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FACULTY OF LETTERS AND LANGUAGES  
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH



**The Conflict Between Reality and Appearance in *A Doll's House*  
by Henrik Ibsen and *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee  
Williams**

**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements for  
a Master Degree in English Literature and Civilization**

**Candidates:**

- Drifa SADI
- Yasmine TETAH

**Supervisor:**

**Mr. Farid KACI**

**Panel of Examiners:**

**Chair: Mr. Yousfi.**

**Supervisor: Mr. Farid KACI**

**Examiner: Mrs. Tighzer-  
Arab.**

## **Dedication**

This research paper is dedicated to our beloved Allaoua Cherdouane who passed away, may God welcome him to His vast paradise.

This research is dedicated to every single person who stood by our side all along our work.

To our beloved mothers who introduced us to life and motivated us when needed to.

We dedicate this research to our supporting fathers all along our studies.

And with a great honor, we dedicate this work to all the students and the teachers all around the world.

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## Abstract

This research paper attempts to discuss and analyze the two major themes that are presented in *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen and *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams which are escapism and the conflict between reality and appearance, using psychoanalysis introduced and developed by Sigmund Freud as our theory in order to go in depth and analyze the character's personalities and psyches to get to understand their actions, thus, to understand the two selected themes we cited above. This paper shows the authors' great careers, the successes they achieved, and the failures they faced through their biographies. It also presents some historical events that affected the two writers' eras and countries, and influenced them to come out with their pieces of writings. We also present the literary background that covered their eras and may be influenced them personally in their writings. Moreover, we use psychoanalysis to analyze the two plays' characters, their personalities and psyches through studying their conscious and unconscious minds in order to understand more their actions and choices. At last, we explore escapism as a dominant theme in the two plays and how it is considered to be an ultimate solution for some characters in order to ignore or sometimes, beautify the harsh reality they live in, along with the conflict between reality and appearance that is considered to be a continuous conflict.

**Key words:** *A Doll's House*, appearance, conflict, conscious and unconscious minds, escapism, psychoanalysis, reality, *The Glass Menagerie*.

# **GENERAL INTRODUCTION**

## General introduction

Everybody in this life has a different view of himself. Often, appearance is the one that dominates and blinds the truth. For example, when a person looks at the mirror, either he sees that weak human being who has neither power nor strength! Or he sees an appearance that he himself has been forced to see in order to conceal the truth, the fact that he can sever all appearances of falsehood and deceit around him.

There are those who live in their own world of illusions and those who live in the truth, and between fantasy and reality there is a vast distance that is like the distance between sky and earth, hell and heaven, logic and falsehood.

In this dissertation we will introduce two works of literature that deal with various issues of life, whether from the psychological aspect or the emotional aspect, especially with regard to the whole society *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen and *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams taking into account the problems and obstacles that deeply affect the characters.

*A Doll's House* is one of the most famous plays of the Norwegian writer Henrik Ibsen, and it is considered as a social drama that has stirred up a lot of controversy in Europe and America.

*The Glass Menagerie* is an autobiographical play written by the American writer Tennessee Williams. It highlights many of the difficulties and arduous decisions that he himself faced as a young man.

Through the literary medium, Ibsen and Williams managed to reflect the lives of their societies in two different periods of time. Their main endeavor is to communicate and show the deep image of a person which is in a self-conflict between reality and appearance and between hope, disappointment and deception. To achieve

the aforementioned purpose, they built their works upon some social and historical issues that played, in fact, an important in their literary texts.

The human mind struggles to accept reality through reason and logic. However, this becomes more complicated. There is no definitive answer to the question of what reality is. To put it plainly, one can define reality as the mirror of one's life and all that exists, regardless of whether or not it can be observed or understood.

In most cases, the person has a strong desire to escape, either because of psychological pressures, nervousness or from life circumstances. He may feel to escape from everything, even from himself and this is what is meant by escapism in psychology. Escape is not a bad thing in all cases, it is the freedom of mind, it has a lot of advantages, and sometimes it is the best way to get rid of all psychological pressures by taking a period of recovery from all that the person is exposed to.

There is a considerable amount of literature on Ibsen and Williams' two literary works, as they have already been studied in different fields, and tackled from different angles.

Stella Adler states in her book on *Ibsen, Strindberg, and Chekhov* that Ibsen has changed the world of literature by using his own magical touch which is his sense of craft and his strong ability of analyzing the human character. She also claims that he is the one who opened up the drama which was the powerful way of creating, describing and making a proclamation.

Michael Egan in his book *Henrik Ibsen: The Critical Heritage* compares artists, actors and intellectuals to David, and the Victorian establishment to Goliath. In the story of David and Goliath, Goliath is bigger and stronger and fiercer. David is a weakling by



comparison, yet David prevailed against Goliath. How he won was not so important. Egan illustrates saying:

The story of battle over Ibsen in this country is a curious one. It is easy to mock his critics for their blindness and cultural Toryism, and praise his defenders for their courage and percipience: there is undoubtedly an exhilarating David-and-Goliath quality in the spectacle of a handful of intellectuals and actresses slowly taking apart the Victorian establishment. (2)

He also claims that behind Ibsen's writing, there is a reflection of what he lived and experienced and this is evident through saying:

A curious self-consciousness infuses the writings of Ibsen's contemporaries when we read them now. They were aware that the clash over his name, and what came to represent, was somehow pivotal: that future generations would judge them in its light. So acutely did Ibsen appear to challenge or confirm their values that even as they reacted-part of the history of that response itself-came the recognition that its direction and quality were intrinsically important, a reflection of and a comment on the period.(1)

Gerald Weales states in his book *Tennessee Williams*, that Tennessee Williams has been trying from the beginning of his carrier to transmit reality as it is in a realistic image, especially truth, reality, life experiences are the source of the poetic imagination and the mirror that reflects their feelings.(33)

Brend Murphy asserts in her book *Critical insights* that Tennessee Williams's play *The Glass Menagerie* is much closer to William's life; it contains his biography from his youth to early manhood. His real life is presented in this play. (234)

Harold Bloom criticizes Tennessee Williams in his book *Bloom's Modern critical views* about the dramatic weakness of his play *The Glass Menagerie* and says:

*The Glass Menagerie* scarcely bothers at such a displacement, and the transparency of the incest motif is at once the play's lyrical strength and, alas, its dramatic weakness. Consider the moment when Williams chooses to end the play, which times Tom's closing speech with Laura's gesture of blowing out the candles. (6)

Both plays then played an important role in portraying and embodying the image of the family in society according to a specific period of time for each of the two patches and how appearance controlled the truth. Thus, we are going to show throughout this work that although we live in a time other than the time Henrik Ibsen and Tennessee Williams lived, we are going through circumstances that force us to pretend and coexist according to the standards of our strategic, religious, and social position, and every person is imprisoned for his ideas and everything he tells.

Since psychoanalysis is part of psychotherapy that works to find connection among patient's unconscious mental processes, as Sigmund Freud asserts in his *A General Introduction To Psychoanalysis (1920)*: "to be sure, this much it may presume you to know, namely, that psychoanalysis is a method of treating nervous patients medically" (9), it could, therefore, be helpful to use psychoanalysis theory in order to analyze Tom, Laura and Amanda in *The Glass Menagerie*, Nora, Torvald, Linde in *A Doll's House* referring to the three Freudian concepts of psychology "The id, the ego and the superego". In fact, this theory involves a number of terms that are related to the human being such as his ideas, personality, mind and treatment. The core of psychoanalysis is the belief that all people process unconscious thoughts, feelings, desires and memories.

This research, therefore, explores and analyzes both the literary works regarding escapism as the only refuge for certain characters that choose to ignore their reality, deny their responsibilities and duties to join their own desired world.

This study tends to show the social issues in which social problems, conflicts and suffering affect individuals within society that leads to the conflict of opinions. It also aims to show how society reflects and is reflected by life's problems inside self-conflicts and how a period of time and a geographical location can determine the human thinking process and the general outlook of society.

The question remains, what is the strong motive that leads to the domination of appearance over reality?

Appearances can dominate the truth or the reality perhaps because of:

- 1- The time period of the environment to where a particular person belongs.
- 2- The fear of losing the perfect image imposed by a given society.
- 3- The physical or the psychological state of mind.

In terms of structure, this dissertation is divided into an introduction, two chapters and a general conclusion.

The first chapter is theoretical, it contains the biographies of the two major writers Henrik Ibsen and Tennessee Williams, regarding both the historical background and the literary influences of the Norwegian and the American societies, and it also introduces psychoanalysis theory.

The second chapter provides the summaries of the two plays *A Doll's House* and *The Glass Menagerie*, the analyses of some characters according to psychoanalysis approach, then explores escapism, and the conflict between reality and appearance.

# **CHAPTER ONE**

## Chapter One

### Author's Biographies, Historical and literary Backgrounds

#### Introduction

In this chapter, some biographical elements about the two authors are going to be introduced in addition to major historical and literature events that took place in the authors' eras and places. At last we will introduce the theory of psychoanalysis.

#### 1. Biographical elements

##### 1.1 Henrik Ibsen

The 19th century Norwegian playwright, director and poet Henrik Ibsen was born on Skein March 20<sup>th</sup>, 1828, Norway. Ibsen and his five brothers had a wealthy life, and were raised in an upper-class family.

Financial and economic circumstances and crises forced the family to move to a smaller house in Venstop. Later, Ibsen's family returned to their hometown in Skein, while Ibsen moved to study in Grimstad as a pharmacist assistant, but he was not accepted at Christiania University because of his low grades.

It was around 1851 that Ole Bull the violinist changed Ibsen's position and gave him the name of "Theater poet" in Bergen where he wrote his two plays; *Catiline and Tragedy...* As they say "failure is not always the end, but it could be the beginning of new opportunities and although Ibsen's first plays were not successful, he gained a priceless experience in the world of theatre to become the father of Drama. After two years of his failure attempt, Ibsen's works *Catiline and the Burial Mound* were finally published under his nickname

‘‘Brynjolf Bjarme‘’. Ibsen accepted an appointment as an assistant director at the Norwegian theatre in Bergen and was expected to assist as a dramatic composer.

Ibsen wrote hundreds of plays; his artistic experience made him a professional. His plays were written in verse and drawn from Norse folklore and myths like *Lady Inger* 1855 and others. (Henrik Ibsen)

*A Doll’s House* is one of Ibsen’s most famous plays along other plays such as *Ghosts*, *An Enemy of The People*, *The Wild Duck* and *Hedda Gabler*. In *A Doll’s House*, Ibsen shows complex relationships among all his characters so that their interior power of strength and weakness are reinforced by comparison with others (Sturman, 29). This play has a great significance for the way it deals with the destiny of a woman who, in the Norwegian, lacked reasonable opportunities in a male-dominated world of that time.

The Norwegian government offered Ibsen the opportunity to travel and study in Italy. He left Norway and spent 27 years in Italy and Germany until 1896. He turned to Norway and settled there in Christiania until his death in 1906 to leave behind him an artistic career of 26 dramas and about 300 poems (Dr Azger, Suleiman 5, 6).

## **1.2 Tennessee Williams**

His real name is Thomas Lanier Williams known as Tennessee Williams because of his Southern accent. He was one of the most famous playwrights of America during the 20th century. He was born on Palm on Sunday March 26th, 1911, in Columbus, Mississippi, United States. His father was not that father every child wanted to have, he was an alcoholic, a gambler, a womanizer and also a man’s man just like his mother Edwina Dakin once described him. He was rarely home and this affected badly the family.

Edwina Dakine, Williams' mother, inspires him for most of his plays for the huge responsibility she met because of his consistent father's absence. His family was an unhappy one, and for many years, the family lived with his mother's parents. The worthy to mention is Rose, Williams' sister who inspired him for Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*. All her life she suffered from schizophrenia and then she kept institutionalized for the rest of her life. (Tennessee Williams Biography)

For Williams it was such a trauma and was shocked when he knew that his parents agreed to the prefrontal lobotomy for his sister and turned her into a shadow. (Weiss)

The family moved to St-Louis, Missouri, when his father had a job at a shoe factory. In St-Louis, Williams attended Missouri University, Columbia. He was transferred to Washington University where some of his works were produced by little theatre group. Then, he started studying Dramatic writings at the University of Iowa where he got hold of his grade in 1938. (Tennessee Williams)

This American playwright's career lasted for more than 40 years during which he had too many successes along with many failures but he never gave up or stopped writing.

“He penned some 45 full length plays and 60 shorter dramas, as well as screenplays, short stories, letters, essays, and volumes of poetry. Previously unpublished materials held in special collections and archives across the United States are being regularly uncovered, produced and published by eager literary scholars and theatrical producers”. (Heintzelman and Smith-Howard, ix)

He won many awards for his great efforts and his successful works such as *The Glass Menagerie* (1944), *A Streetcar Named Desire* (1945), *Cat on a Hot Tin Roof* (1959), *The Night of the Iguana* (1961) and many others.

Williams' health was getting worse especially after the death of his long-term partner with whom he fell in love and married, Frank Merlo who died of a lung cancer in

November, 1969. 14 years later, Williams suffered from a harsh nervous downfall and got institutionalized to get the medical assistance he needed, but unfortunately he could not make it and he died on February 25th, 1983. (Tennessee Williams Biography)

*The Glass Menagerie* portrays a lot of Williams' real life since it is a memory play, and it reflects the state of the American society during the Great Depression and the disordered Williams' family. It tells a lot about its author and presents facts and events that were part of Williams life. It is considered to be a masterpiece and the most successful play of Tennessee Williams.

“After a successful run in Chicago, *The Glass Menagerie's* Williams first big success run for 561 performances on Broadway, winning The New York Drama Critical Award, The Donaldson Award and the Sidney Howard Memorial Award.” (Weiss)

It is a very significant play for its strong content, plot, symbol and also for Williams' unique style and this is why it gained a lot of attention at that time and still studied all around the world. Writers from different countries and eras commented on it and wrote some notes explaining the play and analyzing Williams style and his life since all his plays contain some elements that touched him the most in his life. In *The Glass Menagerie* Williams refers to the American dream that faded away and about the social environment that was dominating America during the Great depression where boys at a young age were, in a way, forced or obliged to leave school in order to work and that is portrayed through Tom. It is all about daily life experiences and sufferings, People's weakness and social issues, these themes dominate the big majority of his plays because they are all a portrayal of his life.



## 2. Historical Background

### 2.1 Norway

In the 19th century, strict Victorian social laws severely restricted and affected the rights of all women, especially married women. All governments across Europe adopted the Napoleon Act, which forbade only women from interfering in any financial transaction.

Many women who ran their own business or earned their own wages preferred not to marry because the law related to this could affect their career financially. However, the beginning of the twentieth century brought with it a great development as things began to improve and change, as the Women's Suffrage Movement originated in Europe and the world as it developed into granting women rights and privileges such as the right to own property and the right to vote. (Florman and Kestle)

Since patriarchal ideology underlies the entire social, economic and political system, the status of women has become an unbalanced issue. The patriarchal structure was not something expected of the upper middle class, but all laws stemmed from its ideology. Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* was the best example of this case as women were not allowed to borrow money without the knowledge and acceptance of their husbands. The character of Nora shows her deviation against social norms when she borrows and pays Krogstad behind her husband's back. (Cron)

The industrial revolution in the nineteenth century brought tremendous results and developments in social and economical fields. Ibsen gradually lived and experienced these changes. He liked to write about everything that revolved around his social milieu. His famous play *A Doll's House* reflected the life of the Norwegians during the 19th century after a period of prosperity and tremendous economic development of the country, and the growth of the upper middle class, as the characters depicted by Ibsen Nora and

Torvald. This period of time brought with it an obsession increasing with money and many pressures for having and not having money. Expectations were all for the formation of the upper middle class during that time. These expectations are often referred to as "bourgeois respectability", which led to financial success without debt, rising social mobility, good moral judgment, strong and secure patriarchal marriage.

Society has a great role in this period in strengthening marriage and making man the main center in whose hand things go, and that he is the one who controls and imposes authority, as a result the woman must obey her husband and depend on him economically, socially and psychologically, especially with regard to institutions of marriage and motherhood. During this era, women were seen as weak and inferior to men, and were expected to only become housewives who would obey their husband's orders and fulfill their demands. Ibsen revealed all those events of the 19th century throughout his play. He developed a keen awareness of all women who suffer in a male-dominated society. (Cron)

## **2.2 USA**

The Great Depression is the most remarkable economic collapse that affected the industrial countries in the world and most specifically America. It is the worst and the longest depression that the Americans have ever experienced. It began in 1929 and took over the country till 1939, a whole decade where unemployment, poverty and misery dominated the American society, which led the American people to doubt about the individualism philosophy they adopted during the Roaring Twenties. It is as a complex, long and a challenging decade that changed all the fields.

America in the Roaring Twenties was in its full power and prosperity. The stock market was stable in spite of some depressions that were quiet easy to overcome, but the entrance of

1929 shackled the country in all sides, every single part of a market economy are connected as a result if an event takes place all the other sectors will be affected and this was exactly what happened in 1929 after the stock crash.

At the beginning, economists and leaders did not worry about it, they thought that it was like the first one and they considered it as a correction of the market, but soon things started to become serious and to take a dangerous dimension. The American economy had faced many ups and downs with easy and hard economic downturns, Capitalism and Individualism helped to strengthen and give power to the American economy. During the 15th century, the country was in its all prosperity and economic power. Americans were living a luxurious life without worrying, they adopted the belief of hard work and discipline, so they enjoyed life in spite of some depressions that were easily overcome, no recession had touched America and created a huge damage as the Great Depression. People lost all what they had, unemployment took over America's life never before, at the start it was about 1,500,000 unemployed, but the number became 3.250.000 unemployed in 1930 and it did not stop here, but it continued to worsen more than 13 million people were not working and the worthy to mention is that there was not any insurance program for them, so they lived in misery. This depression brought psychological and physical damages on people not only economical. It created gender problems because the unemployed men were complaining about women that were employed, it also affected children since at a very young age were forced or obliged, in a way, to work and meet huge responsibilities. Black people also suffered and too much more than white essence they were sometimes obliged to leave their jobs for the whites, but this had created an important change for them because the government for the first time forbade racial discrimination.

In a short period things got to the bottom and the basic political concern of the United States at that time was the issue of recovery. Eventually, the republicans were considered to

be also one of the main reasons that led to depression. They dominated politics all the 1920s, at first it was prosperous by the lead of Herbert Hoover as the president of America from 1929 to 1933, but then it turned to a real mass. The 1929 marked the end of their shame because the way they responded to the downturn was considered as irresponsible and opposing American sufferance as a result they destroyed the public confidence. Now that republicans failed the Democrats took the lead in 1932 through the election of Franklin Delano Roosevelt who made Hoover's policy responsible for this depression, and thanks to his good leadership he achieved a recognized status in the American history that made it out of the crisis with the help of what it was called the ' ' The Brain trust' ' which is a group of economic and academic advisors. As a result, he transformed America and created a whole change.

*The Glass Menagerie* was written during this period and it portrays a lot about the American society, and how much people suffered and faced changes that affected negatively their lives. (Lhcn Batoul Sofya)

### **3. Literary Background**

#### **3.1 Norway**

Norway witnessed the most influential literary era in the 19th century. All what society had seen in the previous years got reflected in literature, so romanticism, national romanticism, poetical realism, realism, naturalism and neoromanticism came during that prosperous century. Literature flourished into different genres like fiction for the first time. History, fantasy, romance and feelings were considered as the most interesting subjects at that time when poets and writers wrote more about realistic things, and detectives, all in all, it was between reality and fiction.

During the period of the Scandinavian Union and the subsequent Dano-Norwegian Union (1387-1814), Norwegian literature did not exist, Ibsen have identified this period as

‘‘ Four hundred years of darkness ‘’ in which the period of union with Denmark, Danish replaced Norwegian.

Doro the Engelbrets Dotter (1634-1713) wrote powerful religious poetry, shown as the first recognized woman author at that time during the 17th century which was the period of meager literary activity in Norway, but at the same time there were significant contributions. During the rebirth period, the establishment of the Norwegian University in Christiania, Oslo which was seized by the spirit of revolution following the French and American revolutions. After the Norwegians signed their Constitution in 1814, forth series of Great authors were brought by the Norway cultural backwater. This period have seen collection of Norwegian folk tales by Bishop Jørgen Moe and Peter Asbjørnsen. The genius of Ivan Aasen was at the heart of introducing a pure Norwegian language by using the dialects spoken in the areas that were isolated from capital by writing *The Speech of The Country*.

By the late 19th century, the Great four emerged, Henrik Ibsen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, Jonas Lie and Alexander Kielland in the sea of nationalistic romanticism. The realism of Kielland *Skipper Worse* scanned the way to the nationalistic and romantic spirit and that swept Europe rekindled and the Norwegian interest in their glorious Viking past.

Henrik Ibsen was known as the influential Norwegian playwright and the responsible for the popularity of modern realistic drama in Europe by his well known plays *A Doll's House*, *The Wild Duck*, *Ghosts* (1881), and *An Enemy of The People* (1882) in which controversy became the primary focus and the antagonist was the entire community. Ibsen rewrote the Drama's rules with realism that was to be adopted by Chekhov and others.

Ole Rølvaag, Johan Bojer and Ingeborg wrote about emigrants, about their experienced life that is to say literature at that time documented the experience of Norwegians who immigrated to America providing a mirror image of their selves.

After Norway got its independence from the Union with Sweden in 1905, the Norwegian literature developed. Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson won the Nobel Prize in literature for his work of the previous century, Knut Hamsun also won it for his idealistic novel *Markens Grøde Growth of the Soil (1917) in 1920* and Sigrid Undset won it for her famous work *Kristin Lavransdatter*. Her book was set in the medieval Norway and published from (1920/1922) in three volumes, with her two books *Olav Audussøn* published (1925/1927). Her works dealt with modernist waves like the stream of consciousness.

### 3.2 USA

American literature history saw a lot of great writers with greater pieces of writings. During the 19th century their literature reflected more the time, the mindset and the changing circumstances such as the war, the Great Depression. At that time most of the works produced were what we call great fiction, fine poetry and also drama and this one was of such importance especially in the 20th century. So in order to understand literary writings, a person needs first to know about the when and the where they were written.

The literary movements that dominated that era were naturalism and realism among others like modernism, structuralism, and deconstruction. The writers were dealing with realistic subjects to treat the issues of the American society and some of them were of a pessimistic view. It was a rich period in terms of literature, all writers wrote about real life experiences with or without its bitterness, and most of their works tackled subjects that were really lived or experienced by people of that time.

One of the most known American writers is Mark Twain (1835/1910). His writings are a reflection of the American society of that time and he put a personal touch to change other writers' view over the use of the language because he speaks in his books and writes like real

people with different accents and Pronunciations, and this helped more in working on realism and naturalism. We also have Henry James (1846/1916) who embraced realism. We also have inner and interwar writers like the poet Ezra Pound (1885/1972) who was such an influencer for some of other great writers and poets such as T. S. Eliot (1868/1965). We also have Scot Fitzgerald (1896/1940) who wrote *the Great Gatsby* which is a realistic novel that inspired and still inspires many writers all over the world and also film directors to make of it a movie. We also have Ernest Hemingway, Williams Faulker and others.

This period had also seen a big prosperity and flourishing in Drama and some writers were considered to be the greatest American playwrights such as Eugene O'Neill (1888/1953), Tennessee Williams (1911/1983) and also Arthur Miller (1915/2005). (O'Hagan.)

#### **4. Psychoanalysis Theory**

Psychoanalysis is a clinical method used in the treatment of mental illnesses, it talks about the organization of personality and its development mechanisms that guide analytical psychology, it is a theory that deals and analyzes human mind and emphasizes the importance of the unconscious mind. It believes that human mind has conscious and unconscious mind. Therefore, in psychoanalysis the unconscious mind controls and dominates the conscious one, so it helps to understand human's personality and its development, and it is a clinical method to treat and heal mental illnesses, or an approach that treats what is called "abnormal human behavior".

The father of this theory is Sigmund Freud. He is a neurologist and he was considered to be the founder of psychoanalysis, he was born on May 6, 1856, Freiberg, Moravia, Austrian Empire and died on September 23, 1939 in London, England. His works led him to be the most influential intellectual of his time.

The story began when one of his mentor friend Josef Breuer was treating a patient named Anna who faced a series of changes in her life that were not explicable. At first, she had a very bad cough with no reason or improvement, after that she faced speech difficulties and lost her voice completely. With time she recovered, but she spoke in English which is not her mother tongue. The things become more dangerous when she lost her father, she could not feel some parts of her body and other problems to which experts did not find any physical causes, or explanations. Breuer diagnosed her and proclaimed that she was suffering from hysteria. He provided her with medical treatment that helped her a little bit to recover, but within time a new symptom appeared. She needed Breuer more than anything as if she fell in love with him and told people she was pregnant with Breuer's baby that led him to give up this study and abandoned Anna since he was married. Here Sigmund Freud took the place of his friend and started to heal her as he found a secret behind this all. Freud continued his work where his mentor, Breuer left. He recovered Anna from her all problems after spending time in a sanatorium. She became a respected social worker in Germany. Anna still remembers the causes of developing the psychoanalytic theory. (Sibi K J)

For Freud behavior tells a lot about a person, the neurotic behavior is goal-directed which means it is meaningful, specific, and helpful and this is the novelty Freud brought, the focusing on the abnormality because it is informative, but of course by taking into consideration its psychological aspects. (Brief introduction to psychoanalytic theory)

According to Sigmund Freud, human mind is divided into two major minds, the conscious mind and the unconscious mind. The latest is with a great importance and it controls the behavior of a person to the greatest degree and it is the biggest part of a personality. Well for him the conscious mind is described as the Tip of the iceberg, it is about memories, thoughts and emotions, under it we also have what is called preconscious mind that helps the conscious one to retrieve memories, but he brought to the world a new part that is



more vast and complicated, the conscious and the preconscious minds are just smaller parts of a mind whereas the unconscious one is the largest one because it contains everything that is related to trauma or strongest events marked memory, but are not available at a conscious level so it is the iceberg.

For Freud, human personality consists of three basic and important parts which are the id, the ego and the superego. Each part is responsible for something and does a specific thing that the others do not, but they work all together to form a normal human being's personality. Well, for him, the id consists of two biological instincts he named Eros and Thanatos. The Eros is responsible of the daily activities a human does in order to survive like eating and breathing and sex, all this together create what he called libido. Freud believed in Eros and considered it to be stronger than Thanatos which is about death instincts, so the id is a structure within the mind that greedily seeks only pleasure and avoids pain.

The Ego is the social, rational self caught between the id and superego. For example, a traumatized person may try to keep bad memories or thoughts in the unconscious where they cannot be remembered and the defense mechanism protects the ego from these thoughts and memories. It developed from the Id and it satisfies its demands in an accurate, suitable and a realistic manner according to the external world.

The superego is a structure within the mind that reprimands the id and represents authority over the ego. It is more about moral standards and invites people to adopt an acceptable behavior in a given society. When the Id, ego and superego work together and each one does what it needs to be doing, it is a normal process, but when it is not the case and goes beyond the limit it turns to be abnormality. (Sibi K J)

For Freud, literary texts are like dreams, they reflect the confidential and concerns of the author. The literary work is the mirror, or the presentation of the author's neurological minds. One may desalinate a certain character within a literary work that is supposed to be the

author's own psyche. Psychological criticism first deals with the literary work as an expression, in a fantastic form, for the state of mind and the structure of the writer's personality, so the idea of psychoanalysis is all about the concept that all the people's behaviors or actions are determined by their distinctive ideas of the repeated events. From the words of Adler we are reinforced by social necessities, 'we are self conscious and capable of improving ourselves and the world around us' (McConnell, 250) and from here we notice that there is a mutual charm or magic between literature and psychoanalysis which is the main intermediary between the two specialties. Thus, psychoanalysis focuses on obscurity or disguised appearances or motives which make literature clear in both the level of the character's actions in the text and the level of writing.

Psychoanalysis plays an important role in the reading, understanding meanings and the connection between culture and literature. Also its big function in emphasizing the subject, and its capacity to relate between identity and meaning that are integrated to the psychic and cultural dominations.

This theory is known as a form of therapy that helps to cure mental disorders by examining the influence or interconnection between conscious and unconscious elements in the minds. It investigates someone's most personal anxieties and meanings to culture and gives us the outlook or a perspective on them as cultural formations. Thus, Psychoanalysis helps comprehend culture, philosophy, religion and all forms of literature not only in the fields of psychology and medicine.

Psychoanalysis theory can be used to analyze the author, his life and his literary work and also to analyze certain characters as a tool to explain their behaviors and motivations, besides, it is used to explain the appeal of the work for the audience or those who read it and also it is used to analyze the language and symbolism's role in the text. The authors are affected by the psychoanalytic concepts which are emulated in their mind and characters.

For Freud, Dreams are important codes that must be deciphered in order to understand any given personality. They strengthen the ego so they really have an important role in psychoanalysis method since it tells about the unconscious. From that it is easy to relate literary works to dreams because both of them are fictional and are creations of the mind even if literature tells somehow reality. It means just like dreams that are about human desires, wishes, fears and expectations, literary works explore them and present them in texts, so writers tell a dream story that could have a coded message that should be decoded just the way psychoanalysis method does with human dreams in order to treat a patient. (Sibi K J)

The use of psychoanalysis on literature also started when Freud was interested in writers and analyzed their writings in order to understand their unconscious mind. He even wrote an essay relating literature to dreams “*The Relation of a Poet to Daydreaming*” (1908).

In 1909 the application of this theory to literature showed its path. Psychoanalyst sand writers started to admit the powerful touch of this theory in understanding literature, it started to become a useful approach like the psychoanalyst Otto Rank and Ernest Jones Freud’s student. The idea that literary works present the mind of its author was adopted by I. A Richards, Kenneth Burke and Edmund Wilson, but others were totally against and adopted the idea that a literary work does not necessarily reflect the author’s personality and this is what is called Jungian theory.

Psychoanalysis became important to many different famous writers and took place in the world of literature like Conrad Aiken, Robert Graves, and James Joyce who are some novelists who adopted Freud’s theory.

The conventional idea of psychoanalyze the author’s personality through the work changed when Holland Norman established a new theory which is reader-response criticism. The attention went from authors to readers and this is more explained by Elizabeth Wright who thinks that what pushes readers to read something specific is their hidden wishes and

desires. We also have the French theorist Jacques Lacan who emphasizes the importance of the language. For him, dreams are not a sign of repression, but they are discourses. Lacan developed Freud's theory when he added the importance of language. As a result of all this the relationship between the author, the reader and the language is complimentary; we need to psychoanalyze all the three elements in order to decipher the literary message transmitted. (Murfin Ross C)

## **Conclusion**

In this chapter, we presented both the author's lives in order to be more familiar with them, and then we introduced some important historical and literary events that took place in USA and Norway in order to understand more the writer's plays. We have also presented our theory which is psychoanalysis by giving its brief history. In the coming chapter, we will analyze the two plays using our theory in order to explore escapism and discuss the conflict between reality and appearance.

# CHAPTER TWO

## Chapter Two

### Psychoanalytic Study, Escapism and The Conflict between Reality and Appearance

#### Introduction

In this chapter, we will introduce brief summaries of the two plays under study, namely Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and Tennessee Williams' *The Glass Menagerie*. We will analyze them relying on some key concepts of Freud's psychoanalytic theory in order to explore escapism that shows the difference between the characters' reality and their appearance.

#### 1. Summaries

##### *1.1 A Doll's House*

This play takes place in the apartment of the Helmer family where Nora, the heroine of the play and Mr. Helmer Torvald's wife, is always treated as a baby girl. Mr Helmer is a lawyer who works for the bank, Krogstad is his bad worker and since he was accused of forging documents, Mr Helmer refused to keep him in his job. Mrs Linde (Kristine) was an old friend of Nora and she was in a relationship before with Krogstad. At the time where women were not entitled to borrow money from the bank, a strong woman did! It was Nora few years before. She made her first step and borrowed from Krogstad secretly from the bank without her husband's knowledge. The power of her love for her husband pushed her to forge the signature of her dead father and keep those papers in her room so that she could earn money like a man in the world of men's domination. This act was considered as a disgrace for the woman, it was Nora's sacrifice to save Torvald's life and free him from his illness, she did not tell him so that to preserve his dignity. One day Mrs. Linde went to Nora asking her to tell

her husband to find for her a job in his company because she was in a strong need to work and gain money after her husband's death , and of course Mr. Helmer accepted her to take the place of Krogstad as a secretary.

Krogstad threatened Nora and told her that he would tell her husband about the loan she borrowed, if she did not convince Torvald to change his mind about Krogstad and let him back to work. However, Mr. Helmer stuck to his word and holds his decision to never give him a chance. As revenge, Krogstad wrote a letter in Helmer's mailbox telling him about the disgrace of Nora's case.

Nora was so confused and she would have revealed that secret case to Dr. Rank who is an old family friend, but she retracted her decision when he expressed his love for her despite knowing that she was married and she replied that she had never loved him. Nora had no choice, but to tell her friend Kristine. Since Linde was in a relationship before with Krogstad, she told her friend Nora that she would persuade him to give up his decision.

When Kristine met Krogstad, she explained to him that harsh circumstances pushed her to marry her husband who passed away, her words signify that she is still in love with him and she told him that she would welcome his love for her again.

Krogstad promised Linde to walk in the right way and since he could not return back the letter he wrote to Mr. Helmer, he send another letter explaining to him the convincing truth and about his deepest apologies.

After Mr. Helmer received the first letter, he rebuked and blamed Nora for her act and described her with all the words of disgrace, that she is dishonest and not qualified to raise her children, telling her that he would keep her as his wife outwardly no more! Soon the second letter arrived proving Nora's innocence; Mr. Helmer was so happy and told Nora to forget what happened and thinks as if she saw a nightmare... Nora realized the bitter truth, which is

that her loved one does not appreciate what she did for him and that she was living all her life with the illusion of her husband's love, as long as, she felt herself as a tied doll. Nora realized that Torvald did not and will not understand her and that he is not the ideal and suitable one for her. She decided to leave everything despite her husband's insistence leaving behind her her ring and the keys of her house to start the life she is willing for.

### *1.2 The Glass Menagerie*

The entire play takes place in the Wingfield apartment where the main character Tom, who is also the narrator, begins to tell his story which is a memory stick in his mind.

Amanda is the mother of Laura and Tom, she is a moody mother who always quarrels with Tom and sees his behavior like his father who abandoned them without any given explanation and only a picture of him is left on the wall. She always tells her children about her luxury life and her gentlemen callers who line up every day in front of her door's house, she always lives in her past, but lamenting her present when she remembers her actual situation hoping that her shy daughter will have callers the way she had in the past.

Laura is totally different from her mother, she is a modest girl at the point that she is not able to face the world and make contact with reality. She has an illness from childhood, one leg is a little shorter than the other which makes her walk with a limp, and this was the reason why she escapes into her glass animals. She is fragile as a piece of her own glass. Tom resorts to leave home and seeking adventure in the wide open world rather than being held captive by his family and his eventual responsibilities. He often stays up late at night pretending to go to the movies so his mother always fights with him and sees that he must take all the responsibility. Amanda tells Tom that he can escape forever if he finds a suitable husband for his sister Laura. Tom scoffs at the idea at first, but he informs his mother that a gentleman caller called Jim will visit them the next night.



When Jim arrived home, Amanda ordered Laura to open the door, Laura opened the door and was surprised that the gentleman caller was the one she had admired in her high school, and that he was the one who called her with the nickname "Blue Roses ". Since everyone is having dinner and listening to Amanda's boring repeated speech about her nostalgic past life, Laura spends most of the time on the sofa away from the others.

By the candlelight's atmosphere, Jim gently approaches Laura. After having a little conversation, Jim was happy to know that he was Laura's classmate, and the most important for Laura is that he told her that he remembers his nickname to her « Blue Roses ».

Jim encourages Laura to be more self-confident, they danced together. Unfortunately, he matches a table knocking on a glass unicorn figurine which is the favorite glass animal for Laura. The broken unicorn becomes like the rest of the Glass horses. Surprisingly, Laura's love for Jim made her laugh at the situation.

Jim told Laura that he like her the way she is and he kissed her. However, he revealed to her that he is engaged. Laura smiles bravely and accepted the reality as it is. At the end she gave him the broken statue as a souvenir.

After Jim leaves, Amanda blames again Tom and while they were fighting, Tom left the Wingfield apartment, and then he assumes the role of the narrator as he did at the beginning of the play, he explains to the audience how soon he left his family the way his father did. Despite his escape, there is still something that haunts him. It is his sister Laura who always does not miss his mind nor his heart; he always carries her in his memory.

## 2. The Analyses

### 2.1 *A Doll's House*

Sigmund Freud, a famous psychologist, said that literature has a clear connection with human nature. It is a reflection of what we were, we are, we will be, we hate and we long for. He argued that childhood experiences influence adulthood in the pursuit of happiness. Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is a prime example of Freud's theory as the main character Nora returns to her childhood habits in her house as a wife. Nora has limited mental development because she is obsessed with her teenage state, she does not take into consideration the superego that represents society, dignity, principles and her ego led her to take what her Id wants more. She is so class, polite, patient and strong. She put all her efforts to save her marriage and her house, and then she woke up to save herself from drowning. When Nora finally realized at the end of the play that she is nothing to her husband and an unfit mother to raise her children, she began to fully develop as a mentally mature woman after her husband's miscarriage and this is evident when he said:

What a horrible awakening! All these eight years – she who was my joy and pride – a hypocrite, a liar – worse, worse – a criminal! The unuttered ugliness of it all! – For shame! For shame! (Nora is silent looks steadily at him. He stops in front of her.) I ought to have suspected that something of the sort would happen. I ought to have foreseen it all your father's want of principle–be silent! – all your father's principle has come out in you. No require, no morality, no sense of duty–How I am punished ofhaving winked at what he did! I did it for your sake, and this is how you repay me. (Ibsen, 85)

This guilt makes Nora the embodiment of Freud's response training. It happens when a person feels mean to someone who acts contrary to what they are feeling or what they are expecting

and the more expectations you have, the more deceptions you are going to face. In Nora's case, she subconsciously felt guilty for lying to Torvald, so she worked hard to be the perfect woman for him. Her guilt does not affect her conscience until her husband mentions hurtful words in his speech while blaming her saying that she is "a hypocritical, liar and worse a criminal" (Ibsen, 85). This guilt cast doubt in Nora's mind and made her lose her confidence as she began to believe that she was no longer a perfect mother especially when Helmer said:

You will still remain in my house, that is a matter of course. But I shall not allow you to bring up the children; I don't dare to trust them to you. To think that I should be obliged to say so to one whom I loved so dearly, and whom I still –. No, that is all over, from this moment happiness is not the question; all that concerns us is to save the remains, the fragments, the appearance –" (Ibsen, 86).

So she took off her costume (society customs) and chose not to collect her heart's shreds by escaping to build her own personality as a mature dependent woman in her own world after separation.

Sigmund Freud argued that women seek to marry a man like their father, in his burgeoning theory called "Electra Complex" and this is evident with the character of Nora. At the beginning of the play Henrik Ibsen shows how happy she is with her husband and she always depends on him. Although the Electra Complex states that young girls feel jealous of their own mothers, Freud's theory on the subject suggests that persons cannot thrive if they are obsessed during this period. It was this fixation that made Nora despised in her life. It is her husband's hurting speech that pushed her through this phase to escape and without her pain; she would not have been pushed through this fixation or her eventual development.

Torvald's superego led him to be a hypocrite. He told Nora after having a dance together that he really cares for her at the point that he wishes if any trauma would happen so that he could prove his steadfast heroic nature. In fact, when he finds the letter that reveals how Nora brought extortion to his family, without control, he did not think by his heart "id", he did not recognize the advantages of this act on him, but he stuck on his superego and he fails to understand her. All he thought is just how society would see them and how they would react. He told Nora after he scolded her that from that moment he would keep her as his wife just in papers and his concern is just how to appear to society's eyes. This shows the domination of the superego, he does not care about the truth whose value was known at the end.

The ego of Kristine (Linde) led her to leave her "Id" that is her lovely person (Krogstad) and marry with another man just to help her sick mother and take care of her little brothers. Misery, bad circumstances and her urgent need to get her family out of the inferno of poverty prompted her to think with her mind not her heart, and that the only way to get rid of that miserable situation is her escape to marry with a rich man, and this is evident through her speech with Krogstad:

Mrs. Linde. I could do nothing else. As I had break with you, it was my duty also to put an end to all that you felt for me.

Krogstad (wringing his hands). So that was it. And all this—only for the sake of money.

Mrs. Linde. You must not forget that I had a helpless mother and two little brothers. We couldn't wait for you, Nils; your prospects seemed hopeless then. (Ibsen, 70)

## ***2.1 The Glass Menagerie***

As it is already said in the first chapter, *The Glass Menagerie* represents the writer's psychological troubles and this is obviously seen through the characters who noticeably suffer

from neurosis. Neurosis is a mental disorder marked by anxiety, fear, low self-esteem and illusion. All of Tom, Amanda and Laura are suffering in their lives, so they created a sort of an imaginary world where they live in order to make it easy for them. It is a way of escape.

According to what is already said in the first chapter, in order to be a normal human being all the id, ego and the superego have to work together, when it is not the case, a normal human being turns to be abnormal. In *The Glass Menagerie*, there is a continuous conflict between the three parts. The characters seem to have difficulties dealing with their real lives and accepting them as a result they all found a way of distraction to escape in order to beautify a little bit the harsh reality they are dealing with. Their appearance and the reality they are in are completely different. They are living their lives, but carrying with them a lot of hidden desires and unrealized dreams, so it is a continuous conflict that should not be revealed.

In order to understand the unconscious mind of these characters which seems a little bit complicated, we have first to understand the conscious one. Well starting with Tom, he is a modest young man aware of his miserable life who seeks for a change, but this only going to happen far from his mother and sister who are in an indirect told way, a drawback for him. At a very young age he is obliged to work and play the role of a father, a brother and a son all at once to meet the needs of his small family his father abandoned. Even if the father is not present in the play, he plays an important role in all characters' psyche. He marked a deep dark scare in their hearts that caused a lot of mental damages for all of them.

For Tom, the way to escape is through poetry, alcohol and going to Cinema. In Psychoanalysis when a person is mentally damaged the first solution he select is the creation of unreal world where he becomes the center and feels safe and protect in another word "satisfied", at first it is all about satisfaction, but within time it becomes worse and starts to be

a part of that person's life. This is what happened to Tom. At first he found a way to escape his harsh reality, he enjoys writing, he goes to cinema as a way of entertainment and sometimes he even drinks alcohol to forget for a moment what he actually is, but the need for more dominates him. This unreal world he created started to become a big desire he can not reflect, it starts to change his personality and his ego awakes in him a strong feeling of making it true, at first his love to his sister Laura shackles him, but this desire becomes irresistible, this is why he left everything just the way his father did.

The fight between his Id, ego and superego is seen from the beginning of the play till the end. As Freud relates the id to pleasure principle or human instincts and the more pleasure is achieved the more satisfaction is felt. Tom faces a lot of secret desires he wants to realize, one of them is freedom, the free will to do what he wants without any barriers, to experience life to be the person he wants to be, unfortunately he could not be that person because of the responsibilities he has toward his mother and sister. The id is selfish and not logical, but is strong enough to make a person wants to achieve pleasure.

In his case, at the beginning of the play, the superego is present, society's morals and values interfering and make Tom stay with his family, so the superego, in a way, controls the id's impulses, and was more about morals.

In Tom's mind, there is a fight between the id who wants him to be satisfied and the superego who wants him to stay with his family. The interference of the ego which is situated in the preconscious mind, mediate between the two which are situated in the unconscious mind. The ego works according to reality; it meets id's demands with taking into consideration the superego demands. It compromises satisfaction without causing any damages to the two unconscious parts.

In Tom's situation, the ego worked pretty well but it could not manage to keep him taking the right decision that satisfies both the id and the superego. At the end of the play, he simply abandoned his family in order to realize the id's demands without taking into consideration the social morals and values.

In the case of Amanda, she always seems to be living in her past. She escapes to it whenever she had a chance to. When analyzing her personality, she seems to have a big problem dealing with her present life. When a person got used to have a peaceful, beautiful, and a luxurious life then suddenly things started to take another direction and change in an unpleasant way, it becomes an inner shock, the person starts to live a set of events that were not predicated or expected, so as a way of defense, past memories are always a good option. Amanda lives a life she never expected or wanted to live, as a solution, she chooses to escape to her past. She tells a lot about the life she once lived in order to forget for awhile her harsh reality. Her mind (Id part) preserved everything about her past and whenever she feels insecure about her present life she goes back to it and feels secure again. An example of that is given in Scene one when the family is eating all together:

Laura [sitting down]: I'm not expecting any gentleman callers.

Amanda [crossing out to kitchenette, airily]: Sometimes they come when they are least expected!

Why, I remember one Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain – [she enters the kitchenette.]

Tom: I knew what's coming!

Laura: yes. But let her tell it. Tom:

again?

Laura: she loves to tell it.

[Amanda returns with bowl of dessert.]

Amanda: one Sunday afternoon in Blue Mountain, your mother received seventeen! Gentlemen callers! Why, sometimes there weren't chairs enough to accommodate them all. We had to send the nigger over to bring in folding chairs from the parish house.

Tom [remaining at portières]: how did you entertain those gentleman callers? Amanda: I understand the art of conversation.

Tom: I bet you could talk.

Amanda: Girls in those days knew how to talk, I can tell you." (Williams, 9, 10)

As we already said, the id is about memories and pleasures, whenever there is a scene in the play where the family is gathered for dinner, Amanda starts giving instructions to her children about how to eat, how to sit and how to behave and this is unconsciously done on purpose. She does not live in the rich class family she desires to so she in a way tells her children to behave the same way the rich behave and this gives her a kind of a relief. Her unconscious mind orders her to give such instructions in order to achieve pleasure.

She also obliges Tom to work hard to become a gentleman, and also to earn more money to become maybe rich one day as it is seen in scene four:

"Amanda: But, Tom, you go to the movies entirely too much! Tom: I like a lot of adventure, [...]

Amanda: Most young men find adventure in their career.

Tom: Then most young men are not employed in warehouse." (Williams, 35)

She also chooses to neglect the fact that her daughter Laura is a handicap person and never talks about her mental health but she is pushing her to find a gentleman caller and to act as a normal person.



In Psychoanalysis, all these worries, fears, and insecurities tell a lot about the unconscious mind of a person. As we already said, *The Glass Menagerie's* characters suffer from neurosis, and they have all created a world which is unreal in order to escape their harsh real world. So Amanda does the same thing, her id preserves a lot of her past memories and gives her an enormous desire for a change, so whenever she meets people she unconsciously starts talking about the way she lived in her past. She is a frustrated, anxious mother, who does not know the future of her children, but these continuous worries led them to be mentally damaged to create an illusionary world where they belong to escape, and this, at the end, led Tom to take wrong decisions.

When it comes to Laura, she is the most damaged person in this play, but she suffers in silence. She suffers from the Inferiority Complex which is a neurotic condition, a very serious psychological problem, a strong feeling (sometimes real and sometimes not) that leads to low self-esteem and the lack of confidence then feeling inferior in front of others unconsciously, explained by Alfred Adler.

It is a problem that must be treated soon it begins, but in Laura's case, none of her family ever cared. From the beginning of the play until the end, she suffers from all the neurotic problems. She lived a set of circumstances that made of her the person she is. Her father abandoned them without any reason, and this has left a deep scare in her heart. She is emotionally and physically crippled as we already said in the play's summary. Well, saying that she suffers from this Inferiority Complex does not come from nowhere, Jim O'Connor when he had a quiet private talk with her told her about it, he even mentioned the fact that none of her family helped her in order to overcome it, all this is find in scene seven.

Throughout the play, we see how Laura is a sociopath; she never had friends in her life. Despite her important role in this play, she only has few lines. She most of the time, is silent,

playing with her glass menagerie, or sitting on the sofa. She is insecure about her appearance, and led her to escape high school.

Laura is not sure about the way people see her and judge her. All these things affected and damaged her personality and pushed her to isolate herself. But the main reason why she is not secure is her handicap. She has one leg bigger than another so she wears a limp. For her this limp makes a sound when walking and people hear it so it disturbs them, but of course all this happens in her mind. When coming to Laura's mind, her id, ego, and superego faces difficulties to work together and as it is seen, they failed to cooperate. When she considers her reality, she is displeased; her strong secret desire to be a normal person faded away and became a mental disorder she cannot manage to overcome.

Jim is the only realistic person of the play, managed to being her for awhile, to her real world, and to face who she really is. But one more time, it doesn't last for so long, she could not fit in, she turns back to her glass of animals that becomes her real world. Laura relates herself to the glass unicorn because he is different from the other animals of the collection, and this tells enough about the way she sees herself.

### **3. Escapism**

When coming to escapism in the two selected literary works, we see that it is the most chosen option by the characters, especially those of *The Glass Menagerie*. We also could distinguish two types of escapism, mental and physical.

Escapism is a natural process created by the human mind as a means of avoiding unpleasant facts and events. It is a method used generally when a person is unconsciously shocked and cannot manage to accept the reality as it is. When escaping from reality, a person have the optionality to choose the way, it differs from one person to another.

When it is about a normal human being, facing the reality is the best and the safest option, but when it is about an abnormal person, escapism is the best option.

In *The Glass Menagerie* or even in *A Doll's House* we see that some characters escape to an illusionary world and others really escape their actual life to start another one. In the first play, it is a very dominant theme. We see that the characters do not feel the match between them and their real world. They think that they do not fit in, they are unconsciously blaming their selves and others for what they really are. Inside their unconscious minds they carry a lot of unrealized desires and a lot of memories, most of them affect them negatively.

Starting with Laura and Amanda, for them it is a mental escape. They could not manage to accept their reality. Amanda escapes to her past which is for her a perfect one. Whenever she faces difficulties with her present life, she goes back to the past, those days where she used to have a luxurious life. Laura escapes to her glass unicorn, different and never fitting in. She created a world of her own and most of the time escapes there because for her it represents security.

Concerning Tom in *The Glass Menagerie* and Nora in *A Doll's House* they both physically escaped. At the beginning, Tom escapes from his harsh reality to the cinema, poetry and alcohol as the conversations between him and his mother tell:

#### Scene Four

"Amanda: But, Tom, you go to the movies entirely too much. Tom: I like a lot of adventure. [...]" (P.35)

And also in the same scene we have:

"Amanda: Promise, son, you'll – never be a drunkard!

Tom [turns to her grinning]: I will never be a drunkard, mother." (P. 33)

But his need to a real world where he becomes an unseparated part led him to physically escape. He simply abandoned his mother and sister led down his unrealistic world he created to search for freedom and real happiness.

Nora did the same thing, at the end she just likes Tom, abandoned everything to realize what she wants:

Nora (taking her bag). Ah, Trovald, the most wonderful thing of all would have to happen.

Helmer, tell me what would be!

Nora. Both you and I would have to be so changed that –. Oh, Torvald, I don't believe any longer in wonderful things Happening. Helmer. But I will believe it. Tell me? So changed that –?

Nora. That our life together would be a real wedlock. Goodbye. (She goes out through the hall.)

Helmer (sinks down on a chair at the door and buries his face his hands). Nora! Nora! (Looks round, and rises.) Empty. She is gone. (A hope flashes across his mind.) The most wonderful thing of all –?

(The sound of the door shutting is heard from below.) (Ibsen, 97)

Her husband disappointed her so much and the unpleasant events she faced made her realize that she needs to be free to face the real world all alone and to explore it the way she wants to. She physically escaped to start a new life. For her, she used to be treated by her husband as a little girl that needs a male protection. She never had a chance to express herself the way she chooses to. Even she was happy and made her best to be a good wife for her husband and a great mother to her children, she finds out that her personality is limited to this and those people she sacrificed herself for, simply misunderstood her, at the end she gave up everything and escapes.

"Nora. Listen, Trovald I have heard that when a wife deserts her husband's house, as I am doing now, he is legally freed from all obligations towards her. In any case I see you free from all your obligations. You are not to feel yourself bound in the slightest way, any more than I shall. There must be perfect freedom on both sides. See, here is your ring back. Give me mine.

Helmer. That too?

Nora. That too.

Helmer. Here it is.

Nora. That's right. Now it is all over. I have put the keys here. The maids know all about everything in the house – better than I do. Tomorrow, after I have left her, Christine will come here and pick up my own things that I bought with me from home. I will have them sent after me." (Ibsen, 96)

#### **4. The Conflict between Reality and Appearance**

What is obvious in the two plays is the continuous conflict between reality and appearance. The characters pretend happiness and normality in contrast with their reality. They are faking a smile everyday to appear different from what they really are. They pretend to create another personality that matches the real world they live in to avoid questions.

In *A Doll's House*, Nora tries so hard to be the perfect wife for her husband, and the good mother for her children. She lives for them and gives the perfect image they expect and want to see. At the beginning readers may be tricked by seeing a perfect family, a perfect marriage, and a perfect couple, the whole thing appears magical and enviable, but this appearance they give is a lie. Both Nora and Torvald were, at first, in harmony trying to follow the social conditions and appearances, a successful marriage full of happiness, a good

relationship between husband and wife, but in fact, when analyzing everything, they are just acting the way they should act, they are doing the thing the society obliges them to do. Reality is not something you would take into account no matter what you really want.

Nora uses shopping and spending money to feel satisfied maybe because it is the only thing she does alone without her husband's interference. She is dependent on him, and does everything he asks her to, a real submission. In the play, Linde describes her being a little child, who doesn't explore the world or face life yet.

Appearances in the Norwegian society during the 19th century marked a notable place. A woman should give the perfect image of herself no matter who she really is. She is obliged to follow a set of conditions that society has created in order to be an active part of it. A man or a husband should be responsible and a leader of his own and also of his family. This appearance should become a part of one's personality in order to be accepted. Reality is something that should not be seen or given importance.

In *A Doll's House*, all the characters are fighting their reality in order to appear the way society demands and this evident when Helmer said to Nora after reading the letter:

It is incredible that I can't take it in. But we must come to some understanding. Take off the shawl. Take it off, I tell you. I must try and appease him some way or another. The matter must be hushed up at any cost. And as for you and me, it must appear as if everything between us were as before – but naturally only in the eyes of the world. You will still remain in my house, that is a matter of course. But I shall not allow you to bring up the children; I dare not trust them to you. To think that I should be obliged to say so to the one whom I have loved so dearly, and whom I still – No,

that is all over. From this moment happiness is not the question;

all that concerns us is to save the remains, the fragments, the appearance –" (Ibsen, 86) At first we see Nora as a little girl that does nothing more than obeying her husband. She is immature and materialistic. But things changed when she understands that she worth more than what is given to her, she becomes mature and strong enough to take the decision of giving up her whole family, and the appearance she is obliged to give to serve for the reality she wants to live. Contrary to her husband who sticks to that appearance and never giving it up, he always refers to the social morals and values.

When it comes to *The Glass Menagerie*, all of Tom, Amanda, and Laura are trying to hide their reality and to fake an appearance that please others.

Tom is the first to admit it from the very beginning of the play saying it is a memory and he live in Illusion. He fakes an appearance that pleases his mother and satisfies Laura whenever he is home. Once outside, he goes back to his harsh reality and never accepts it. He escapes to cinema that represents his illusionary world and forgets for awhile his reality. At first, this was handled but then, he physically escaped. He abandoned his sister who means too much to him, and his mother who needs him the most. He could not handle the fact of being someone who never wanted to be. He was obliged to work, to meet the needs of his little family, to play the role of a responsible young man toward his mother and sister, but this appearance he gives, never made of him a happy man since the real person he wants to be is in a way rejected by his mother, an adventurer free man.

Amanda also did the same as Tom did in the beginning, she created a sort of an illusionary world from her past, and an appearance she gives to people in order to hide her bitter reality. In the outside she may look as the happy strong woman who is ready to jump whenever you whistle, but actually she is much damaged inside. It is not easy for a woman to

be abandoned by the man she chose to spend the rest of her life with to find herself fighting alone with two children. The reality she does not show is her sufferance, her misery, and her regrets because once upon a time, she used to have all what she desires, and who knows maybe one of the seven gentleman callers she once had could be a different life for her than what she is living now. The appearance she shows is the opposite of her reality, strong, powerful, a little bit independent.

Laura also did the same thing. She fakes an appearance everyday to please her mother who wants her to find a gentleman caller. Despite she is a psychotic, cripple, and a sociopath, she manages to escape her reality and shows something else. When you see her, she seems happy playing with her glass animals, but actually it is just a way to escape her reality and appear as a normal person.

The conflict between reality and appearance is one of the major themes that are used in the plays along with escapism. Williams and Ibsen write something we all experience in our daily life. They present something real and illusionary at the same time. When reality does not satisfy or it is acceptable, people very often fake an appearance. It is a very important theme that should be carefully treated in order to understand the characters real personality.

## **Conclusion**

In the present chapter, we have summarized the two selected plays *A Doll's House* and *The Glass Menagerie* in order to be more familiar with them. Then we have analyzed some characters of both the plays who are Nora, Torvald, and Linde of the first one, Tom, Amanda, and Laura of the second one, using psychoanalysis theory. We have also talked about escapism as a dominant theme along with the conflict between reality and appearance.



# **GENERAL CONCLUSION**

## General Conclusion

The present research aimed to study and analyze some characters of *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen, and *The Glass Menagerie* by Tennessee Williams using psychoanalysis theory as introduced by Sigmund Freud.

In the first chapter which is theoretical, we presented the two authors' biographies. We spoke about their lives, their families, beside their notable careers introducing some of their successful works. We also inserted the historical background of the periods in which the authors lived and wrote the selected literary works cited above. We dealt with the Victorian era and the industrial revolution in Norway that affected Ibsen's thinking, in addition to the great depression that affected USA to a huge extent, and through *The Glass Menagerie* we see how the American families lived and suffered. Moreover, we presented the literary background of both Norway and USA by naming a bench of great writers and remarkable literary works. At the end, we introduced our theory which is psychoanalysis, giving some important information needed throughout our research, beside its starting and development, and we also mentioned its application in the world of literature.

In the second chapter which is analytical, we started by giving both plays summaries. Then, we begin with the application of our theory which is psychoanalysis. We have selected three characters in each play in order to be analyzed. We have Nora, Torvald, and Linde in *A Doll's House*. Tom, Amanda, and Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*. From our psychoanalytic study, we get to know our characters' personality, thinking, and the reason behind their actions in addition to this, we spoke about their psyche through analyzing the conscious and the unconscious mind. Furthermore, we dealt with escapism as one of the major themes of the two selected works. We found out two types of escapism that are physical and mental, and though our analyses, we became able to detect each of these two types the characters have chosen. Nora and Tom escape physically, Amanda and Laura escape mentally. For the

majority of the characters, escape is the ultimate solution in order to forget their harsh reality. Illusion dominates their lives to become an inseparable part of them. Lastly, we dealt with the conflict between reality and appearance that dominates the characters entire lives. We explained that it is a continuous conflict throughout the plays, sometimes it is imposed by the society as it is seen in *A Doll's House*, and other times, it is simply a choice made by the characters in order to avoid the harsh reality they live in as it is presented in *The Glass Menagerie*.

After finishing our analyses, we can conclude some of the outcomes of our study. Ibsen and Williams through their works cited above tried to show the other side of life which is more realistic, cruel and bitter. We get used to see literature as a beautified style that makes people dream and explore the fictional world, but in here, we see a normal, natural, and real life of the individuals that faced circumstances which are incontrollable. Through our psychoanalytical study, we can say that these written works are simply giving us an idea about the authors' personalities and lives. They presented to us the suffering of people within a historical context, and how they were affected by their countries and societies. In *A Doll's House*, Ibsen presents a woman who becomes able to take decisions by herself contrary to what was really happening in Norway during the 19<sup>th</sup> century, when women had no power, and were barely given a position in a male dominated society. Williams also presents a family that suffers because of what was happening during the great depression in the USA. The strength of these works is the characters' identities and personalities which are instable and affected by their surroundings. These two, make their characters escape their reality to find a certain pleasure that allows them to survive through escape. Escapism is a kind of a therapy that cures the characters when needed to as it is explained by Freud. It is a therapy session that Nora, Tom, Amanda, and Laura choose when things become unacceptable.

The last point we dealt with is the conflict between reality and appearance which is the major concern of the characters. All of them choose to simply fake an appearance to please the others. In Ibsen's work, this fake appearance is created by the society that obliged women to behave in a certain manner that maybe, they don't like, whereas men, are given a complete authority and right over women. Contrary to what happen in Williams' work, where characters choose to fake an appearance in order to feel satisfied. The psychoanalysis theory we applied shows how much Ibsen and Williams succeed in unveiling the importance of their biographies and historical events in building up their works, and it permitted us to know more about the reality which is ignored.

*A Doll's House* and *The Glass Menagerie* are two examples of two strong writers who challenged the writings of their times and created a whole new aspects of writing, and opened a wide door in the world of literature.

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## Résumé

Ce travail de recherche traite deux thèmes majeurs présentés dans *A Doll's House* par Henrik Ibsen et *The Glass Menagerie* par Tennessee Williams qui sont l'évasion et le conflit entre la réalité et l'apparence, en utilisant la psychanalyse introduite et développée par Sigmund Freud comme notre théorie afin d'approfondir et d'analyser les personnalités et les psychismes des personnages pour comprendre leurs actions, donc, pour comprendre les deux thèmes sélectionnés que nous avons cités ci-dessus. Cet article montre les grandes carrières des auteurs, les succès qu'ils ont obtenus et les échecs auxquels ils ont été confrontés à travers leurs biographies. Il préfigure également certains événements historiques qui ont affecté les époques et les pays des deux auteurs et les ont influencés à sortir ces écrits étonnants. Nous présumons également l'arrière plan littéraire qui a couvert leurs époques et peuvent être influencés personnellement dans leurs écrits. De plus, nous utilisons la psychanalyse pour analyser les personnages des deux pièces de théâtre, leurs personnalités et leurs psychismes en étudiant leurs esprits conscients et inconscients afin de mieux comprendre leurs actions et leurs choix. Enfin, nous explorons l'évasion comme thème dominant dans les deux pièces et comment elle est considérée comme la solution ultime pour certains personnages afin d'ignorer ou parfois d'embellir la dure réalité dans laquelle ils vivent, ainsi que le conflit entre la réalité et l'apparence qui est considéré comme un conflit continu.