

Casa de muñecas: una nueva faceta de la mujer del siglo xix ***Dollhouse: a new facet of 19th century women***

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Resumen

La obra *Casa de Muñecas*, del dramaturgo Henrik Ibsen, fue consolidando una nueva concepción del teatro moderno del siglo XIX. La protagonista, una mujer que logra despojarse de las normas que le impone la época y busca en sí misma el amor verdadero, deja las restricciones sociales que las mantenían ocultas y no las dejaban verse como ella misma. El artículo es el resultado de búsqueda de información relacionada fémina en una sociedad conservadora a través de la aplicación de métodos como: método histórico-lógico, análisis y síntesis, inducción y deducción, sistematización, análisis documental y de manera particular los de análisis que pueden abordar el estudio de una obra; destacan el sociológico, el psicológico y el lingüístico. Tiene como objetivo El objetivo sistematizar los conocimientos teóricos y metodológicos relacionados con el análisis y crítica literaria.

Palabras clave: Amor, Desamor, Sociedad conservadora, Libertad, Mujer, Opresión

Abstract

The play *A Doll's House*, by playwright Henrik Ibsen, consolidated a new conception of modern theater in the 19th century. The protagonist, a woman who manages to shed the norms imposed on her by the time and searches for true love within herself, leaves behind the social restrictions that kept her hidden and did not allow her to see herself as herself. The article is the result of a search for information related to women in a conservative society through the application of methods such as: historical-logical method, analysis and synthesis, induction and deduction, systematization,

documentary analysis and particularly those of analysis that can address the study of a work; The sociological, psychological and linguistic stand out. Its objective is to systematize theoretical and methodological knowledge related to literary analysis and criticism.

Keywords: love, heartbreak, conservative society, freedom, women, oppression.

Introduction

The subject Literary Analysis and Criticism, conceived in the study plan for the Artistic Education career, is made up of a knowledge system valid for higher education as well as for any other branch of art, it demands a remarkable effort to guarantee the proper understanding of the literary work, This does not consist in providing historical or cultural information more or less broad, but rather in providing interesting details about the life of works and authors to provide a critical position in the confrontation with literary discourses of various genres that allow them an accurate decoding of the artistic fact as a source of knowledge, enjoyment and as an event of high educational value.

The critical analysis of art is a genre, between literary and academic and even journalistic, which makes an aesthetic evaluation of works, artists or exhibitions in a personal and subjective way. It is at the same time evaluative, informative and comparative, written in a concise and pleasant way, without pretending to be an academic study, but providing empirical and contrastable data, assuming these arguments it is possible to work with one of the works that has marked a milestone in the artistic endeavor that enriches the analysis and criticism; essential elements for the study and teaching of good art and that add to the talent and mastery of the professional.

In the 19th century, modern theater was born in Norway, at the height of the industrial revolution. In the wake of this phenomenon, the feminist movement arose there, which was totally opposed to the tyranny of the male sex, whose purpose was to seek equal conditions in marriage and political power between men and women Veloz (2009). This technification brought with it the distinction of social classes: bourgeoisie, businessman, steel magnate, banker and merchant, and in turn the proletariat, the workers exploited as labor, who had no choice but to organize their movement to claim for decent work and pay.

In this context, the labor and feminist movements began to mark the history of Norway at the dawn of the twentieth century in search of a social position so that women could perform in roles other than those they were commonly accustomed to as housewives, caring for their husbands and children. In this way, society faces important social changes which allowed opening new ideological conceptions

that materialize in the literary production; hence playwrights with spontaneous and innovative ideas that mark the milestone of the theatrical representations never forgotten.

In this panorama Ibsen, H. (1828-1906), a realist and modern playwright who opens the curtain with great works such as: *Brand* (1866), *Peer Gynt* (1867), *The Pillars of Society* (1877) and *A Doll's House* (1879), the latter, the work that is the subject of the present analysis: *With A Doll's House*. The position of this creator created a great controversy for the conservative society of that time. His objective was to reveal a decadent world based on oppression and lies, "Pillars of society", based on the historical events that Piña lived through (2001, p.5).

The magnificence of "A Doll's House" weaves a scandalous ending, which reaffirms the individuality of women and lays bare the lack of love lived in a bourgeois marriage, a dramatic situation that has repercussions in its expansion throughout the European continent, specifically in cities such as: London, Rome and Paris. The play was translated into several languages: English, Portuguese, Spanish, French, Italian, Russian, German; among others; all this allows to state as an objective: to critically analyze the play "A Doll's House" from the author's vision related to the woman of the time.

Development

The examination of the work is based on the use of theoretical methods such as: historical-logical: for the systematization of the historical evolution, analytical-synthetic: allowed the analysis and interpretation of the relationship of the characters from the author's vision. Induction-deduction: based on the study of the parts as a whole, documentary analysis: for the study of criteria of different specialists related to the work and others purely for literary analysis, among which stand out: the sociological, psychological and linguistic to arrive at conclusions that allow to determine that the expression "A Doll's House" could suppose a childish expectation, but more goes beyond because it reveals that reality that allows an encounter with life itself.

With the literary happiness that reading grants, the work weaves family and matrimonial frameworks, battles between the struggle of masculinizing power, sees the situation of women immersed in the economic and cultural aristocracy of the time, and thus immerses the reader in a real world, which remains through the centuries, devoid in principle of apparent human struggles between hope and freedom.

Reading "A Doll's House" is not only enjoyment, pleasure, enjoyment; it represents a challenging experience, a path not easy to undertake, the protagonist is a woman mediated by diatribes occurred in

a fictional world of perfect marriage that has been invented, becoming an object of that marriage in full social economic formation of the Norwegian bourgeoisie.

The main questions that call for analysis, in the author's opinion, are related to the lack of love and the awakening of women in a conservative society. Historically, love is a transversal reference that has set literary standards in different periods; as is the case of *Romeo and Juliet* (1557), a tragedy that tells the story of two young people in love, who despite the opposition of their families, decide to commit suicide and live their love beyond death so that true love can be illustrated; However, they would come in contrast to the discouraging experience of lovelessness that the protagonist of "A Doll's House" lives, who faces the search for her individuality, after discovering lovelessness in a marriage of appearances, and in a society that oppresses and subjugates women's freedom.

One of the categories that should be carefully analyzed is the relationship of characters and the dialogue between them, such as: Doctor Rank, a friend of the family, and who had been in love with Nora in silence. Cristina, her childhood friend and remains as her most faithful confidant, in turn, who keeps in her past a love that was never consolidated with Krogstad, who exerts pressure on Nora to reveal a great truth that she has hidden from her husband for many years, a revelation that allows the protagonist to recognize that she was just another doll in her house.

The reflections related to the character Nora must be based on the awakening, when she realizes that her marriage was only built under the oppression and the appearance that her husband wanted to show before society, a discovery that makes her feel the need to seek love in herself, leaving in the background the love for her children, and distorting the love that Torvaldo, her husband, offered her: a possessive, materialistic love and social appearances. The bourgeois home of the Helmer family is presented as a mere mirage, a deception, it was only a dollhouse, where the protagonist is a doll playing at being a woman, mediated by the indications and presumptions of a husband who cements the lack of love from the beginning.

On falling in love, Ortega y Gasset points out that "attention is fixed by itself on the other being. In the vital urgencies, on the contrary, the attention is fixed obliged, against its own taste" (1995, p.102). In the play *A Doll's House*, it was not for pleasure that Nora, her protagonist, worked late into the night, or that she bought the cheapest things for herself, she adds, "To love another is not only to indulge in his happiness. But to contribute to it" (1995, p.103) and Nora made a great contribution of dedication so that everything in her home would run normally, without being burdened by the payment of a debt she had acquired to save her husband, evidencing with this act the love for others, before herself.

Alluding to the chronological order in which the play develops, the journey continues after the recognition of the crisis of love. Nora felt for Torvaldo a love that is presented with sincerity, dedication, sacrifice, commitment and respect. It is evidenced in the next section of the play, in the conversation between Nora and Cristina, her friend, regarding everything she had to do to pay the debt to Krogstad, who lent the money to save Torvaldo and take him to Italy for his recovery:

These events reveal a woman who, opposing the social rules of the 19th century, transgresses every norm to save her husband. Although what becomes visible to others is a submissive woman subjected to her husband's will, inside her is a brave and determined woman, as can be analyzed in the following passage:

Cristina: Well, but your father gave them the necessary money.

Nora (smiling): Yes, that's what Torvaldo and everybody believes, but.... Cristina: But?

Nora: Dad didn't give us a cent. I was the one who got the money.

Cristina: You? Such an important amount?... (Ibsen, 2001:14).

Nora's concern for her husband made her go to extreme and unsuspected lengths, such as forging her father's signature in order to borrow the money to pay for his illness. However, will this be the full realization that the protagonist has reached? What will be the conclusion she will reach after the truth of her feat is revealed? To solve these questions we will enter the play, especially in that part in which Nora strips her of everything she has, really finding true love, which is nothing more than love for her.

Bustamante (2009) defines Nora as the new Eve of the 19th century, and there is no reason to doubt it. From the Biblical history we know stories from the Old Testament regarding Adam and Eve, especially that passage in which Eve disobeys God's prohibition by eating the forbidden fruit, which leads her to be banished from paradise for transgressing the rules of the supreme God, to face the misfortunes of a new life outside Eden. Another Biblical version mentions that Eve was not Adam's first wife, but Lilibet, who refused to attend to his requests, and preferred to leave rather than be subdued. Likewise, it is Nora, the new Eve, the new Lilibet, the new woman who breaks the norms of the society of that time, who finally wakes up from that false home built on lovelessness, and decides to leave, leaving her husband and children.

In Nora's last conversation with Torvaldo Helmer:

Nora: I have others no less sacred: my duties to myself. Helmer: First of all, you are a wife and a mother.

Nora: I don't believe in that anymore. First of all, I am a human being with the same titles as you..., or, at least, I should try to be. I know that most men will agree with you, Torvaldo, and that those ideas are printed in books; but now I can't think about what men say and what is printed in books. I need to form my own idea about this and try to account for everything (Ibsen, 2001, p.76).

Barthes, raises the absence, traditionally, has been expressed by the woman in the discourse d: ..." the Woman is sedentary, the Man hunter and traveler; the Woman is faithful (waits), the Man is rondador (navigates, roams). It is the woman who gives form to absence, who elaborates her fiction, since she has the time to do so (1993, p.34).

A reflection on the most sublime love of a woman for someone: the love for her children. Nora had three children with Torvaldo: Emmy, Iván and Bob, whom she loved intensely, which is presented to us in the play when she shares games with them, or assisting them with the help of her nanny Mariana, and, beyond that, accompanying them in a self-sacrificing way in all their activities. But Ibsen, in his play -quite modern for his time-, questions the myth of maternal love, leaving a question since then: Can a mother abandon her children to think of herself?

Perhaps what is controversial about Ibsen's work in the 19th century is that unpredictable and unexpected act, since abandoning one's beloved children is inconceivable. However, Nora justifies her attitude when she states that she does not feel prepared to educate her children, and reaffirms it at the end of the play, in the last conversation she had with Torvaldo: Nora: Goodbye Torvaldo. I don't want to see the children. I know they are in better hands than mine. In my present situation, I cannot be a mother to them (Ibsen, 2001, p.104).

Maternal and endearing love becomes in this play nonsense of everyday life and of that conservative era, a matter that would leave much food for thought, not only at that time, but also today. But it is seen at times, perhaps to safeguard the self-esteem, physical and moral integrity of today's woman, and at the same time to avoid subjecting the children to also grow up in the middle of a Doll's House. But Nora makes that decision because she has believed herself incapable of taking care of her children.

For Ibsen there seems to be no greater tragedy than not having taken existence into one's own hands, or having "wasted" it, as if we had more than one. His characters have to face this harsh reality sooner or later. Nora's moment came relatively early in life [...] It is only upon awakening that we "dead"

become aware of our state and that a radical decision is necessary to return to "life" (2006, p.7). According to De León:

Nora's awakening as a woman puts her at a crossroads: to play the role of a self-sacrificing mother or as a respectable wife at the height of her social class, but whom ultimately chooses to seek her personal self-realization in herself. With this, Ibsen breaks the scheme of women of that time and gives it a polemic ending.

Nora's inner reflection leads her to conclude that, for eight years, she had lived with a stranger about whom she knew nothing. "It was very simple. It was this very night, when I saw that the expected prodigy did not happen. Then I understood that you were not the man I thought you were" (Ibsen, 2001, P.102). Being totally disappointed, she submits to make a conclusive decision for her life: to leave, to stop being just another doll.

The play is a clear example of a dominant love, apparently calm, but completely possessive. Torvaldo Helmer embodies the prototype of dominant love, of the man who exercises authority over his wife, motivated by appearances and social status. A love turned into lovelessness that surprises Nora, after a reflection with herself:

Helmer: Nora, with pleasure I would have worked for you day and night, and I would have endured all kinds of privations and hardships; but there is no one who sacrifices his honor for the beloved.

Nora: Thousands of women have done so.

Helmer: Hey, you think like a girl, and you talk the same way.

Nora: That's possible, but you don't think and talk like the man I can follow. Now that you have calmed down, not as to the danger that threatened me, but as to the danger you were in... You have forgotten everything, and I am your little songbird again, the little doll you were willing to carry in your arms as before, as and with more precautions than ever when you discovered that I am more fragile (Getting up). Listen, Torvaldo: at that moment it seemed to me that I had lived eight years in this house with a stranger, and that I had had three children with him? Ah, I don't even want to think about it! I am tempted to tear myself into a thousand pieces (Ibsen, 2001, p.103).

In this exhaustive analysis to trace the search for true love and the unfolding towards lovelessness, the dramatic text that is addressed does not leave aside the love of the best friend of the Helmer family: Dr. Rank, with a love lived in silence, in deep contemplation and admiration for Nora, evidenced only in a conversation he had with her and in which he declares his feelings: I have sworn that you would

know before I died. I could never have found a better opportunity. Yes, Nora, you already know, and it is as much as to tell you that you can trust me as no one else... Is it wrong to have loved you as deeply as I could? (Ibsen, 2001, p.64).

The text presents in a clear and masterful way how Cristina, and Krogstad, the villain, manage to overcome the time and difficulties that each had to go through to get back together. She, who years before had left him to be with a man who brought her quality of life to help her family, discovers that she wants him back, helping Krogstad to regain his life, his love for himself and giving Nora an impulse to recognize her individuality, as quoted below:

Krogstad: Would you have thought of me?

Christina: I need to work in order to endure existence. All my life, as far back as my memory goes, I have spent working. It was my greatest and only joy. Now I find myself alone in the world, and I feel a horrible emptiness. To think of nothing but oneself takes all the attraction out of work. Come on, Krogstad; tell me for whom and why I am going to work.

And further on: Christina: I need someone to serve as a mother, and your children need a mother. We also feel inclined towards each other. I have faith in what is deep inside you, Krogstad... With you nothing will frighten me (Ibsen, 2001, p.81).

The confessions of a love that is still alive, despite the distance, become visible in the text. Cristina, a suffering woman, appears again in Krogstad's life to make sense of it, for despite his corrupt background, he is loved by Cristina regardless of that dark aspect of his life. Very similar to what happens in the Byzantine novel, in which two lovers are separated by life's misfortunes, such as travel or captivity, and despite the difficulties they manage to meet again and realize that their love has remained intact, despite the distance and difficulties.

Moreno's story (1977), as well as the play "A Doll's House", have a point that connects them: despite being written in two different times, Moreno makes a strong criticism to the bourgeois marriage of the upper class, to the subjugation suffered by thousands of women in a society established with codes and laws that do not allow them to be themselves.

An alarming ending in both cases, with a differential nuance that their authors imprint, in correspondence with their context and time, and in both cases a severe questioning of an unjust society that does not allow the emergence of subjectivity, and in this case, two women, to a kind of self-erasure, as an expression of their authenticity.

The fundamental point in which both authors coincide is the awakening of both women, who, after questioning themselves, after looking inward, thinking reflectively about the life they have led in their respective marriages, reduced to the condition of objects of/for lovelessness, manipulated by their husbands -and in addition, in Laura's case, by their husbands' husbands, in the case of Laura by her mother, from a young age, and Nora by her father-, they collapse when they realize that the life they lead does not allow them to be themselves, and they wake up making radical decisions that, in principle, question these two women, but, in the end, also question these oppressive societies.

It is impressive how theater allows us to recreate life itself, which corresponds to the purpose or purpose that we find in the origin of the genre, and that we mentioned at the beginning of the text. Analyzing the character of Nora Helmer, it could be asserted how this woman breaks the scheme of the traditional plays of the time, nothing different from being at home, taking care of the children, everything going normally. But in *A Doll's House*, when the play ends, the author leaves the audience astonished, because that woman breaks the scheme of what is common, and apparently seen, both in the dramatic art of the time, as well as in bourgeois society. Dubatti states in this regard:

Nora's conflicts are linked to her will to collaborate with her husband Torvaldo, but it clashes with the limitations imposed by society on women's performance. She will finally demand, for her return to the house (open ending), certain conditions of equality, respect and participation that will allow the construction of "a real marriage". Therefore, the addressee of her actions is a collective entity greater than her individuality, it is society itself. At the time of its premiere this outcome was scandalous (Ibsen, 2006, p.32).

It is the open ending that Ibsen leaves, and this is that becomes the crux of the play, with respect to the position claimed by the woman. The condition of deciding, and leaving everything, is a sign of opposition, rebellion and rejection -we could also say that it is the only option of self-affirmation that was relegated to them- to the subjugation that they have to live: the lack of love established by a sexist society, in which the word of the woman is worthless, and an open ending for a new woman, the woman of the twentieth century.

In the same way, these demands transcend real life. The theatrical revolution that Ibsen founds with this play goes much further. The social background that it generates, allows us to speak of women who break the scheme in real life, and at this point we could think of European women who, like Nora, claimed a leading role in society.

On the other hand, one can share with the criteria of Collett (1813-1895), considered the first feminist in Norway, who like Ibsen was literary, wrote the novel *The Governor's Daughters*, published between the years (1854 and 1855), a work in which she makes an insidious criticism of forced or forced marriages, and deals with issues such as the difficulties of being a woman in a patriarchal society. Thus, the fictional world of the theater is inspired by the events that emerge in life, which is why Ibsen is considered one of the playwrights who was most concerned about the decorative role assigned to women and the exclusionary subjugation in the role of wife and mother in a society driven by male selfishness (Pelletiere, 2006, p.34).

My critical position, as a student and a meyer who has lived through a different era, converges with the position of authors who have defended women. It is possible to demonstrate that literature encompasses the most diverse spheres of the vital experience of the human being in which, of course, there is the committed creator on one side and on the other the reader, with a point of coincidence, the latter enriches the artistic creation with contributions from his point of view, mastery of the sciences of language, because literature is the art of the word and its direct material is the language, instrument of thought and human communication.

Conclusions

The hermeneutic analysis of the work, reveals the weave woven by the lack of love and the awakening of women in a conservative society; an awakening of equitable claim through the creation of feminist movements, turning them into women with equal rights without ceasing to be mothers and wives, gradually conquering equal rights with respect to men: The women's roles as rulers, politicians, writers, sportswomen, among others, which they face with gallantry and make them more than worthy of admiration, aspects that resize self-love as an expression of self-affirmation and rebellion. Theater, as a form of representation, recreates life; it allows unveiling and projecting the ideologies and social conceptions that the time and the social context provide. Therefore, the theater, as a literary genre, reveals the concerns and worries of the author, who wants to show, in a wise way, what is not openly seen, and this is the case of the play we are dealing with in this analysis.

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