

#### 4D: Observe & Analyze I

**Lauren Brickman, Adjunct Lecturer, Theatre & Speech** [00:00:00] A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen premiered over a hundred years ago in the year 1879. At the time that it premiered, it was considered extremely controversial. Okay, nobody had seen a woman leaving her husband on stage before. And though it's been over a hundred years, the play is still produced today. Many people consider Henrik Ibsen to be a feminist. However, Ibsen himself would not have called himself this. He didn't think he was setting out to do anything specifically for women's rights. He felt that he was simply holding up a mirror to society, reflecting back to his society what he saw. So the gender inequalities he was capturing to him were just truth. It wasn't anything revolutionary, although many would say he was. Now, we've also read a play this semester called Satellites. I'm hoping many of you have started to see some connections between our two female protagonists. Nina from Satellites and Nora from A Doll's House, though written a hundred years apart and living in drastically different circumstances, faced many of the same struggles, a struggle to find themselves in their home and out of the home. So at this point, you've read both plays. You've read A Doll's House, you've read Satellites, and now I'm interested in your thoughts. What did you think about the plays? Did you like them? Did you like one of them more than the other? Did you have a favorite character? Do you yourself see these common themes? What do you guys think? Okay, I want to hear from you. I want to hear your ideas, your thoughts. Yeah, Caitlin.

**Caitlin, Student** [00:01:26] I thought it was interesting how Nora, who didn't have a job outside the home, she, just like Nina, who was a working mom, hired a nanny to take care of her children.

**Lauren Brickman** [00:01:36] Good.

**Student** [00:01:37] I really liked A Doll's House better because Nora was really fierce at the end. She lived in a world where men told her she couldn't be what she wanted to be.

**Lauren Brickman** [00:01:46] Great, great. Now, I covered this in the opening, but I'm curious, how did you all, as readers, interpret the gender inequalities that were being discussed in these plays? What do you think? Yeah, Chris?

**Chris, Student** [00:01:59] While, um, both Nina and Norah feel a lot of pressure to be perfect mothers, they are struggling to hold their own identity outside these roles, maybe?

**Lauren Brickman** [00:02:07] Great. I absolutely agree. These are two characters who are absolutely struggling to hold on to their sense of self. Now, Chris, can you offer some support or evidence for this or anybody else? Can anyone help Chris support this with evidence from the text?

**Student** [00:02:21] Nina and Nora are being torn between what they want and what they think they want. Nora almost feels like she's suffocated by her roles as both a mom and a wife. She kind of feels like she's acting those parts. So she even tells Torvald in that final scene that he treats her like a doll. So in turn, she treats her children like dolls. And that's really where that title comes from. And then Nina feels just the opposite.

**Lauren Brickman** [00:02:42] Good. So you're saying that Nina feels the opposite. Can someone else help support this claim with some evidence? Thomas?

**Thomas, Student** [00:02:51] Nina seems to be feeling like her career's taking away from her job as a mom and that she feels bad, that she wants to take care of her child.

**Lauren Brickman** [00:03:00] Very good, very good. Can we find any other connections between these two plays? Yes, Chris.

**Chris, Student** [00:03:06] Well, I actually saw a connection between Nora and Miles. Having been adopted, Miles didn't know much about where he came from. He was African American and he was raised by a White family. And this created all sorts of issues for him. When Nora was speaking with her husband about feeling like a doll passed down from her father to him, this made me think of Miles, and I bet this is how he felt.

**Lauren Brickman** [00:03:32] All right. That is a great connection. I really love what you're seeing here. I love that analysis. Now, does anyone else have any lingering questions, anything that was unclear when reading, anything we're wanting to get to the bottom of? Yes, Caitlin.

**Caitlin, Student** [00:03:45] I still want to know why Ibsen had her leave her kids in the end. Was he advocating for women to be more independent or was he just testing us readers? I still have a lot of questions about that.

**Lauren Brickman** [00:03:57] I love that. I love that so much. Yeah.

**Student** [00:03:59] I'm still not sure how I feel about Nora. Part of me feels she's brave, but part of me feels she's being selfish. I feel that way about a lot of characters we've been reading. I just feel confused. Shouldn't I have an opinion one way or the other?

**Lauren Brickman** [00:04:13] This is great. That is a great transition into what activity we're going to be doing today. Now, remember a couple weeks ago when we started exploring the protocol for strategic question asking, right. We've got our wonderful mnemonic, CLOSE UP: Clarity, Linking, Open-Ended, Synthesis, Evidence, Understanding, and Priority. Now, each of you is going to take turns being the questioner, being the sharer, and being the observer. The reason we're doing this exercise is so that through your own questioning, you can get a deeper sense of the material. Now, don't worry about whose turn it is to do what, because I'm going to be keeping track. I'm going to let you know when to switch out roles, okay? I want you all to get into your small groups. We're going to begin the work.

**Student** [00:05:02] Okay, so I'll be the questioner first. Chris, you can be the observer, and if you want to be the sharer?

**Thomas, Student** [00:05:06] Okay.

**Student** [00:05:09] Why did Nora give her a ring back?

**Thomas, Student** [00:05:10] Because she wanted a divorce, but I don't think that was allowed then.

**Student** [00:05:14] Why do you think Torvald said they can live like brother and sister?

**Thomas, Student** [00:05:19] Because he doesn't want her to leave?

**Lauren Brickman** [00:05:24] You've asked two understanding questions. Now this time I want you to try an upper level question, maybe something open ended about Torvald's motives.

**Student** [00:05:31] Why do you think he doesn't want her to leave?

**Thomas, Student** [00:05:33] He loves her.

**Student** [00:05:34] Do you think he really loves her or do you think he wants a wife?

**Lauren Brickman** [00:05:38] Good. Really good.