Gender Roles in the Victorian Era

Aidan, Lydia, & Katie
Victorian Era

- refers to the time period when Queen Victoria ruled in England which stretched from 1837-1901
- Saw the spread of several political movements such as socialism, liberalism and feminism
Gender Roles

- Inequality between men and women
- Characterized by distinct roles for men and women
- “Separate spheres”
Characteristics of women’s lives

- Lived more secluded and private lives, as they were more confined to the home
- Expected to be pure and submissive
  - Nora was secluded
- Should want to get married and have children
- Education
Characteristics of Men’s Lives

- also victim to societal standard
- Expected to be masculine and achieve success outside the home
- Should separate themselves from activities in the home
Cult of domesticity

1. Image of the ideal woman
   b. Support husband!!

2. Women’s proper place in society
   a. Separate spheres

3. Writings
   a. Many magazines containing articles on how to keep a clean home, fashion, dance
   b. These writings reinforced the cult of domesticity
Separate Spheres (cult of domesticity)

- women’s place: private sphere
- Men’s place: public sphere
- Called a natural division that was rooted in the nature of each gender
  - Tied to legal status
- Now considered an example of social construction of gender
  - Societal attitudes shaped ideas of each gender which either constrained or empowered them
Suffrage movement

- Suffragette movement founded in 1903 after lack of progress of the National Union of Women's suffrage (NUWS) - anyone in women's studies this is the movie Iron Jawed Angels
  - NUWS believed in non-violent protest.
  - believed that if women caused trouble it would confirm to men they could not be trusted
  - The WSPU was convinced more drastic measures were needed
- In 1825 an article was written that stated ‘women did not need the vote because their interests were the same as that of their fathers or husbands, who did have the vote.’
  - This further shows the submissiveness that women were required to have, which began the movement for voting
- The fact that this is called “A doll’s house” shows how trapped Nora was in her life
- In the beginning it gave the impression that she was happy and her home life was comfortable, towards the end of the text it is the complete opposite
- Women were controlled by men in the victorian period, they were not to have any power, which is shown through Nora having to hide the fact that she borrowed money because it would ruin his ego
- “How painful and humiliating it would be for Torvald, with his manly independence, to know that he owed me anything!”
Works Cited


history/trail/victorian_britain/women_home/ideals_womanhood_01.shtml.


