THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORD DOLL
TO THE MAIN CHARACTER AS SEEN IN HENRIK IBSEN’S
A DOLL’S HOUSE

A THESIS

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Sarjana Sastra
in English Letter

by

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Dr. Fr. B. Alip, M.Pd., M.A.
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Dani Kristyawati (2002). The Significance of the Word 'Doll' to the Main Character as Seen in Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House. Yogyakarta: Department of English Letters Study Programme, Faculty of Letters, Sanata Dharma University.

ABSTRACT

This study focuses its discussion on the significance of the word doll to the main character as seen in Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House. A doll as the symbol has an important relation with Nora as the main character in the play.

Therefore, to study the significance of the word doll to the main character, the thesis attempts to answer two questions of the problem formulations. The first is: how does Nora’s character in the play? The second is: what is the significance of the word doll to Nora as the main character? This study uses one approach to analyse character and characterization of Nora and the significance of doll. The approach is objective criticism. Objective criticism is used as approach in this study because the analysis of character and symbol are based on the work itself.

The objectives of the study are to see Nora’s character, the interpretation of the word doll and the significance of doll to Nora’s character. By looking Nora’s character, it will help us to understand the relation between her character and the word doll, which signifies Nora’s Character.

The study results in several points. The first answer is about Nora’s character. In showing Nora’s character, the write used four ways based on M.J. Murphy’s theory. They are character as seen by others, speech, past life, and mannerism. From these ways, the writer finds that Nora is a childish woman, a spendthrift woman, and an independent woman finally. Nora’s character indicates the doll’s characters, which are pretty, something to play with, and has certain rames. The second point is about the significance of the word doll and its interpretation with Nora’s character in the term of signifier, signified and interpretation. The first interpretation is a doll as the signifier, the signified is miniature of human, usually of a child and the interpretant to make the representative connection between signifier and signified occurs in one of her character that is childish. The second interpretation is a doll as the signifier, a thing made as a toy is the signified and the interpretant, which make the signifier and signified connected is Nora’s character when her father used to treat her like a doll or a plaything. Torvald also regards her very much in the same way. The third interpretation is a doll as the signifier and a puppet is the signified. The interpretation to make the signifying connection is that Nora has to behave like what Torvald wants her to. The last interpretation is a doll as the signifier and something usually a child to play with is the signified. The active present of Nora’s attitude toward his family is the interpretant.
ABSTRAK

Fokus utama skripsi adalah arti kata doli terhadap pemeran utama dalam A Doll’s House karangan Henrik Ibsen. Doll sebagai simbol memiliki hubungan yang sangat penting dengan Nora sebagai pemeran utama dalam drama ini.


Manfaat pembahasan studi ini adalah untuk melihat karakter Nora, interpretasi atau pengertian kata doli dan penandaan doli terhadap karakter Nora,dengan demikian kita akan mengerti hubungan antara kata doli dan karakter Nora.

CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

The most unique creation in the world is human. A human has feeling and rational, which differs human from other creations of God. By feeling and rationality, a human creates something to fulfil his desire. A human creates novels, pictures, articles, poems, and so on. This is what we call the uniqueness of human and no other creations can create it.

In the form of writing, several people who are experts in writing create something to share their feeling of joy, sorrow, and other emotions with the readers. Sometimes they put their true experience or reality into their writing, so writing could be the imitation of life.

The work of art such as novels, poems, or plays may contain a situation in which people often struggle for their ideas. Literature is a medium to express human life as William Henry Hudson says:

Literature is a vital record of what men have seen in life, what they have experience of it, what they thought and felt about those aspect of it which have the most immediate and enduring interest all of us. It is thus fundamentally an expression of life through the medium of language (Hudson, 1958:10).

In other words, literature is the mirror of life since the literary world is a reflection of human life, and it brings us to the reality of human situations, problems, feelings, and all other aspects of human life.
Henrik Ibsen, one of the writers that I have chosen, wrote his literary works based on the reality. He opened up the social issues in the society at that time. The issues in the society often mask the inner life of his characters. What happen in the inner characters is often worst than the society and Ibsen wants to reveal this situation on his plays.

Ibsen's main concern in this play is about social problems between a husband and a wife of his days. The destruction between Torvald and Nora shows us the destruction between a husband and a wife that often happens in our society. The destruction happens in the way Torvald treats Nora as a doll. The wrong treatment from Torvald toward Nora has brought him into male domination.

As a free human in the world, Nora has to decide everything on her own. Unfortunately, the situation places her to obey whatever her husband says. These what make her think twice to tell Torvald about what happen to her, her desires, needs, and obsessions for she knows that Torvald will not pay attention to her. She just acts as if Torvald already fulfils her needs. In fact, she wants to be free woman and not like a doll. This situation causes Nora hard to say all the difficulties in their relationship because Nora cannot break her position toward Torvald. Until one day, she has to work secretly in order to pay the debt that she already borrows from Krogstad. Nora uses the money to go abroad to the place where can make Torvald get well from his sickness.

The decision not to tell Torvald about the money proves that actually she is a brave woman. The fact that she does not tell Torvald about borrowing money with
the reason that borrowing money from someone outside or inside the family will humiliate his family's status.

She has to obey all the rules that Torvald already set for the whole family without considering Nora's opinion or position as a wife and mother to the family. Until the time has come, Nora realizes that she has power and chance to be what she wants to be.

The writer impressed with the course of Nora's life and her family. The attitude that Torvald always expects from Nora is to be a doll to him. In fact, Nora is a strong woman with big submission to her husband.

The information above explains the reason why the writer chooses this topic in her thesis that is to discuss about the word doll, which has significance meaning with Nora as the main character in this play.

B. Problem Formulation

Referring to the background affirmed early, there are two questions that will lead the analysis to a profound explanation. These questions can be formulated as follow:

1. How does Nora's character in the play?

2. What is the significance of the word doll to Nora as the main character?

C. Objective of the Study

The objective of this study will discuss about the problem formulation as formulated above. First, the discussion will analyse Nora's character. From this
discussion it can be seen her character’s development. The second answer is about the significance symbol of the word doll to Nora as the main character and its interpretation between them. These explanations will complete the discussion about the correlation between Nora as the main character and the word doll as the symbol of her.

D. Definition of Term

In this study, I need to define some terms in order to obtain more understanding about the symbolism of the word doll in A Doll’s House in the correlation with the main character. These terms are:

1. Symbol

According to A Glossary of Literary Terms, a symbol in its broadest sense is anything, which signifies something else; in this sense, all words are symbols. In discussion literature, however, the term symbol is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event, which in turn signifies something or has a range of reference, beyond itself (1981:195).

2. Doll

According to Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary, a doll is a kind of model of baby or person, usually a child to play with (1974:257). Other sources describe doll as miniature human figure, usually of a child, made as a toy, a pretty, empty-handed woman (New Webster’s Dictionary 1992:106). Doll also means a toy baby, puppet, pretty silly woman (The Concise Oxford Dictionary 1951:356). Doll in this play also has literary
meaning based on the title *A Doll's House*. We already know about the meaning of doll. House in this title means house of doll, doll that has a house. Ibsen wants to describe Nora's position as doll in the house and house itself also a plaything as a doll.

3. Significance

The word significance according to *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary* means meaning; importance (1974:799). Charles Sanders Pierce presents the term of representation or a sign. Representation or a sign is something that stands to represent something. Saussure says that in the symbol, the relationship between *signifier* and *signified* is arbitrary; it requires the active presence of the *interpretant* to make the signifying connection and it only occurs in language.

4. Character

According to Abrams', characters are the person presented in dramatic or narrative work, who are interpreted by the reader as being endowed with moral and dispositional qualities that are expressed in what they say in dialogue and by what they do in the action (1981:20)

In the analysis, the writer decided to use all definitions, which has been stated above.

E. Benefit of the Study

The writer in writing this thesis has a great expectation that the thesis will help the readers to understand the relationship of the society as the real life with the
art as the imitation of life that Ibsen want to share. By understanding the background of the play, we may understand the play deeply, moreover about the male domination toward female as we can see in this play.

The writer also hopes that the readers can understand about the main character and its relationship with the word doll as the symbol this play. The more important aim that the writer wants to achieve is that the readers will see deeply the exploration of the word doll as the symbol of Nora in this play.
CHAPTER II
THEORETICAL REVIEW

A. Review on Related Studies

In the world of literature, Henrik Ibsen is known as a poet and a very well known playwright who wrote most of his plays in realistic setting. Ibsen wrote his plays based on facts and commonly occur in his time as the problem of the middle class families, for example, problems that are associated with the family status, social class, woman emancipation, and man domination.

In accordance with Raymond in Drama from Ibsen to Brecht, Ibsen is concerned with the social problem of his days, and he offers his readers the form of conversation between people in the family. He describes the setting, which usually takes place in the house and full of furniture. Ibsen also tries to describe the atmosphere in every single act, which helps the readers to be involved in this play (1968:25).

Raymond writes about the characters in the A Doll’s House as follow:

Characters were similarly conventional: “heavy father, innocence distressed, rough diamond, jealous husband, faithful friend”. This play did not deal in nuances. Character and action were drawn in bold. Theatrical lines: action was varied, complicated, and continuous in order to provide excitement and surprise and expectation in the theatre; characters were set in a single, simple colourful mould, in order to provoke theatrical recognition (1968:27).

Milly S. Barranger in Understanding Plays says that A Doll’s House is about the question of human right as Ibsen himself said, it is also about human appetites for power and exploitation and their victim. In this drama, other issues played out: patriarchy, submission, and rebellion (1994:489).
Many people comment on the use of symbol by Ibsen in *A Doll's House*. Jeanette Lee says that play is the reflection of life. It has its symbol and the symbol does not fit at all points (cited in Raymond William 1968:53). Each symbol holds certain meaning but by the symbol in the play, we could not be possible to take the meaning of the whole symbol as the overall judgement on the play.

M. C. Bradbrook states

Ibsen has hidden power light up all his writing, giving it not only the rich concentration of *A Doll's House*, but also the unifying cohesion of the symbolic (cited in Raymond William 1968:54).

William Archer says that *A Doll's House* is full of symbolism. Archer wants to say that in this play Ibsen uses a lot of symbol and the symbolism is mainly autobiographic (cited in Raymond William 1968:54).

Most critics of *A Doll's House* talk about the use of symbol. Unfortunately, they never mention which things or situations symbolize something. They only find that *A Doll's House* contains some kind of symbol.

The writer agrees with Jeannette Lee's opinion about symbol in Ibsen because certain meanings of symbols do not always suitable for another symbol. Like what the writer want to do in her analysis that *doll* symbolize certain meaning.

The writer also supports Raymond William idea about symbol in *A Doll's House*. This dramatic play is full of symbol. Most part of the play conveys certain hiding meaning that only can be understood by observing them deeply and thoroughly. Ibsen himself as the writer of the play also influences the symbol.
A. 1. Review on the Theories of Character

Holman and Harmon define character as the idea of the moral constitution of human personality, the presence of moral value, and the presence of the creature in art in the form of human being. The character is also a brief description of a person, which has some definite quality. The person is not described as an individualized personality or physical appearance but as an example of person’s characteristic on virtue or habit or disposition or even status such as a grumbler or complainer, a glutton or food-lover, a babbermouth or big mouth, a fop or unmarried person, etc.

M. H. Abrams describes character as the person presented in a dramatic or narrative work, who is interpreted by the readers as being competent with moral and disposition quality, that are expresses in what they say in the form of dialogue and what they do in the form of action (1981:20).

Perrine (1988) states that the characterization must also consider three principles, they are:

1. The characters must be consistent in their behaviour.

2. The characters must be clearly motivated in whatever they do, especially when there are any changes in their behaviour.

3. They must be lifelike or plausible.

All above principles should be the basic requirement to make the story convincing. A character should have reason in doing his action. They must represent real life where people face and solve problem.
Moreover, Abrams categories character into *main character* and *minor character*. A *main character* is the central character of the story. He or she plays the most important part throughout the story. Unlike the main character, throughout the story a minor character is not fully developed. A *minor character* appears in certain setting only to become the background for the major character. However, though the major character is the main important ones in terms of the plot, a minor character is also very important to the characterization of the major ones, to the development of the plot, or even to the tone and implies significance of the whole work (1967:21).

According to E. M. Forster, there are two kinds of character, *flat* and *round* character. A *flat* character is also called a type of two-dimensional. A flat character builds around a single idea or quality. The author does not present this character in detail, and therefore he only describes in a single phrase or sentence. A *round* character is complex in temperament and motivation and is represent with subtle particularity. This character sometimes surprises the readers with unexpected behaviours (cited in Abrams 1981:20).

Forster also says that a *round* character is as difficult to describe with any adequacy as a person in real life, and like most people, he is capable of surprising us (cited in Abrams's 1981:20).

Another theory presented by Holman and Harmon who classify characters as *static* and *dynamic* characters. A static character is one who changes a little or even does not change at all. As Holman and Harmon say:

A Static character is one who changes little if at all. Things happen to such a character without things happening within. The pattern of action reveals the character rather than showing the character changing in response to the action. Sometimes a
static character gives the appearance of changing simply because our picture of the character is revealed bit by bit (1986: 83).

A dynamic character, on the other hand, is one who changes throughout the story. As Holman and Harmon say:

A dynamic character is one who is modified by action and experiences, and one objective of the working, which the character appears, is to reveal the consequences of these actions (1986:83).

Holman and Harmon argue that most great dramas and novels have dynamic characters as protagonists. Short stories are more likely to reveal static characters through actions than to show changes in dynamic character resulting from action (1986:83).

M. J. Murphy (1997:161-173) explains the details how an author conveys to the readers the characters and the personalities of people he writes about. Based on how the author conveys to the readers about what sort of people the characters are, and how he makes the readers know and understand them.

1. Personality description

The author describes the characters through the details of his appearance, which are shown in the physical appearance of the characters. From the appearance, it is shown that the character is strong or weak, tall or small, fat or thin, with curly hair or blonde, of white or black skin, and handsome or beautiful. Personal description helps the readers both to visualize the person and to understand his characteristics
2. Character as seen by others

The author describes the character through the eyes and opinion of other characters. The other characters will give explanation about what a character is like. The readers also can use their point of view to describe certain character.

3. Speech

The author gives the readers an insight into the character in the work through what a person says. It can be seen whenever a person speaks, whenever he is in conversation with other character, whenever he puts forward an opinion we can see his character.

4. Past life

The readers learn to know the character’s personalities by learning something about a person’s past life. The author gives the readers a clue to events that helped to shape a person’s characters. This can be done by direct comment by the author and through the person’s thought, his conversation or the medium of another person. The character’s past life is always closely connected to his present life. Whenever the author provides picture of the character’s past life, it can be traced and learnt to help us figure out his motives of recent actions.

5. Conversation of others

The author gives the readers clues to a person’s character through the conversation of other people and the things they say about him. We need to pay attention to the conversation of other characters in order to help us get more information to support our judgment on the character. It is useful to go through
speech by speech, to determine exactly what is meant or implied by each of them. They can show how a character is like.

6. Reaction

The author can also gives us a clue to a person's character by letting us know how that person reacts to various situations and events. The character shows his or her personality from his or her actions. The actions are related to his or her motives and thoughts.

7. Direct comment

The author describes or gives comment on a person’s character directly. Direct comment gives the readers a straightforward description about character.

8. Thoughts

The author gives us direct knowledge of what a person is thinking about. Whenever the author gives a direct description of the character's mind, what he is thinking about, we are led to a more profound analysis on the mental process of the character. We are facilitated to disclose the thought inside the character's mind.

9. Mannerism

The author describes a person's mannerism, habit or idiosyncrasies, which may also tell us something about his characteristics.

Furthermore, if character means an individual within a literary work, characterization is the process by which an author creates, develops, and presents the character to be life like inside the work.

There are two methods for characterizing the person in the story: showing and telling method. In the showing method or dramatic method, the author presents his
character in the form of conversation, talking and acting. The author in this sense leaves the readers to guess what motives and disposition lay behind what they say and do. A reader of a work of literature using this method is likely to be vague in finding out the characterization of the character in the play according to what the reader reads for the author only provide him the clues in the form of dialogue and description. In the *telling method*, the author himself intervenes authoritatively in order to describe, evaluate the motives and nature qualities of his characters. In using this method, the author is likely to be able to ensure the readers about the characterization of the character as he limits the readers' perception with his characterization (1981:21).

However, both methods are good. The application of the method depends on the author’s preference over one method. If the author wants the readers to find out the characterization of the character by themselves, it means that he will provide only the clue by using the showing method. If he wants the readers to perceive the exact characterization of his characters, he will provide detailed characterization on his characters by using the telling method.

Some other times, however, the author uses both methods in his work to make the readers find out the characterization of the characters by themselves and to give the readers the exact characterization of the characters.

**A. 2. Review on the Theories of Symbol**

Symbolism is one of the most important aspects of imaginative literature, which is difficult to be understood since it has deeper meaning inside it. The
imaginative literature means the way an author sends his idea through literary work where we have to use our imagination to understand it (Barranger, 1994:58).

McMahan describes a symbol as something concrete that stands for or suggest more than it. For example, a flag, a piece of colored cloth, stands for nation; yellowed failing leaves may suggest death; and rain can signify rebirth (1986:58).

Robert Stanton writes that ideas and emotions often seem as real as any physical fact, however they are invisible and intangible. In order to make ideas and emotions vivid in reality, the author uses symbols. Symbols will evoke these ideas, emotion more concrete, factual, and details in the reader’s mind (1965:30).

Stanton also explains that symbol may be anything in the story: a single object, a repeated type of object, a physical substance, a shape, a gesture, a colour, a sound, and a fragrance. All these things represent a facet of a human personality, the indifference of nature to man’s suffering, futile ambition, human responsibility, the romanticism of youth (1965:30).

Holman and Harmon define symbol as something that stands for, suggests, or means something else. A symbol is like an image that evokes an objective, and concrete reality. The symbol does not “stand for” the meaning, it evokes an objective that suggests the meaning (1986:494).

Rohrberger and Woods classify literary symbol into two broad types. The first type is called public, common or conventional symbol. This type has universal meaning that easily can be understood by the readers while they read the play. For example, flowing water suggests time and eternity, a voyage suggests life, a cross suggests Christianity, and a weapon suggests military authority. This kind of symbol
is used widely in the world of literature. The second type of symbol is *private* or *personal symbol*. This type of symbol only can be understood if the symbol used in the whole context of the play. One symbol can have related meaning to another symbol in one play or certain work of art (1971:16-17).

Northrop Frye describes another theory of symbol in *Anatomy of Criticism*. He identifies that a symbol is a unit of literature structure that can be cut off for critical attention. A word or a phrase is a symbol when it is used with some kind of special reference (1973:71). Frye also argues that the symbol can be in the form of a sign or verbal unit, which stands for the things outside the play (1973:73).

Another definition is presented in *Oxford Dictionary*, which defines symbolism as representation of ideas by the use of symbol (1987:876).

The significance of a private or personal symbol is generated mainly for itself; it arouses a more difficult problem in interpreting. Below are some cautions Perrine in *Literature Structure, Sound, and Sense* (1974) gives to help readers interpret symbol in literary works.

1. Readers should find clues that are furnished in the story itself. These clues are to tell the readers that a detail should be reluctant to identify an idea as symbolical. These certain signals or hints are such as those mentioned by Rohrberger and Wood, Jr. in *Reading and Writing about Literature*. They are through emphasis, repetition, implication, or recurring patterns (1971:17). Whenever these hints occur, they indicate that the author is saying one thing in terms of another, and these hints should never be neglected for they lead to eventual understanding.
2. The meaning of a literary symbol must be established and supported by the entire context of the story. The symbol has meaning in the story, not outside it.

3. A symbol may have more than one meaning. A symbol is like a many faceted jewel. It flashes different colours when it is turned in the light. This is not to say that it can mean anything we want it to but the meaning is always controlled by the context of the story.

Panuti Sudjiman and Aart Van Zoest’s *Serba-serbi Semiotika* or *Interpretation et Semiotique* (1991:8) mentions Charles Sanders Pierce’s argument about the terms of representation or a sign, an object, and a ground. A sign or representation is something that stands to represent something else. An object is the word used to call what the sign wants to represent. A ground is something that is used to make the sign work. To make easier, here the example: the word ‘table’ in French sentence *mettez ce livre sur la table* or in English it means *put the book on the table*. People who understand French can only admit the word ‘table’ as a sign. Therefore, the language itself is “the ground”; in this case, it is a code, a convention and people will understand what the sentence means. If the sentence is used in a special or certain situation, the word ‘table’ refers to a certain thing: a table where it is called “the object”. ‘Table’ as the object according to *Oxford Dictionary* means piece of furniture consisting of a flat top with support legs (1987:878).

Pierce also argues in Terence Hawkes’ *New Accents: Structuralism and Semiotic* that a sign or representament is something that stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity: it is anything which determines something
else (its interpretant) to refer to an object to which itself refers (its object). A sign thus stands for something (its object); it stands for something to somebody (its interpretant); and finally it stands for something to somebody in some respect (this respect is called its ground). These term, representament, object, interpretant and ground can thus be seen to refer to the means by which the sign signifies (1978:126-127).

The relationship, according to Pierce (1978:127-128), normally involves three elements, sign or representament, object, and ground in the three kinds of 'triadic' structures or 'trichotomies' in whose terms the fourth element, the interpretant is perceived. The structures are as follows:

a. 'Triadic relations of comparison' or logical possibilities based on the kind of sign. These are the qualisign, a 'quality' which act as a sign once it is embodied; the sisign, an actual thing or event which act simply and singly (as indicated by the prefix sin) as a sign; and the legisign, a law that act as a sign (i.e. not in the form of a single object but as the abstract working of a set of rules or principle: grammar operates as a recurring legisign in language).

b. 'Triadic relations of performance' involve actual entities in the real world, based on the kind of ground. These are the icon, something which functions as a sign by means of feature of itself, which resembles its object; the index, something which functions as a sign by virtue of some sort of factual or causal connection with its object; and the symbol,
something which functions as a sign because of some 'rule' of conventional or habitual association between itself and its object.

c. 'Triadic relation of thought' is based on the kind of object. These are the \textit{rheme} (or \textit{seme}), a sign which indicates the understood possibility of an object to the interpretant; the \textit{dicent} (or \textit{dicisign} or \textit{pheme}) which conveys information about its object, as opposed to a sign from which information may be derived; and the argument, a sign whose object is ultimately not a single thing but a \textit{law}.

The important framework derives from the assertion and proposition through the second 'triad' of signs: \textit{icon}, \textit{index}, and \textit{symbol}. Their importance requires us to look closer at them.

In the \textit{icon}, the relationship between sign and object, or signifier and signified, manifests in the Pierce's phrase about a 'community in some quality': a similarity or 'fitness' of resemblance proposed by sign, to be acknowledged by its receiver.

A diagram or a painting has an iconic relationship to its subject in so far as it resembles it: it is the signifier to its subject's signified in the iconic mode (Terence Hawkes 1978:128-129).

In the \textit{index}, the relationship is concrete, actual and usually of a sequential, causal kind. The pointing finger is a signifier whose relationship to its signified is \textit{indexical} in mode. A knock on the door is an index of someone's presence, and the sound of a car's horn is a sign of the car's presence in the same mode. Smoke is an \textit{index} of fire. A weathercock is an \textit{index} of the direction of the wind (1978:129).
In the symbol, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary; it requires the active presence of the interpretant to make the signifying connection and according Saussure the major systematic manifestation of signs in this mode occurs in language (1978:129).

All the explanation above, according to Terence Hawkes could be clarified like this: the pointing finger or the observation of a leaf could be said to be the index of a tree; the diagram or the picture of a tree constitutes an icon of the tree, the utterance of the word ‘tree’ is a symbol of the tree is no inherent, necessary ‘tree-like’ quality in that signifier: the relationship to an actual tree remains fundamentally arbitrary and sustained only by the structure of the language in which it occurs, and which is understood by its interpretant (1978:129).

In Terence’s Structuralism and Semiotic Saussure puts the case that any semiotic analysis must postulate a relationship between the two term signifier and signified which not one of ‘equality’ but of ‘equivalence’. The relationship between sound-image (signifier) and concept (signified) constitutes what Saussure calls the linguistic sign. In the term of non-linguistic system, this ‘associative total’ of signifier and signified constitutes simply the sign (1978:130-131).

Saussure’s example is a bunch of roses. It can be used to signify passion. When it does so, the bunch of roses is the signifier, and the passion is the signified. The relation between the two (associative total) produces the third term, the bunch of roses as a sign. As a sign, it is important to understand that the bunch of roses is quite a different thing from the bunch of roses as a signifier: that is, as a horticultural entity. The bunch of roses as a signifier is empty, as a sign it is full.
B. Theoretical Ground

The theories that are explained in the previous part will be applied according to its focus. Each theory has its own focus and this will facilitate the writer to decide on which part each theory is supported to be located and implied.

Here, the theory of character and the presentation of the character are needed to explain about Nora. In order to explain Nora’s character, the writer used E. M. Forster, Holman, Harmon, and Abrams's theories to observe how the character is. The writer tries to use the theory promoted by M. J. Murphy in order to see how the character is presented. These theories help the writer to analyse what kind of a person Nora is.

To correlate Nora’s character and the word doll, the writer used the theory of symbol presented by Barranger, Holman, Harmon, Northrop Frye, and Perrine since the word doll considered being a symbol of Nora’s character.

The theory of sign, signifier, and signified in the term of symbol by Charles Sanders Pierce, Terence Hawkes and Saussure is used to explain about the significance of the word doll to Nora as the main character. The writer will try to explain the word doll as the symbol according to Saussure’s theory about the relationship between the signifier and the signified, which requires the active presence of the interpretant to make the signifying connection in the term of symbol. By this explanation, the readers will understand that the word doll actually symbolizes Nora’s character.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

A. Object of the Study

Henrik Johan Ibsen (1828-1906), a Norwegian dramatist and poet, was the creator of the modern realistic prose drama and one of the greatest dramatists of all the time.

The type of work, which the writer wants to analyse in this study, is a play, and its title is A Doll’s House. This play by Henrik Ibsen was first published in 1879. A Doll’s House was Ibsen’s first international success. He wrote it in Rome during the summer time in 1879, at the age of fifty-one. After decade, this play becomes a subject of the worldwide discussion. It arose an extraordinary controversy wherever it was staged or read. There was scarcely a civilized country where never performed it until the end of the century. This play comes from a true story, which Ibsen witnessed (William Benton, Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1970:1024). Penguin Book first published this play in 1959. It consists of social problem, which arises in Ibsen’s time. A Doll’s House has become a classic expression of theme of woman right.

A Doll’s House is a story about a family, which seems to be a happy family. In fact, Nora as a wife is treated like a doll in the mansion house. She dares to take a risk by borrowing money secretly for the sake of Torvald’s health. Nora realizes that Torvald would be angry if he knows that Nora has borrowed money secretly. Unfortunately, Torvald wrongly perceives her goodness with the reason that borrowing money will humiliate his family’s status. He only knows that the money is
coming from Nora’s father. Nora uses the money to bring Torvald to Italy in order to heal his sickness. When Torvald discovers Nora’s secret about the money and he is very angry because of that. This problem becomes the moment, which makes her decide to leave her family away to find her own life and not to be a doll anymore.

B. Approach

To evaluate the play that the writer already chosen, the writer tried to use the criticism based on the literary orientation. The writer uses objective criticism to do the analysis of this study according to Abrams in *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (1981:35-37).

Objective criticism views a literary work as an independent, unique entity separated from other external aspect. It only focuses in the work itself. In criticizing, the things that have to be criticized are the inner structures or the intrinsic elements of the work. These elements consist of the plot, theme, tone, character, atmosphere, and setting. By using the objective criticism, the literary work is presumed as a unity whose parts cannot be separated and are closely intertwined. Therefore, the analysis is more on the relation between the intrinsic elements of the work.

The writer chooses the objective criticism because it is the most suitable approach in explaining the title of this thesis, since it studies the internal of this play. In this case, the writer wants to observe the intrinsic elements of the play like the character and characterization of the main character and the main character’s development, which has relationship with the word *doll* as the symbol in that play.
The decision to apply this approach gives the writer opportunities to concentrate on the content of the play only, as mentioned before, objective criticism gives an idea of examining a literary work by looking the work itself. It gives me more chances to go into a deeper understanding on the text of the play.

C. Method of the Study

The method of library research has been considered suitable and applicable for this thesis. Therefore, it is not enough to read only *A Doll's House*. To explore the symbol of the word *doll*, which has relationship with the main character in this play, surely requires some other references. This method of research requires the sources in the library. These sources are compiled and analysed through a desk research.

The writer tried to get better understanding about the main character, Nora, and the word *doll* as the symbol of Nora’s character by reading and rereading the play and tried to pick out the basic idea of Nora’s characters. The writer attempted to put her attention on the evidences, which symbolized Nora’s character and contained relationship with the word *doll*.

To do the analysis of the problems the writer also used several reference books as the secondary sources. Since the writer used the objective criticism, the writer read again the play in order to find more information about the intrinsic elements of the play especially about the main character that is Nora and the symbol, which implied in the story especially the symbol of *doll*. Some theories are employed to analyse Nora’s character. In analysing her personality, the writer used M. J.
Murphy's theory by looking Nora's character as seen by other characters in the play, and her speech, past life, and mannerism. In analysing Nora's character, the writer also used Abrams's theory namely *showing method*. By this theory, the writer as a reader have an opportunity to explore Nora's character and guess the motive and disposition of her character through the dialogues and actions.

Since the word *doll* is a symbol, according to Perrine's theory, the meaning of it cannot be taken from outside the story. To clarify the word *doll* is by looking to the work itself and from certain dictionaries. To explain its relationship with Nora as the main character is by correlating the meaning of *doll* with Nora's characters using Pierce and Saussure about the *signifier, signified* and *interpreant*.

The final step is drawing conclusion based on the result of the analysis that had been done.
CHAPTER IV
ANALYSIS

A. The Discussion of Nora’s Character

In A Doll’s House, we find some following characters. The major character is Nora Helmer. The other characters are the minor ones such as Torvald Helmer, Krogstad, Mrs. Linde (Christine), Dr. Rank, Anne Marie, Ivar, Bob, Emmy, and Helen (the maid). Their personalities can be revealed through their attitude, behaviour, conversation and speech.

The analysis will discuss only the major character, Nora Helmer. She is the major or central character of the play because she plays most important part throughout the play (Abrams 1967:21).

Nora’s character changes throughout the play. That is why Nora is dynamic character (Holman and Harmon 1986:83). Nora’s character is also round one, which is complex in temperament and motivation. She is capable of surprising the readers by her decision to leave her family at the end of the story (E. M. Forster in Abrams 1981:20).

Nora is the wife of Torvald Helmer, a bank manager. She is a beautiful wife, who always concerns with and give full attention to her children, husband, and family and even to the other people. Nora seems to do everything to please her family.

Helmer. Do you remember last Christmas? For a full three weeks beforehand you shut yourself up every evening till long after midnight, making ornaments for the Christmas Tree and all other fine things that were to be surprise to us. It was the dullest three weeks I ever spent!
Nora. I didn’t find it dull. (Act I p. 99)

Helmer. Of course you couldn’t, poor little girl. You had the best of intentions to please us all, and that’s the main thing. But it is good thing that our hard times are over.

Nora. Yes, it is really wonderful. (Act I p. 100)

Nora is very kind to other people beside her own family. She is so kind to the porter by giving him extra tip and helps Mrs. Linde, her old friend, to find a job at her husband’s bank.

Porter. Sixpence.

Nora. There is a shilling. No, keep the change. (The Porter thanks to her, and goes out…) (Act I p. 96)

Nora. Christine is tremendously clever at book-keeping, and she is frightfully anxious to work under some clever man, so as to prefect herself –

Helmer. Very sensible, Mrs. Linde.

Nora. And when she heard you had been appointed manager of the Bank - the news was telegraphed, you know—she travelled here as quick as she could, Torvald, I am sure you will be able to do something for Christine, for my sake, won’t you? (Act I p. 112)

Because of her attention and love to her family, she likes to spend large amount of money that she gets from her husband to please her family and buy household things. For example, she buys a Christmas tree, and Christmas presents for her children, husband, and maid, but she buys nothing for herself. She does not want anything for herself.

Helmer. Very well. But now tell me, you extravagant little person, what would you like for youself?

Nora. For myself? Oh, I am must sure I don’t want anything. (Act I p. 97)

Nora’s attention is just to make her family happy and she shows it to her children as she plays and talks to them.

Nora. How fresh and well you look! Such red cheek!—like apples and roses. (The children all talk at once while she speaks to them.) Have you had great fun? That’s splendid! What, you pulled both Emmy and Bob
along on the sledge?—both at once?—that was good. You are a clever boy, Ivar. Let me take her for a little, Anne. My sweet little baby doll! (Takes the baby from the Maid and dance it up and down.) Yes, yes, mother will dance with Bob too. What! Have you been snowballing? I wish I had been there too! No, no, I will take their things off, Anne; please let me do it, it is such fun. Go in now, you look half frozen. There is some hot coffee for you on the stove. (Act I p. 113)

Nora also adores her husband very much. She will not accept anyone who underestimates her husband, as she is angry with Krogstad who talks about her husband’s weakness.

**Krogstad.** Oh, I have known your husband from our student days. I don’t suppose he is any more unassailable than other husbands.

**Nora.** If you speak slightlyingly of my husband, I shall turn you out of the house. (Act I p. 116)

Her dedication toward husband is shown in the way she obeys everything just as Torvald says.

**Nora (moving towards the stove).** As you please Torvald. (Act I p. 97)

**Nora.** ...everything just as Torvald say it! ... (Act I p. 108)

Nora tries to give the best to her family and people around her. She does not want anything from Torvald except the money to pay the debt when she had to bring Torvald to Italy. So, actually she is a hard worker because she gets money not only from her husband but also from the job that she does secretly.

**Nora.** Well, then I have found other ways of earning money. Last winter I was lucky enough to get a lot of copying to do; so I lock myself up and sat writing every evening until quite late at night. Many a time I was desperately tired; but all the same it was a tremendous pleasure to sit there working and earning money. It was like being a man. (Act I p. 108)

All the work that she does only is the sole purpose to take Torvald to Italy in order to heal his sickness and she reveals her biggest secret to Mrs. Linde as her old
friend and the only person that she can trust. She expects that someday everything will be all right after she tells the secret to Mrs. Linde. Nora feels happy and proud when she can do something for her husband without considering the risk that might follow.

Nora. I think so, too. But now, listen to this; I too have something to be proud and glad of.

Mrs. Linde. I have no doubt you have. But what do you refer to?

Nora. Speak low. Suppose Torvald were to hear! He mustn’t on any account—no one in the world must know, Christine, except you.

Mrs. Linde. But what is it?

Nora. Come here. (Pulls her down on the sofa beside her.) Now I will show you that I too have something to be proud and glad of. It was I who saved Torvald’s life. (Act I p. 103)

Nora never tells Torvald about the money that they use to go to south (Italy) and she does not want Torvald to know the secret.

Nora. Yes; odds and end, needlework, crochet—work, embroidery, and that kind of thing. (Dropping her voice.) And other things as well. You know Torvald left his office when we were married? There was no prospect of promotion there, and he had to try and earn more than before. But during the first year he overworked himself dreadfully. You see, he had to make money every way he could, and worked early and late; but he couldn’t stand it, and fell dreadfully ill, and the doctors said it was necessary for him to go south. (Act I p. 102)

Torvald thinks that Nora’s father gives the money to Nora and Nora asks him to go to Italy as if she wants for herself. So, Nora keeps two secrets first it is about the money and second is about Torvald’s sickness. She is hard for her to face the matters.

Nora. But it was absolutely necessary that he should not know! My goodness, can’t you understand that? It was necessary he should have no idea what a dangerous condition he was in. It was to me that the doctors came and said that his life was in danger, and that the only thing to save him was to live in the south. Do you suppose I didn’t try, first of all, to get what I wanted as if it were for myself? I told him how much I should love to travel abroad like other wives; tried tears
and entreaties with him; I told him that he ought to be kind and indulgent to me; even hinted that he might raise a loan. That nearly made him angry, Christine. He said I was thoughtless, and that it was his duty as my husband not to indulge me in my whims and caprices – as I believe he called them. Very well, I thought, you must be saved – and that was how I came to devise a way out of the difficulty—(Act I p. 106)

Later, Nora always prevents her husband from knowing about her borrowing money. She does it because she does not want him to feel humiliated. It is Torvald’s principle that a family should not owe anything because it will humiliate the family’s status.

Actually, Nora borrows money by forging her father’s signature. As a wife, Nora has no right to sign anything. The society at that time only allows men to sign something. She does it because she finds no way that would be better to save her husband and her father has just died.

She takes a careless action. She commits forgery without thinking how dangerous it is for her. She does not know that it is a crime. Everything she does for the sake of her husband’s health.

Mrs. Linde. And did your husband never get to know from your father that the money had not come from him?
Nora. No, never. Papa just died at that time. I had meant to let him into the secret and beg him never to reveal it. But he was so ill then – alas, there never was any need to tell him.
Mrs. Linde. And since then have you never told your secret to your husband?
Nora. Good Heavens, no! How could you think so? A man who has such strong opinion about these things! And besides, how painful and humiliating it would be for Torvald, with his manly independence, to know that he owed me anything! It would upset our mutual relations altogether; our beautiful happy home would no longer be what it is now. (Act I p. 107)
From that analysis above, we can see that Nora is a wife and a mother who devotes her life to her family. She is willing to do everything for the family and to make her family happy even sometimes she has to sacrifice herself.

Sooner or later, the situation reveals itself. Torvald discovers the secret. That moment makes Nora realize everything she feels about her family. She never feels happy living with her family. Nora changes when she knows Torvald’s reaction about the forgery. She begins to realize that her husband is not a man that she thinks about. She becomes an intelligent and brave woman who argues against her husband.

Nora. Sit down. It will take some time; I have a lot to talk over with you.
Helmer (sit down at the opposite side of the table). You alarm me, Nora!—and I don’t understand you.
Nora. No, that is just it. You don’t understand me, and I have never understood you either—before to-night. No, you mustn’t interrupt me. You must simply listen to what I say. Torvald, this is a settling of accounts. (Act III p. 160)

After eight years of marriage, they never have a serious conversation as a husband and a wife. That night when everything is uncovered, she reveals all her feeling.

Nora. We have been married now eight years. Does it not occur you that this the first time we two, you and I, husband and wife, have had a serious conversation?
Helmer. What do you meant by serious?
Nora. In all these eight years—longer than that—from the very beginning of our acquaintance, we have never exchanged a word on any serious subject. (Act III p. 160)

Torvald thinks that a serious conversation will only appear in the matter of business. That is why he never has a serious conversation with Nora. Torvald assumes that Nora will not understand about business matter. In the matter of fact,
Nora thinks that the family problems or conversation between husband and wife in the family should be the serious one beside the business matter.

Torvald’s treatment toward Nora is, according to Nora, like the way her father treats her. She never expects him to do so. She expects him to be a husband and not as father. After long time of marriage, Nora reveals her opinion and feeling before finally she decides to leave everything in her family even husband and children.

**Helmer**. Was it likely that I would be continually and forever telling you about worries that you could not help me to bear?

**Nora**. I am not speaking about business matter. I say that we have never sat down in earnest together to try and get at the bottom of anything.

**Helmer**. But, dearest Nora, would it have been any good to you?

**Nora**. That is just it; you have never understood me. I have been greatly wronged, Torvald—first by papa and then by you. (Act III p. 160)

Nora who is used to think about her family realizes that she needs to stand on her own feet and face the hard life alone.

Finally, she makes a great decision to leave her home and family.

**Nora**. Indeed, you were perfectly right. I am not fit for the task. There is another task I must undertake first. I must try and 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.

**Helmer** (springing up). What do you say?

**Nora**. I must stand quite alone, if I am to understand myself and everything about me. It is for that reason that I cannot remain with you any longer. (Act III p. 162)

The decision to leave her family and home shows us that she is a dynamic character (Holman and Harmon 1986:83). Her character is also a round one. It is clear that Nora’s character develops and completely changes because she makes a

Nora understands that a woman should become herself without hiding behind her husband. She wakes up to be a self-reliance woman.

According to M. J. Murphy's theory, there are nine ways to see how a character is presented to the reader. In this study, the writer will only take four ways, which are dominant to show the character of Nora. The presentation of Nora's character is clearly described in several ways such as others' opinions and her own speech, past life and mannerism.

1. Nora's Character as Seen by Others

To give clear explanation about Nora's character as the main character, the author describes her through the eyes and opinions of other characters in A Doll's House. The surrounding characters give comment about what and how Nora is. Based on the opinion of Torvald as the husband in this play, Nora is a spendthrift woman. Nora likes money but never keeps it.

**Helmer.** Don't disturb me. (A little later, he opens the door and looks into the room, pen in hand.) Bought, did you say? All these things? Has my little spendthrift been wasting money again? (Act I p. 95)

**Helmer.** You are an odd little soul. Very like your father. You always find some new way of wheedling money out of me, and, as soon as you have got it, it seems to melt in your hands. You never know where it has gone. Still, one must take you as you are. It is in the blood; for indeed it is true that you can inherit these things, Nora. (Act I p. 98)
Torvald always tells Nora not to spend money recklessly but Nora often asks money to Torvald and she does not care whether they have to borrow money from a stranger or someone else.

Nora. Pooh! We can borrow till then.
Helmer. Nora! (Goes up to her and takes her playfully by the ear) The same little featherhead! Suppose, now, that I borrowed fifty pounds today, and you spent it all in the Christmas week, and then on New Year’s Eve a slate fell on my head and killed me, and—
Nora (putting her hands over his mouth). Oh! Don’t say such horrid things.
Helmer. Still, suppose that happened,—what then?
Nora. If that were to happen, I don’t suppose I should care whether I owed money or not.
Helmer. Yes, but what about the people who had lent it?
Nora. They? Who would bother about them? I should not know who they were. (Act I p. 96-97)

In Mrs. Linde’s eyes, Nora is spendthrift woman.

Mrs. Linde (smiling). Nora, Nora, haven’t you learnt sense yet? In our schooldays you were a great spendthrift. (Act I p. 102)

Mrs. Linde also gives a clue that Nora is also childish.

Mrs. Linde (smiling). My dear! Small household cares and that sort of thing!—you are a child, Nora. (Act I p. 104)

When Nora expresses her own feeling and opinion about Torvald and Dr. Rank, she actually gives a clue of her is childish character. Mrs. Linde is the only friend with whom Nora shares her feeling. She also believes that Nora is childish woman.

Nora. That is quite right, Christine. Torvald is so absurdly fond of me that he wants me absolutely to himself, as he says. At first he used to seem almost jealous if I mentioned any of the dear folk at home, so naturally I gave up doing so. But I often talk about such things with Dr. Rank, because he likes hearing about them.

Mrs. Linde. Listen to me, Nora. You are still very like a child in many things, and I am older than you in many ways and have little more experience. Let me tell this—you ought to make an end of it with Dr. Rank. (Act II p. 126)
As a good and mature wife, she should not try to compare her husband to Dr. Rank. She thinks that it is more comfortable to speak with Dr. Rank. This attitude becomes a basic clue of Nora’s childish character.

Her childishness can also be seen in the way she keeps the secret and thinks that there will be no problem with her marriage. Mrs. Linde insists her to tell Torvald everything.

**Mrs. Linde.** Nora, you must tell your husband all about it.
**Nora** (in an expressionless voice). I knew it.
**Mrs. Linde.** You have nothing to be afraid of as far as Krogstad is concerned; but you must tell him.
**Nora.** I won’t tell him. (Act III p. 150)

Mrs. Linde discovers that Nora is a stubborn woman and it is one of her immature characteristics. Nora’s attitude by being stubborn and full of pretence in front of her husband gives Mrs. Linde a clue that actually Nora does not grow up yet. Nora has a mind of a child that who never worries about life.

**Mrs. Linde.** How kind you are, Nora, to be so anxious to help me! It is doubly kind in you, for you know so little of the burdens and trouble of life.
**Nora.** I—? I know so little of them?
**Mrs. Linde** (smiling). My dear! Small household cares and that sort of thing!— You are a child, Nora. (Act I p. 104)

Nora’s father, husband and friends always think that Nora is a woman who cannot do anything. She is regarded as woman incapable for something serious.

**Nora** (tosses her head and crosses the stage). You ought not to be so superior.
**Mrs. Linde.** No?
**Nora.** You are just like the others. They all think that I am incapable of anything really serious— (Act I p. 104)
Krogstad also gives the description of Nora’s childish.

**Nora.** I have courage enough for it now.

**Krogstad.** Oh, you can’t frighten me. A fine, spoilt lady like you—
(Act II p. 139)

Krogstad is sure that Nora does not have enough courage to refuse his will since he knows that Nora is a spoilt woman.

2. **Nora’s Speech**

A serious conversation takes place when Torvald finds out the secret. At that time, Nora tries to reveal her true feeling and puts forward her opinion and it gives a clue to her character. From her speech, Nora shows her motivation and attitude toward life. She begins to think about her own life, emotion, feeling and thinking. What she has in her life is not different with others have. She thinks that this is the time for her to take back everything she owes because it is her real life that she must follow and she has to stand on her own feet.

**Nora.** I don’t believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you are—or, at all events, that I must try and become one. I know quite well, Torvald, that most people would think you are right, and that views of that kind are to be found in books; but I can no longer content myself with what most people say, or with what is found in books I must think over things for myself and get to understand them. (Act III p. 162-163)

Realizing that she cannot understand Torvald anymore, Nora decides to leave her house.

**Helmer** (springing up). What do you say?

**Nora.** I must stand quite alone, if I am to understand myself and everything about me. It is for that reason that I cannot remain with you any longer.

**Helmer.** Nora! Nora!
Nora. I am going away from here now, at once. I am sure Christine will take me in for the night—

Helmer. You are out of your mind! I won’t allow it! I forbid you!

Nora. It is no use forbidding me anything any longer. I will take with me what belong to myself. I will take nothing from you, either now or later.

Helmer. What sort of madness is this! (Act III p. 162)

Nora’s speech shows that she changes to a mature woman. Torvald’s treatment has made Nora different. The situation teaches Nora to be brave to face the world.

Nora. To-morrow I shall go home—I mean, to my old home. It will be easiest for me to find something to do there.

Helmer. You blind foolish woman!

Nora. I must try and get some sense, Torvald. (Act III p. 162)

3. Nora’s Mannerism

Ibsen describes Nora's character through her mannerism and habit. Nora’s mannerism and habit can be seen in her daily relationship with her husband. The way she tiptoes across and listens at her husband’s door, hides in her pocket a bag containing macaroon, puts the bag of macaroon in her pocket and wipes her mouth are the mannerism that shows in her attitudes.

(...She takes a packet of macaroon from her pocket and eats one or two; then goes cautiously to her husband’s door and listens.) (Act I p.96)

Nora. Just now. (Puts the bag of macaroons into her pocket and wipes her mouth.) Come here, Torvald, and see what I have bought. (Act I p. 96)

She always looks for ways to please her husband, in which she often pretends in front of him. For example, her husband forbids her to eat macaroon because they will spoil her teeth, but she eats it behind his back.

Helmer. And I would not wish you to be anything but just what you are, my sweet little skylark. But, do you know, it strikes me that you are looking rather—what shall I say—rather uneasy to-day?

Nora. Do I?

Helmer. You do, really. Look straight at me.
Nora (looks at him). Well?

Helmer (wagging his finger at her). Hasn’t Miss Sweet—Tooth been breaking rules in town to-day?

Nora. No; what makes you think that?

Helmer. Hasn’t she paid a visit to the confectioner’s?

Nora. No, I assure you, Torvald—

Helmer. Not been nibbling sweets?

Nora. No, certainly not.

Helmer. Not even taken a bite at a macaroon or two?

Nora. No, Torvald I assure you really—(Act I p. 99)

4. Nora’s Past Life

We can learn about Nora’s personality by learning her relationship with her father when he was still alive. The treatment from her father shapes her character and what he already does is closely connecting to her present life. It can also be seen in her relationship with her husband. That is why Nora’s character in the future is closely connecting with her past life.

The treatment from her father makes her behaviour like a child on the other hand; she becomes a woman who obeys the male domination both of her father’s and her husband’s. Here, the writer wants to say to the readers that Nora is treated as a doll.

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 dool-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 the thought it great fun when I played with them. That is what our marriage has been, Torvald. (Act III p. 161)

They treat her like a doll. Nora must obey and agree with everything that already arranged or decided.

Nora. It is perfectly true, Torvald. When I was at home with papa, he told me his opinion about everything, and so I had the same opinion; and if I different from him I concealed the fact, because he would no have like
it. He called me his doll-child, and he played with me just as I used to play with my dolls. And when I came to live with you—(Act III p. 161)

From the explanation above, we can see the character of Nora in general. It is already explained about Nora’s behaviour in her relationship with her family and friend.

B. The Word Doll as the Symbol in A Doll’s House and Its Meaning to Nora as the Main Character

In this second part of the discussion, we will see the specific part of Nora’s character. This discussion will explain about Nora’s character, which has correlation with the word doll in the term of signifies, signified and the interpretant to make the signifying connection between doll and Nora’s character.

The decision to take the word doll as the symbol in this play is by applying Perrine’s steps (1974). This symbol is taken to signify Nora’s character. Here are the descriptions of doll:


The meanings of doll above help the writer to describe which part of Nora’s behaviour or attitude that showed the significance meaning to the word doll.
In a symbol, the relationship between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary; it requires the active presence of the interaction to make the signifying connection and the major systematic manifestation of signs in this mode occurs in the language (Saussure cited in Terence Hawkes 1978:129).

The significance of the word *doll* to Nora as the main character will be clearly describe that the *doll* is the signifier and it signified Nora. The interpretant to make the signifying connections is Nora’s character, which is shown in her daily life. In order to be more specific, a doll has many characteristics, which can describe Nora’s character (Saussure cited in Terence Hawkes 1978:129).

Specifically, the meaning of *doll* as the symbol can be seen in the explanation below in the correlation with the Nora’s character according to Saussure and Pierce’s theory of symbol.

1. First Interpretation

The *signifier* is doll and the *signified* is miniature of human, usually of a child. The *interpretant* to make the representative connection between signifier and signified occurs in one of her character that is childish. The other characters in this play describe Nora as a childish woman.

Torvald as the husband admits that Nora is a childish woman. He often treats her like a child. He never gives her an opportunity to be involved in any serious thing. Although Nora gives full attention to the family, she never faces or solves any serious problem. Nora reveals her feeling about this when finally she realizes that Torvald never gives her a chance to be involved in any serious matter.

*Nora*. In all these eight years—longer than that—from the very beginning of our acquaintance, we have never exchanged a word on any serious subject.
Helmer. Was it likely that I would be continually and forever telling you about worries that you could not help me to bear?
Nora. I am not speaking about business matter. I say that we have never sat down in earnest together to try and get at the bottom of anything.
Helmer. But, dearest Nora, would it have been any good to you?
Nora. That is just it; you have never understood me. I have been greatly wronged, Torvald—first by papa and the by you.
Helmer. What! By us two—by us two, who have loved you better than anyone else in the world?
Nora (shaking her head). You have never loved me. You have only though it pleasant to be in love with me. (Act III p. 160)

Nora’s attitude toward Torvald gives us clues that her childishness drives her to do something behind his back as usually when a child is forbidden to do something, such encourages him to do something.

Mrs. Linde also gives us the same clue that she is like a child and a child is usually incapable for dealing with something serious.

Mrs. Linde. How kind you are, Nora, to be so anxious to help me! It is doubly kind in you, for you know so little of the burdens and troubles of life.
My dear! Small household cares and that sort of thing! —you are a child, Nora.
Nora. You are just like the others. They all think that I am incapable of anything really serious—(Act I p. 104)

2. Second Interpretation

The **signifier** is doll and the **signified** is a thing made as a toy. The **interpretant**, which makes the signifier and the signified connected, is Nora’s character when her father used to treat her like a doll or a plaything. Torvald also regards her very much in the same way.

Nora. It is perfectly true, Torvald.... He called me his doll-child, and he played with me just as I used to play with my dolls. (Act III p. 161)

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 I played with them. That is what our marriage has been, Torvald. (Act III p. 161)

Nora has been treated like a plaything. This treatment makes her to be more like an object in her daily relationship with her husband and father.

If a child plays with a doll, she usually puts a name on it or calls it with certain name based on the figure of the doll. For example, if it is a cat, she will call it a catty; if it is a dog she will prefer to call it a doggy, but if it is a figure of person, she will put a name of a person on it. Such is what Torvald does to Nora, but he prefers to call her with a name of a bird and it is identical with its beauty and cheerfulness. In fact, a bird can be identical with freedom because a bird can fly everywhere he wants to go. The situation, which appears is that Nora is like a bird in a cage. She makes the owner happy by her beauty and cheerfulness, but actually there is a struggle inside her and she wants to be free.

That is what Nora does in her daily relationship with her family. She always tries her best to make the whole family happy. All people around her can only see the happiness she makes, but on the other side, she is struggling to make her husband survive from his sickness, by paying all the debt to Krogstad, keeping the secret about the forgery, and making everything in her family look as if nothing has happened. Torvald thinks Nora is always happy, never sad, and energetic.

The way Torvald treats her is by calling her with certain names of birds like *my little lark, little squirrel, a songbird, a wood nymph, and a dove.*
All the names of birds above are identically with peaceful, carefree, and happy birds at least on the surface. On the inside, the birds may have many struggles, but they do not show them, much like Nora avoids showing her inside struggles.

As a plaything, a doll is weak and cannot do anything she wants. It also happens to Nora. In the house, she occupies the weak position. She must obey every rule in the house, which is decided, without her agreement or acknowledgement and everything goes, as Torvald likes it. Torvald thinks that Nora obeys every rule he decides for actually Nora does not do exactly every rule. For example, Torvald does not allow everyone in the house to borrow money from others because it would humiliate his family's status. It is a good rule but Nora breaks the rule by borrowing money from Krogstad secretly. She does it in order to bring Torvald to Italy to heal his sickness. Unfortunately, Torvald never knows about it. He never knows where the money comes from and for what the money is used.

**Mrs. Linde.** And did your husband never get to know from your father that the money had not come from him?

**Nora.** No, never. Papa died just at that time. I had meant to let him into the secret and beg him never to reveal it. But he was so ill then—alas, there never was any need to tell him.

**Mrs. Linde.** And since then have you never told your secret to your husband?

**Nora.** Good Heavens, no! How could you think so? A man who has such strong opinion about these things! And besides, how painful and humiliating it would be for Torvald, with his manly independence, to know that he owed me anything! It would upset our mutual relations altogether; our beautiful happy home would no longer be what it is now. (Act I p. 107)

Being in the weak position, Nora feels that she should depend on Torvald. She realizes that she will become nothing since she is expected to depend on her husband.
Mrs. Linde. No, a wife cannot borrow without her husband’s consent. (Act I p. 106)

The conversation above is an example that a doll as a plaything occupies the weak position and should depend on the owner or the man as her husband in the financial matters.

3. Third Interpretation

The signifier is a doll and a puppet is the signified. The interpretant to make the signifying connection is that Nora has to behave like what Torvald wants her to.

She is like a puppet, which has to do everything as the owner asks it to. A puppet would behave or a dress up as if the owner wants. In the society, Torvald needs to be looking good and honour though actually his family is not good inside it. It happens when Nora tries to defend Krogstad’s position in the bank. Torvald stands in his decision and gives Krogstad’s position to Mrs. Linde. Actually, he can dismiss another man and change Krogstad’s dismissal. Nevertheless, he does not do that because he does not want people in the bank to think that he easily changes his mind and that his changing is because of his wife. The society at that time only respects a man as the controller and Torvald makes a puppet on Nora and insists her to behave like an ordinary wife in the society.

Helmer. And it is just by interceding for him that you make it impossible for me to keep him. It is already know at the Bank that I mean to dismiss Krogstad. Is it to get about now that the new manager has changed his mind at his wife’s bidding—

Nora. And what if it did?
Helmer. Of course!—if only this obstinate little person can get her way! Do you suppose I am going to make myself ridiculous before my whole staff, to let people think that I am a man to be swayed by all sort of outside influence? I should very soon feel the consequences of it, I can tell you! (Act II p. 130)

Torvald as a husband likes to treat Nora like a puppet. He likes to teach her to do something he wants and not to do anything against his wishes. Nora has to obey and listen to her husband. Nora’s obedience implies that she has to do the things her husband asked.

Nora. Do I?
Helmer. You do, really. Look straight at me.
Nora (looks at him). Well?
Helmer (wagging his finger at her). Hasn’t Miss Sweet-Tooth been breaking rules in town to-day?
Nora. No; what makes you think that?
Helmer. Hasn’t she paid a visit to the confectioner’s?
Nora. No, I assure you, Torvald—
Helmer. Not been nibbling sweets?
Nora. No, certainly not.
Helmer. Not even taken a bite at a macaroon or two?
Nora. No, Torvald, I assure you really—
Helmer. There, there, of course I was only joking. (Act I p. 99)

This dialogue seems that Nora is afraid to do anything against Torvald’s wishes. Nora cannot refuse her husband’s words. It is hard Nora says ‘no’. She always agrees with whatever Torvald says.

Helmer. That is like a woman! But seriously, Nora, you know what I think about that. No debt, no borrowing. There can be no freedom or beauty about a home life that depends on borrowing and debt. We two have kept bravely on the straight road so far, and we will go on the same way for the sort time longer that there need be any struggle.

Nora (moving towards the stove). As you please, Torvald. (Act I p. 97)
Nora cannot be against her husband’s word. She obeys whatever he says. She can only say ‘yes’ to whatever Torvald does. Nora tries to say that she cannot make any decision. His words are absolute.

Nora. Yes, I am very tired. I want to go to sleep at once.
Helmer. There, you see it was quite right of me not to let you stay there any longer.
Nora. Everything you do is quite right, Torvald. (Act III p. 151)

The explanation above shows us that the word doll represents Nora’s character. Nora is a plaything to her father and husband. Nora is a property of someone, a doll to be housed in the toy mansion. Like a doll, which cannot do anything except if the owner plays and moves it, it cannot do anything to satisfy itself but it can satisfy the owner. Nora always acts to pretend her own personality just to satisfy her beloved father, husband, and family. In fact, she is someone who cannot be like a doll staying at home to do someone else’s will.

Nora is a woman who has no chance to be her. She always obeys her husband’s command. Nora has become what her husband has moulded her into. She does everything that Torvald wants. Torvald has arranged everything for her.

Nora (undisturbed). I mean that I was simply transferred from papa’s hands into yours. You arranged everything according to your taste, and so I got the same tastes as you—or else I pretended to, I am really not quite sure which—I think sometimes the one and sometimes the other. When I look back on it, it seems to me as if I had been living here like a poor woman—just from hand to mouth. I have existed merely to perform tricks for you, Torvald. But you would have it so. You and papa have committed a great sin against me. It is your fault that I have made nothing of my life. (Act III p. 161)

From the treatment she has got, Nora feels that she has done nothing for her own life.
Torvald wants to teach Nora to be a good wife. He thinks that she can be a good wife if he teaches her. He wants Nora to be what he likes to be.

**Helmer.** There is some truth in what you say—exaggerated and strained as your view of it is. But for the future it shall be different. Playtime shall be over, and lesson-time shall begin.

**Nora.** Whose lesson? Mine, or the children's?

**Helmer.** Both yours and the children's, my darling Nora.

**Nora.** Alas, Torvald, you are not the man to educate me into being a proper wife for you. (Act III p. 161)

As a plaything, Nora has been treated like something that the owner can do anything to her. Torvald prefers to save his own feeling rather than consider Nora's feeling. He keeps on blaming Nora for what she has done.

**Helmer.** No fine speeches, please. Your father had always plenty of those ready, too. What good would it be to me if you were out of the way, as you say? Not the slightest. He can make the affair known everywhere; and if he does, I may be falsely suspected of having been a party to your criminal action. Very likely people will think I was behind it all—that it was I who prompted you! And I have to thank you for all this—you whom I have cherished during the whole of our marriage life. Do you understand now what it is you have done for me? (Act III p. 157)

4. Fourth Interpretation

The doll is the *signifier*, something usually a child to play with is the *signified* and the active present of Nora's attitude toward his family is the *interpretant*.

Nora has to obey and does every rule, duties, obligations, and all the requirements that demand by her husband in the house. Like playing games, she has to do exactly every rule and has no excuse to play out of the rules. The house seems to be the play yard and all the people in the house are the players, including Nora. She lives under pressure of everything in the house since she is the daughter of her
father until she gets married with Torvald. She gets no chances to change her life into better life.

The opportunities come when Torvald thinks that Nora has already humiliated the family by borrowing money from Krogstad and forgery her father’s signature. It seems to Torvald that Nora has broken the rule that there should be no debt, no money borrowing in the house.

The situation makes Nora have a strong heart and the decision to leave everything in the house and live in her ability. She begins to realize that she can do more than just obeying Torvald’s rules because not all the rules are good. She has her desire to make her life worthwhile.

Finally, Nora decides to go away from her house, family, and everything she has in that house to find something for her. She wants to educate her life that someday she will be ready to do better life.

Her own family hurts her. She finds nothing inside it and people around her do not accept her as she is. They only see the performance without considering the dept of her heart that longing for acceptance of her own personality. Therefore, she decides to go to find herself as someone who can do anything for herself and should not depend on any body else, just for herself.

Another situation also appears when another letter from Krogstad arrives. The dismissal letter from Krogstad telling that he does not need the money anymore. Torvald thinks that it saves his marriage.

**Maid** (half-dressed, comes to the door). A letter for the mistress.

**Helmer.** Give it to me. (Takes the letter, and shuts the door.) Yes, it is from him. You shall not have it; I will read it myself.

**Nora.** Yes, read it.
Helmer (standing by the lamp). I am scarcely have the courage to do it. It may mean ruin for both of us. No, I must know. (Tears open the letter, runs his eye over a few lines, looks at a paper enclose, and gives a shout of joy.) Nora! (She looks at him questioningly.) Nora!—No, I must read it once again—. Yes, it is true! I am saved! Nora, I am saved!

Nora. And I?

Helmer. You too, of course; we are both saved, both you and I. Look, he sends you your bond back. He says he regrets and repents—that a happy change in his life—never mind what he says! We are saved, Nora! No one can do anything to you. Oh, Nora, Nora!—no, first I must destroy these hateful things. Let me see—. (Takes a look at the bond.) No, no, I won’t look at it. The whole thing shall be nothing but a bad dream to me. (Tears up the bond and both letters, throws them all into the stove, and watches them burn.) There—now it doesn’t exist any longer. He says that since Christmas Eve you—. These must have been three dreadful days for you, Nora. (Act III p. 158)

The conversation above shows that Torvald can control everything inside Nora’s life. It seems that he can control Nora’s feeling too. After he gets angry with Krogstad’s letter, which humiliates the family’s status, now he can easily change Nora’s feeling to be happy because Krogstad has repented and regretted about what he has done to Nora. From here, we see that Torvald is only concerned with his own feeling, status and self-esteem without bothering Nora’s condition at that time. He does not even think to help Nora and after everything is over, he asks Nora to forget everything that already happen. Of course, Nora does not easily follow Torvald’s suggestion because she realizes the correct time for her to do anything she wants has come.

Nora. I don’t believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you are—or, at all events, that I must try and become one. I know quite well, Torvald, that most people would think you right, and that views of that kind are to be found in books; but I can no longer content myself with what most people say, or with what is found in books. I must think over things for myself and get to understand them. (Act III p. 162-163)
Torvald is such a selfish man who would not give help if anything happens to her as long as nothing happens to him. He treats her like she is a baby. He thinks that he needs to be there to watch out for her and that she would be nothing without him. That is why she decides to leave him. She does not need his shelter. She does not want to be rescued. She needs to leave this man, even when she does; he still worried about what people will say about their marriage.

Torvald himself admits that the game is over. He regrets for what he has done to Nora. Nora thinks that it is time for her to give herself a lesson.

**Helmer.** There is some truth in what you say—exaggerated and strained as your view of it is. But for the future it shall be different. Playtime shall be over, and lesson-time shall begin.

**Nora.** Whose lesson? Mine, or the children’s?

**Helmer.** Both yours and the children’s, my darling Nora.

**Nora.** Alas, Torvald, you are not the man to educate me into being a proper wife for you.

**Helmer.** And you can say that! (Act III p. 161)

**Nora.** Indeed, you were perfectly right. I am not fit for the task. There is another task I must undertake first. I must try and 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. (Act III p. 162)

Nora reacts against Torvald. Her leaving is a sign that she does not want to live under a man’s command. She says that she is not made for command.

**Helmer.** Oh, you think and talk like a heedless child.

**Nora.** Maybe. But you neither think nor talk like the man I could bind myself to. As soon as your fear was over—and it was not fear for what threatened me, but for what might happen to you—when the whole thing was past, as far as you were concerned it was exactly as if nothing at all happened. Exactly as before, I was your little skylark, your doll, which you would in future treat with doubly gentle care, because it was so brittle and fragile. (Getting up.) Torvald—it was then it dawned upon me that for eight years I had been living here with a strange man, and had borne him three children—. Oh, I can’t bear to think of it! I could tear myself into little bits!
Helmer (sadly). I see, I see. An abyss has opened between us—there is no denying it. But, Nora, would it not be possible to fill it up?
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. (Act III p. 165)

She wakes up from her life as a doll. She wants to end up everything that she has with Torvald because she has become a doll for her whole marriage life.
CHAPTER V
CONCLUSION

The significance of the word *doll* in *A Doll’s House* has a correlation with Nora as the main character. Based on the analysis above, the writer finds the answer of the problems. In order to clearly understand the use of the word *doll* as a symbol, the first discussion is about the characterization of Nora Helmer as the main character. As a dynamic and round character, Nora changes throughout the play and she is capable to make a surprising decision by leaving her family at the end of the story after long time obedience to her husband and family.

In accordance with M. J. Murphy (1972), the writer understands Nora’s character by following four main ways. The character is identified based on Nora’s past life, speech, mannerism, and other views of her.

Based on the discussion about Nora’s character as seen by others, Nora is a spendthrift woman who likes to spend money. She does that because she likes to buy household things and to pay the debt that she has borrowed from Krogstad. She uses that money to bring Torvald to Italy in order to heal his sickness. Torvald initially knows nothing about that secret. When Torvald discovers the secret, he is very angry with Nora because it already humiliates the family. After that, Nora decides to leave her family to find her freedom and to educate herself.

Another character also occurs in this discussion. Nora is a childish woman. She acts like that in her daily relationship with her father and husband. This character can also be seen through her mannerism. She acts like a child in order to please her.
husband. Torvald likes her childish attitude. On the other side, the childish character occurs as the effect of her father's treatment. Her father loves to treat her like an amusing doll. When she gets married with Torvald, he prefers to treat her like her father treats her. That is why in her past lives we can see the childish character also appears.

In her speech, she tries to reveal all her feeling, emotion, and attitude toward life after she realizes that she needs to stand in her on feet. She is not a doll anymore; she is not a plaything but a human who has her own right.

The next discussion is about the description of the object of doll. The description of the object of doll can be seen in the New Webster's Dictionary, The Concise Oxford Dictionary, and Oxford Advance Learners Dictionary. They describe doll as the miniature human figure, usually of a child, a thing made as a toy and puppet.

From the analysis above, it can be concluded that the symbol of a doll is signifying Nora's character. In general, according to Saussure and Pierce's theory, the doll is signifier and it signified Nora. The interpretant to make the signifying connection is Nora's character, which is shown in her daily life. The characteristic of doll is suitable to Nora's character.

The first analysis is the word doll as the signifier and the signified is a miniature of human, usually of a child. The interpretant to make the signifying connection is Nora's childishness character. This character can be seen in the way she acts toward her husband and father. It can also be seen in her daily attitudes
toward Torvald. It gives us clues that her childishness drives her to do something behind her husband back and acts like a child, very spoiled woman.

The second discussion is that the word doll is signifier and the signified is a thing made as a toy. The interpretant to make the signifying connection is Nora’s mannerism in the way she acts toward her father and husband. Her father is used to treat her like a doll or a plaything. Usually a child or the owner of the doll will give a name to it. The name depends on the figure of the doll. The same as true with what Torvald does to Nora but he gives Nora names of birds, which are identical with Nora’s character that she is very active, energetic, carefree, and happy. In fact, Nora struggles inside her. All she wants to do is to make all the family happy. That is why Nora looks happy all the time without considering the inside struggles.

As a wife, Nora only has a weak position in her relationship with her husband. She has to obey every rule and follow every word that Torvald says. She has no power to refuse Torvald’s words. Nora must do everything, whatever Torvald likes. That is why as a wife she has an obligation to make her husband happy by following his will even if it is not suitable with her opinion. The worse thing that she does is when she has no money to bring Torvald to Italy in order to heal his sickness and her father just dies. She has no way out to get the money even she already pretends that is her who needs to go to Italy to her husband. The last thing she does that would be the better way for her to get money is by borrowing money to Krogstad. He is a clerk and he is willing to lend her money with one requirement. The requirement leads her to forge her father’s signature because it is impossible for her to get the money with her husband or her father’s signature. A woman at that
time does not allow to sign anything without the permission from her husband. The final decision is already made that she borrows Krogstad’s money with her father’s false signature. Nora knows that her decision would make her husband angry because she breaks the rule for Torvald said that borrowing money will humiliate family’s status.

The third analysis is the word *doll* as the *signifier* and a puppet as the *signified*. The *interpretant* to make the signifying connection is Nora’s attitude toward male domination in her family. Nora has to behave like what her father and husband want her to behave.

In almost all her discussion and conversation or even daily acting, she has to act, say and do exactly with what her father or husband demand. It is not easy for her to be a *doll* in the mansion house. Torvald as a husband likes to play a puppet on Nora. He likes to teach her to do something he wants and not to do anything against his wishes. Nora has to obey, agree, and listen to her father or husband.

The fourth discussion is that the word *doll* is the *signifier* and something usually a child to play with is the *signified*. The *interpretant* to make signifying connection is Nora’s attitudes as active present toward her family.

After the bad time that they have to face, Torvald admits to Nora that the game is over and Nora makes the biggest decision by living her husband and children and lives for herself.

The things that happen to her show us that Nora’s character represents the characteristic of a doll. The doll is the *signifier* and Nora’s character is the *signified*. The *interpretant* to make the signifying connection is Nora’s life in her relationship
with her father, husband and all her family, which reveals in her attitude, behaviour, conversation and speech. It is clear now that the word *doll* is very significance to Nora’s character as the main character in this play.
BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX

Summary of *A Doll’s House*

Nora Helmer was a wife of a bank manager. Her husband was Torvald Helmer. He loved his wife dearly, but he regarded her very much as her own father had seen her, as an amusing doll—a plaything. It was true that she did behave like a child sometimes in her relations with her husband. She did behave like a child because Torvald expected her to do that way.

Nora was not a doll but a woman with a woman’s loves, hopes, and fears. It was shown when Torvald had been ill and the doctor said that he would die if he did not go abroad immediately. Nora was confused. She knew that Torvald would not allow her to borrow some money. She could not go to her father either for he was dying man. The only way to get money was borrowing money. She borrowed two hundred and fifty pound from Krogstad, a moneylender by forging her father’s signature, so that Torvald could have his holiday in Italy.

In her daily life after Torvald got well, Nora had to think up ways to pay back the money to Krogstad regularly. Every time Torvald gave her money for new dresses and such things, she never spent more that a half of it in fact she was splendid woman. Secretly, she also found other ways to earn money. One winter she worked secretly.

Then Krogstad was the employ of the bank where Torvald was its manager. Krogstad used the condition to get better position in the bank. Krogstad thought that he could use the note to get fortune for himself. But Torvald hated Krogstad and had
a plan to dismiss Krogstad. In the same time, Christine Linde, Nora’s old friend applied for a position in that bank. Finally Mrs. Linde got Krogstad’s position and Krogstad was fired.

Krogstad was angry when he discovered that he was to be fired. He called on Nora and swore that he would ruin her and her husband if Torvald dismissed him. Krogstad reminded her about the note that supposedly signed by her father was dated three days after his death. Frightened at Krogstad’s information, Nora pleaded Krogstad but she was unsuccessfully to reinstate Krogstad in the bank.

Krogstad wrote a letter to Torvald, which he revealed the full details of the forgery that Nora had done. He dropped the letter in the mailbox outside Torvald’s home.

Torvald and Nora attended a fancy dress ball the next evening. At that ball Nora had to be a Neapolitan fisher girl and dance tarantella. She had to divert Torvald’s attention from the mailbox because Krogstad had put the letter, which revealed the full details of the forgery on it by practicing her dance before Torvald and Dr. Rank. She was desperately to solve the problem. She thought of Mrs. Linde could help her. Nora knew that Krogstad had at one time been in love with Mrs. Linde. Mrs. Linde promised to do what she could to turn Krogstad from his avowed purpose. Mrs. Linde, by promising to marry Krogstad and look after his children, succeeded in persuading to withdraw all accusation against the Torvalds, but she realized that Nora’s affairs had come to crisis and sooner or later Nora and Torvald had to finish this matter.
Unfortunately, Torvald read Krogstad's letter after their return from the ball. He was angry and accused Nora of being a hypocrite, a liar, and a criminal, of having no religion, no morality, no sense of duty. He declared that she would no longer be a part of the family and can no longer be his wife although she may continue to live in his house to keep up appearance.

Then another letter arrived from Krogstad, told that he intended to take no action against Torvalds. Torvald then changed his mind and asked Nora to come back to the house. For the first time Nora saw her husband as a selfish man and did not appreciate her as a wife. She remembered that no marriage could be built on inequality and announced her decision to leave her family forever. She was going to try to become a reasonable human being, to become a woman, not a doll to flatter Torvald's selfish. She went out, slammed the door of her dollhouse behind her.