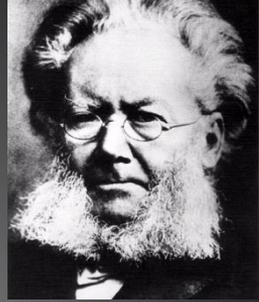




Who was Henrik Ibsen?



- Ibsen was born in 1828 to a well to do merchant family in Skien in Norway
- He came from well respected families, and was exposed to influential, respected and powerful society members
- When Ibsen was 7, his father's fortunes suffered, and they were forced to move outside the city to their summer house
- His father then became an embittered man, and an alcoholic, who took out his bitterness on his wife and children
- His mother was described by his sister as the 'soul of the house'

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Henrik_Ibsen

- His father's financial ruin would have a strong influence on Ibsen's later work; the characters in his plays often mirror his parents, and his themes often deal with issues of financial difficulty as well as moral conflicts stemming from dark secrets hidden from society.
- A central theme in Ibsen's plays is the "unremitting portrayals of suffering women,"
- "Ibsen's sympathy with women came from his understanding of their powerlessness, and his education began at home."



http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/A_Doll%27s_House

- The play is significant for its critical attitude toward 19th century marriage norms. It aroused great controversy at the time, as it concludes with the protagonist, Nora, leaving her husband and children because she wants to discover herself. Ibsen was inspired by the belief that "a woman cannot be herself in modern society," since it is "an exclusively male society, with laws made by men and with prosecutors and judges who assess feminine conduct from a masculine standpoint."

Real Life Inspiration



- *A Doll's House* was based on the life of Laura Kieler
- In real life, when Victor found out about Laura's secret loan, he divorced her and had her committed to an asylum. Two years later, she returned to her husband and children at his urging, and she went on to become a well-known Danish author
- Laura had asked him to intervene at a crucial point in the scandal, which he did not feel able or willing to do. Instead, he turned this life situation into an aesthetically shaped, successful drama.
- In the play, Nora leaves Torvald with head held high, though facing an uncertain future given the limitations women faced in the society of the time.

Criticism

- *A Doll's House* criticises the traditional roles of men and women in 19th-century marriage
- To many 19th-century Europeans, this was scandalous.
- Nothing was considered more holy than the covenant of marriage, and to portray it in such a way was completely unacceptable
- Because of the radical departure from traditional behaviour and theatrical convention involved in Nora's leaving home, her act of slamming the door as she leaves has come to represent the play itself. One critic noted, "That slammed door reverberated across the roof of the world."