

Saint Joan, An Ideal Husband, and A Doll's House: A Comparative Analysis of Female Characters and Social Norms

The late 19th and early 20th centuries witnessed a period of significant social and cultural change, particularly in the roles and expectations of women. This era saw the rise of feminism and the suffrage movement, as women began to challenge traditional gender roles and demand greater equality. This social upheaval is reflected in the works of many playwrights of the time, including George Bernard Shaw, Oscar Wilde, and Henrik Ibsen.

This essay will compare the female characters and social norms in three plays from this period: Saint Joan by George Bernard Shaw, An Ideal Husband by Oscar Wilde, and A Doll's House by Henrik Ibsen. These plays offer a unique perspective on the changing roles of women in society and the expectations placed upon them.

The three plays feature a range of female characters, each of whom represents a different facet of the changing roles of women in society.



Classic European Plays: Saint Joan, An Ideal Husband, and A Doll's House by George Bernard Shaw

★★★★★ 5 out of 5

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- **Saint Joan** is a young peasant girl who is chosen by God to lead the French army to victory against the English. She is a strong and independent woman who defies the expectations of her time. She is also a deeply religious woman who believes that she is acting on behalf of God.
- **Lady Windermere** in *An Ideal Husband* is a young and beautiful woman who is married to a wealthy and powerful man. She is a kind and compassionate woman, but she is also naive and inexperienced. She learns the hard way that the world is not always as it seems.
- **Nora Helmer** in *A Doll's House* is a young and beautiful woman who is married to a successful lawyer. She is a loving and devoted wife and mother, but she is also restless and unfulfilled. She eventually realizes that she is living a lie and that she must break free from the constraints of her marriage.

These three characters represent a range of female experiences in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. They are all strong and independent women, but they also face different challenges and expectations.

The three plays also explore the social norms of the time, particularly with regard to women.

- **Saint Joan** is set in the 15th century, a time when women were expected to be subservient to men. Joan's defiance of these expectations is seen as a threat to the social order.

- **An Ideal Husband** is set in the late 19th century, a time when the upper classes were expected to behave with decorum and respectability. Lady Windermere's affair threatens to disrupt this social order.
- **A Doll's House** is set in the late 19th century, a time when women were expected to be subservient to their husbands. Nora's decision to leave her husband is seen as a radical act.

The three plays show how social norms can restrict and oppress women. However, they also show that women can challenge these norms and create a better world for themselves.

The plays Saint Joan, An Ideal Husband, and A Doll's House offer a unique perspective on the changing roles of women in society in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The female characters in these plays are strong and independent, but they also face different challenges and expectations. The plays also explore the social norms of the time, and how these norms can restrict and oppress women. However, the plays also show that women can challenge these norms and create a better world for themselves.



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