association. (2022). Psychosocial Factors and Homelessness <https://www.apa.org/pi/ses/resources/publications/homelessness-factors>
- Azam, A. (2014). Nora Helmer in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*: A feminist concern in English literature. *Journal of English language and Literature*, 1(1), 13-17 <https://doi.org/10.17722/jell.v1i1.7>
- Bowen Theory Academy (2021). Bowen Theory. <https://bowentheoryacademy.org/bowen-theory/>
- Britannica, T. Editors of Encyclopaedia (2021, August 23). *The Suffrage Movement*. *Encyclopedia Britannica*. <https://www.britannica.com/topic/feminism/The-suffrage-movement>
- Coulombe, N. (2017). *Why feminism wants to dismantle the family (long)*. <https://nikitaccoulombe.medium.com/why-feminism-wants-to-dismantle-the-family-long-4695d45bcf88>
- Coward, S. (2018). *Home life: the meaning of home for people who have experienced homelessness* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Sheffield).
- Doi, A. R. I. (n.d.). Women in the Quran and the Sunnah. https://www.iium.edu.my/deed/articles/woman_quran.html
- Finch, A., & Park, H. (2011). *A post-feminist, evolutionist reading of Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House*. <https://www.yumpu.com/en/document/read/46163105/a-post-feminist-evolutionist-reading-of-henrik-ibsen-a-finchpark>
- Graever, D. (2014, May 30). Savage capitalism is back – and it will not tame itself. *The Guardian*. <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2014/may/30/savage-capitalism-back-radical-challenge>
- Hamalainen, N. (2016). *Literature and Moral Theory* [Introduction]. Bloomsbury Collections. 1-16. <https://doi.org/10.5040/9781501305399.0005>
- History.com Editors. (2018, August 21). *Modernism and Postmodernism*. *History, A & E Television Network*. <https://www.history.com/topics/art-history/history-of-modernism-and-post-modernism>
- Ibsen, H. (1965). *A Doll's House*. Penguin Books India.

- Karim, M. H. B. A, & Azlan, A. A. (2019). Modernism and postmodernism in feminism: A conceptual study on the developments of its definition, waves and school of thought. *Malaysian Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 4(1), 1-14. <https://media.neliti.com/media/publications/322585-modernism-and-postmodernism-in-Historyfeminism-a5f539e4.pdf>
- Kurraz, A. H. (2020). Harry Sullivan's theory in characterizing Nora's personality in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. *Academic Journal of Research and Scientific Publishing*, 2(15), 46-59. <https://www.ajrsp.com/en/Archive/issue-15/Harry%20Sullivans%20Theory%20in%20characterizing%20Noras%20Personality.pdf>
- Lavine, T. Z. (1984). *From Socrates to Sartre: The philosophic quest*. Bantam Books.
- McAfee, N. (2018, June 28). Feminist Philosophy. *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2018 edition), In Edward N. Zalta (Ed.). <https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2018/entries/feminist-philosophy/>
- Mohammed, D. A. (2014). Nora as the distressed heroine in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. *Humanity Studies*, 34, 45-60.
- Mohanty, C. T. (1984). Under western eyes: Feminist scholarship and colonial discourses. *Boundary 2*, 12(3), On humanism and the University I: The Discourse of Humanism, 333-358. <https://www.sfu.ca/~decaste/OISE/page2/files/MohantyWesternEyes.pdf>
- Oruq, A.A.A., & Tariq, N. (2019). The dramatic effect of the antagonist in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*: An analytical and descriptive study. *European Journal of English Language and Literature Studies*, 7(1), 28-37. <https://doi.org/https://doi.org/10.37745/ejells.2013>
- Robertson, J. (2019 January). *Feminism through the Ages: Making waves* [Paper presentation]. Conference: Sociological Foundations of Thought https://www.researchgate.net/publication/330358465_Feminism_Through_the_Ages_Making_Waves
- Sayer, D. (1991). *Capitalism and Modernity An excursus on Marx and Weber*. Routledge.
- Schumann, N. (2020). 20 loving Bible verses about family. *Country Living*. <https://www.countryliving.com/life/g31984772/bible-verses-about-family/>
- Skirbekk, G. (2016). Processes of Modernization:Scandinavian Experiences. *North European and Russian Societies in the Enlightenment: Modernisation and Cultural Transfer*. Helsinki, 7-8. Retrieved from https://www.uib.no/sites/w3.uib.no/files/helsinki_correctedversion.1docx.
- The Center on Capitalism and Society. (n.d.). *Theory of Capitalism*. Columbia University. <https://capitalism.columbia.edu/theory-capitalism>
- Translation of *Sahih Muslim*. (n.d.). *Kitab al-Barr was-salat-i-wa'l-adab (the book of virtue, good manner and joining of the ties of relationship)* https://www.iium.edu.my/deed/hadith/muslim/032_smt.html
- Uddin, M. A. S. N. (2014). From Self Banishing Life to Life Banishing Self: The Prominent Causality and Lady Macbeth's Tragic Downfall. *IJUC Studies*, 10&11, 217-230. <https://doi.org/10.3329/iiucs.v10i0.27439>
- Uddin, M. A. S. N. (2021). Reaching Happiness beyond Emancipation: A Study on the Human-Centric Role of Linde in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. *Malaysian*

How to Cite (APA Style):

Uddin, M. A. S. N. (2022). From home to homelessness: A reflection on Nora's possible post-departure feminist life in A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen. *EduLite: Journal of English Education, Literature, and Culture*, 7 (2), 296-310. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30659/e.7.2.296-310>

Journal of Humanities and Social Sciences, 6(9). 528-536. DOI:
<https://doi.org/10.47405/mjssh.v6i9.1030>

Wilson, E. O. (1998). *Consilience: The unity of knowledge*. Vintage Books

Wiseman, M. C. (2010). Nora as a doll in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. *Inquiries Journal Student Pulse* 2(03), <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/a?id=1680>

Wollstonecraft, M. (1792). *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*.
<http://pinkmonkey.com/dl/library1/vindicat.pdf>

Xiao-yan, W. (2014). On the alienation in Miss Brill. *Journal of Literature and Art Studies*, 4(1), 1-4.

Yeasmin, F. (2018). 'A Doll's House' is the backlash of feminism. *International Journal of English Literature and Social Sciences (IJELS)*, 3(3). 334-338.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.22161/ijels.3.3.7>

Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

Copyright © 2022 Uddin. This is an open-access article distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License \(CC BY\)](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). The use, distribution or reproduction in other forums is permitted, provided the original author(s) and the copyright owner(s) are credited and that the original publication in this journal is cited, in accordance with accepted academic practice. No use, distribution or reproduction is permitted which does not comply with these terms.