Money, Money Essay, Research Paper

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Some people say that money is the root of all evil, but even so, it is realized that one cannot survive with out it. Money is a necessity, and most everyone can agree to the fact that financial security can make one?s life easier. The underlying theme of money plays a central role in Henrik Ibsen?s play A Doll House. The economic theme shapes the plot of the play, affects each character?s behavior, and decides the characters? situations.

First, in the plot, reader can quickly see that it is built on economics. One gets this right away when it is revealed that Helmer, Nora?s husband, has just become the new manager of a bank. Not only does his new position bring in financial security, but also the bank itself is a symbol of money or economy. As the story progresses, the reader slowly discovers the financial insecurity that the family had suffered in the past. Because of the hard times, Helmer was forced to find extra work and his many jobs caused him to become sick. It is based on this previous economic insecurity that Ibsen develops the plot. To save Helmer?s life, Nora is forced to borrow money for a trip that he must take from an old acquaintance, Krogstad. The story revolves around the fact that Nora has kept her borrowing money from Krogstad and slowly paying off her debt monthly an incredible secret from Helmer. Nora?s secrecy creates an air of tension in the play. ?But that?s the point: he mustn?t know! My Lord, can?t you understand? He mustn?t ever know?? (Meyer, 1572). In the end, economic matters also add to the plot. Driven for the need for financial stability, Nora decides to leave her husband and her family so that she may make a living on her own. She realizes that she has been dependent on Helmer for everything that she has needed and wishes once and for all to be free of the burden of economic insecurity. ?I have to try to educate myself. You can?t help me with that. I?ve got to do it alone. And that?s why I?m leaving you now? (1609). Another point in the play where money plays a key role in the plot is when Nora?s friend Kristine shows up at her house with not a penny to her name. Kristine asks Helmer for a position at the bank, which he gladly gives her. But, Helmer does so by firing Krogstad. ?I?m also aware now whom I can thank for being turned out? Krogstad says angrily (1578). Money obviously plays an important function in the plot of the play.

Aside from the plot, the characters? behaviors and ways of thinking are strongly influenced by economic situations. First, Nora?s behavior can be compared to that of a stereotypical housewife. Because Nora lacks money, she is completely dependent upon her husband for support. Anything she wishes to buy she must first get money from Helmer, and in a way, also get permission. ?You could give me money, Torvald. No more than you think you can spare; then one of these days I?ll buy something with it? (1566). Nora also equates personal freedom with how wealthy she is. Since she does not work and does not make any money, she does not believe that she is ?free? and allows Helmer to control her. Nora?s psychological attitude is also affected by money. The reader can note how Nora?s mood changes in relation to how much money she has. When Nora has money, it is evident that she is ecstatic and thinking of how to spend it. When she is lacking money, her character becomes depressed and upset. ?Oh, Kristine, I feel so light and happy! Won?t it be lovely to have stacks of money and not a care in the world?? (1569). In Helmer?s case, he too is easily manipulated with money. The reader can see that Helmer acts more powerfully when he has more money. Helmer believes he is more powerful and is more important than others because he possesses more wealth. In this way, the fact that Helmer has money affects his relationship with his wife. Helmer treats Nora as if she were a child, someone without knowledge or capability to do anything for herself. ?Whatever comes, you?ll see; when it really counts I have strength and courage enough as a man o take on the whole weight myself? There, there, there ? not these frightened dove?s eyes? (1588). Another economic aspect that forms Helmer?s character is that he also does not believe in borrowing money. He thinks borrowing puts a person in a disadvantageous position and he refuses to ever go into debt. His feelings are evident when he tells Nora, ?No debts! Never borrow! Something of freedom?s lost ? and something of beauty too ? from a home that?s founded on borrowing and debt? (1565). Clearly, wealth and riches influence people?s behavior and ways of thinking.

Finally, throughout the play, the acquisition of wealth plays a function in the character?s situations. In Nora?s case, the fact that she had borrowed money, and done so illegally with a forged signature, puts her in the grave situation where she can be blackmailed by Krogstad. ?Do what you want now. But I?m telling you this: if I get shoved down a second time, you?re going to keep me company? (1580). Because Nora had to borrow funds, she is now under the control of an unrespectable man and lives in fear that he will reveal her secret. Krogstad and Anne-Marie?s situations are also similarly shaped by monetary needs. In Krogstad?s circumstances, his lack of money forced him to look toward dishonest means of becoming financially secure. As a result, he has created for himself a terribly poor reputation. Krogstad?s lack of money also meant that he could not support his children as he would like to. Krogstad desperately needed to keep his position at the bank so that he could improve his status and earn money at the same time. ?I?ll have to win back as much respect as possible here in town. That job in the bank was like the first rung in my ladder? (1578). Quite similarly, Anna-Marie had also had financial problems. So much that she could not take care of her children either. This caused her to give up her children in order to make money by becoming the family?s nurse. When Nora asked how she could give up her children, Anne-Marie replies, ?When I could get such a good place? A girl who?s poor and who?s gotten in trouble is glad enough for that? (1584). Another character?s situation shaped by lack of riches was Kristine?s. Kristine had been poor and married for money, not for love. Needless to say, her marriage fell apart and she was left with nothing. Her situation led her to come to Nora for help. ?If only I could get a steady job, some office work – ? (1570). All of these characters? situations were based on financial insecurity and need.

In conclusion, the characters of A Doll House, and the play itself, are greatly affected by money. Monetary conditions influence the plot of the play, the characters? manners and conduct, as well as shape the situations that the characters are in. Economic conditions is the central theme of the play and most aspects of the play revolve around it. Ibsen?s play reflects the importance of money in people?s everyday lives, and demonstrates what can happen if one?s focus relies completely on wealth.