

**PATRIARCHY IN SOCIETY REFLECTED AT HENRIK IBSEN'S
A DOLL'S HOUSE (1879): A FEMINIST APPROACH**



PUBLICATION ARTICLE

**Submitted as a Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Getting Bachelor Degree of Education
in English Department**

by

DESINTA DHIOTYA RACHMA

A 320110179

**DEPARTEMEN ENGLISH EDUCATION
SCHOOL OF TEACHER TRAINING AND EDUCATION
MUHAMMADIYAH UNIVERSITY OF SURAKARTA**

2015

Surat Persetujuan Artikel Publikasi Ilmiah

Yang bertanda tangan di bawah ini pembimbing skripsi/tugas akhir:

Nama : Dr. Phil. Dewi Candraningrum M.Ed.

NIP/NIK : 772

Nama : Titis Setyabudi, S.S, M.Hum

NIP/NIK : 948

Telah membaca dan mencermati naskah artikel publikasi ilmiah, yang merupakan ringkasan skripsi/tugas akhir dari mahasiswa:

Nama : Desinta Dhiotya Rachma

NIM : A320110179

Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris

Judul Skripsi : Patriarchy in Society reflected at Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House (1879) : Feminist Approach

Naskah artikel tersebut, layak dan dapat disetujui untuk dipublikasikan.

Demikian persetujuan dibuat, semoga dapat dipergunakan seperlunya.

Surakarta, Maret 2015

Pembimbing I



Dr. Phil. Dewi Candraningrum, M.Ed

NIK. 772

Pembimbing II



Titis Setyabudi, S.S, M.Hum

NIK. 948

PATRIARCHY IN SOCIETY REFLECTED AT HENRIK IBSEN'S *A DOLL'S HOUSE* (1879): FEMINIST APPROACH

By

- 1. Desinta Dhiotya Rachma**
- 2. Dewi Candraningrum**
- 3. Titis Setyabudi**

A320110179

Muhammadiyah University of Surakarta

desinta.muslim@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

*The research is proposed to analyze the women position which under the control of the invisible hands and the pressures of patriarchal system in society in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* by Feminist Approach. The research sets two objectives: first is to analyze the structural elements of play, and second is to analyze the play based on the Feminist Approach.*

*This study is qualitative using the play of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879) as the object. There are two kinds of data source: primary and secondary. The primary data source is the play of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and the secondary data source are some literary books and some articles related to the play. The method of collecting data in the research is library research by reading and summarising the data. In analyzing the data, the writer employs descriptive analysis.*

*The outcome of the study is as follows: first, in this drama, Ibsen wants to illustrate how woman are become subordinate in her patriarchal society. Second, the patriarchal system in *A Doll's House* harms women because they do not have important role in family until they are marginalized and oppresed. The last, the message conveyed by Henrik Ibsen in *A Doll's House* is to open an insight especially for women about their social status to do many activities in public to compete with men.*

Keyword: *patriarchal system, man's domination, women struggle.*

A. Introduction

Literature reflects and expresses the life, the social condition in society to represent the community and the era (Wellek and Warren, 1977:110). Literature sources are the phenomena that occur in community such as family life and etc (Wiyatmi, 2012:42). Describing the elements of society that occur toward men and women are quite interesting because it presents at the order of life both of them socially and culturally. One of the life problems that becomes the source of the literary works is the position of women in society.

As one of literary works, drama is one of the literary works which is represented on stages. The perform is indicated in action and utters the writer dialogue (Abrams, 1971:43). Drama shows the history of human's life in society and it is presented on stage. *A Doll's House* is a drama written by Henrik Ibsen which expresses the theme of a woman's rights and an individual woman asking for her rights.

In society, women have the lower position than men. When women have marriage, they will have role as wife and mother. They will be hoped well for sex, having babies, cooking, and nothing else. Besides, women are discriminated against in pay, education and job. And also the women's financial depends on the men or their husband. Women do not have freedom and equality, they cannot get professions that they want.

Women's position in the nineteenth century was really in bad condition. The society had strong assumption that "women's position was clear, she was always physically and intellectually inferior to the man" (Rubenstein, 1987:7). This assumption causes the women become the subordinate class in politically and socially. Women are only responsible to their husband, child and household as a wife and mother. As a result they had no right to choose their own ways.

A Doll's House is a drama written by Henrik Ibsen. It is appeared on 15 September 1879. *A Doll's House* reflects an individual woman asking for her rights. Nora Helmer is a wife of Torvald Helmer, the director of bank.

She is beautiful woman and loves her family very much. She never asks for anything useless to her husband. But before she and her family live in the happiness she secretly borrowed a large sum of money so that her husband could recuperate from a serious illness. She never told him of this loan and has been secretly paying it back in small installments by saving from her household allowance. Her husband, Torvald, thinks her careless and childlike, and often calls her his doll. When he is appointed bank director, his first act is to relieve a man who was once disgraced for having forged his signature on a document. This man, Nils Krogstad, is the person from whom Nora has borrowed her money. It is then revealed that she forged her father's signature in order to get the money. Krogstad threatens to reveal Nora's crime and thus disgrace her and her husband unless Nora can convince her husband not to fire him. Nora tries to influence her husband, but he thinks of Nora as a simple child who cannot understand the value of money or business. Thus, when Torvald discovers that Nora has forged her father's name, he is ready to disclaim his wife even though she had done it for him. Later when all is solved, Nora sees that her husband is not worth her love and she leaves him to get her freedom.

The *A Doll's House* plot takes us back in time of Passive Woman period, the life of woman is only as a housewife. Nora, as a woman, a wife, or a mother, behaves like a doll. She is under the control of the invisible hands and the pressures of patriarchal system in society. Based on this drama, the major character has problem about the struggle women's right from oppression.

B. Research Method

In writing this study, the writer employs the descriptive qualitative research. Moleong (1983: 3) affirms that qualitative research a research which results in the descriptive data in the form observed people or behaviors. Then, the steps of conducting this qualitative study are (1) determining the object of

the study, (2) determining the source of the data, (3) determining the method of data collection, and (4) determining the technique of data analysis.

The object of the study is *A Doll's House* play which is published in 1879. It is analyzed by using feminist approach. There are two types of data namely primary data and secondary data that are needed to do this research. The primary data are the main data obtained from all the words, dialogues, phrases and sentences in the novel. The primary data sources of the study are *A Doll's House* play by Henrik Ibsen. Secondary data are the supporting data taken from literary books, criticism, and some articles related to the novel. The secondary data of the study are taken from any information related to the novel. In conducting the study, the writer uses the techniques in collecting the data as follows: reading the novel repeatedly, taking notes of important part in both primary and secondary data, underlying the important word, phrases and sentences which are related to the study, arranging the data into several part based on its classification, library research by collecting and selecting both primary data and secondary data, drawing the conclusion of the analysis that has already done in the former chapter and formulating its pedagogical suggestion. The technique of analyzing data is descriptive. The writer wants to observe the struggle of women in facing the patriarchy system and focus on it. There are two analyses, structural and feminist analysis.

C. Research Finding and Discussion

Based on the data analysis above, the researcher find and discusses the result of the research finding as follows:

1. Patriarchal System

Patriarchy is the social system which men hold primary power. In family life, father is the head of family. He holds authority over women and children. In the household life, husband has big power in family. Husband controls the bigger basic material in family's necessity. And wife's position is weak because her life is under control of her husband.

In *A Doll's House*, Ibsen represents a patriarchal system when Nora was child. She became her father doll's child who played with him in his house.

“When I was at home with father, he told me his opinion about everthing, and so I had the same opinions, and if I differed from him I concealed the fact, because he would not have liked it. He called me his doll's child, and he played with me just as I used to play with my dolls.” (ADH: 66)

The patriarchal system is also presented by Torvald who regards Nora as his doll's wife during their marriage. Nora feels that their home just like playroom of her.

“And you have always been so kind to me. But our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have been your doll's wife, just as at home I was father's doll child, and here the children have been my dolls. I thought it great fun when you played with me, just as they thought it great fun when I played with them. That is what our marriage has been, Torvald.” (ADH: 67)

2. Women's Position

Feminist perspective has formed to figure out that women's position is equals as men. Women have their rights to get equal position as men in many aspects.

Nora represented an equal position as woman and man who both of them are the human being without any differences.

“I don't believe that any longer. I believe that before all else I am a reasonable human being, just as you are or at all events, that I must try and become one.” (ADH: 68)

In the drama, women's position is also presented by Mrs. Linde. She has a figure of having work hard for her family.

“I had to turn my hand to anything I could find, first a small shop, then a small school, and so on. The last three year have seemed like one long working day with no rest.” (ADH: 11)

Women's position is not determined from biologically, they can access the same status as men in terms of citizenship. Both of them have a right to develop themselves. Women's position is raised when they can challenge to authority, so the social status might make optimistic about possibility of realizing sexual equality in the world.

3. Women's Role

Ideological definition about women's roles often begins from institutionalization of division of power and work, and concrete aspect of life. Because more separated productive activity is from domestic activity.

Ibsen describes that women's role is limited on the domestic area. Nora has always become an object in her society. She only has sacred duties, as a wife and mother.

“Before all else, you are a wife and a mother.” (ADH: 68)

In the drama, women's role is also presented by Nora who helps Mrs Linde to get job in her husband's office.

“Nora : He must, Christine. Just leave it to me. I will broach the subject very clearly. I will think of something that will please him very much. It will make me so happy to be of some use to you.

Linde : How kind you are, Nora, to be so anxious to help me!” (ADH: 11-12)

4. Women's Right

In A Doll's House, Nora struggles for her own right that is not given by her patriarchal system, but must be struggled by her own.

Nora has been save her husband's life from serious illness.

“I will show you that I too have something to be proud and glad of. It was I who saved Torvald's life.” (ADH: 12)

She thinks that a wife can do anything to save her family life.

“Linde : No, a wife cannot borrow without her husband’s consent.

Nora : Oh, if it is a wife who has any head dor business, a wife who has the wit to be a little bit clever.” (ADH: 13)

Nora also does not believe that she has no right to save her husband’s life.

“I really don’t know. The thing perplexes me altogether. I only know that you an I look at it quite another thing from what I supposed, but I find it impossible to convince muself that the law is right. According to it woman has no right to spare her old dying father, or to save her husband’s life. I can’t believe that.” (ADH: 69)

Finally, Nora gets her free life from her husband obligations.

“Listen Torvald, 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 set 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.” (ADH: 71)

Women also demand a right to choose what they attend to, including having freedom to be what they want to be (Hamm, 2002).

5. Women’s Participation

In Henrik Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*, women are seldom disbelieved by men in a decision making process, even though it is for herself. This is not fair to her especially if it is looked from point of view. Feminist believes that women have the similar access to men to participate in public life. Besides, woman must be involved in decision making process, both domestic and public.

In *A Doll's House*, Ibsen creates a major character, Nora Helmer who gets subordinate position in her society. She only becomes a wife and a mother.

“My dear ! Small household cares and that sort of thing! You are a child, Nora.” (ADH: 12)

But Nora has something to be proud when she tries to save her husband's life and her family.

“I will show you that I too have something to be proud and glad of. It was I who saved Torvald's life.” (ADH: 12)

In this drama, women's participation is also presented by other major character, Mrs. Linde. She is able to enter public life. She finds a job and live in public area as man.

“I had to turn my hand to anything I could find, first a small shop, then a small school, and so on. The last three year have seemed like one long working day with no rest.” (ADH: 11)

“No indeed, I only feel my life unspeakably empty. No one to live for any more. That was why I could not stand the life in my little backwater any longer. I hope it may be easier here to find something which will busy me and occupy my thoughts. If only I could be lucky enough to get some regular work, office work of some kind.” (ADH: 11)

The emancipation of women have been removed from giving contribution to the family and husband changes entering public life such as political participation and taking a part in legal profession and other social life which are usually dominated over by patriarchy (Murphy, 1995).

D. Discussion

The analysis of the major character's condition in Patriarchal society, position, role, right, participation above shows that each classification of them

gives an important part in building the major character's struggle in the time she lives.

Patriarchal system is social system which men hold primary power. In family life, patriarchal is system of relation between men and women where men dominate women and women live under pressure. The patriarchal system in *A Doll's House* shows the domination of man in family life. Nora Helmer as major character is trapped in her house. As a result, she cannot do activity freely and under pressure.

In *A Doll's House*, Nora works in domestic area is put in subordinate position and her husband works outside the home hold the family rules in all aspect. It condition makes the inequality in their household because Torvald can earn money and do activities but Nora cannot. He has full power to manage and hold his family. Nora cannot use family finance without Torvald's permission.

The time in which Nora lives is the time of modern people life in Norway, which most of people are well-educated, modern and an individual. And this time actually women condition is better because women have bigger opportunity to be more active in politics, education and economic aspects. And also they have to do activities in many aspect of social area. Women are also a human being who has right to earn money, to get a job and to be active in many aspect. These facts have brought Henrik Ibsen to show the other fact of women phenomenon in Norway who must still live in difficulties and struggle to get her right by her own.

Ibsen is one writers in Norway who deplores the attention on the emancipation of women. *A Doll's House* reflects an individual woman asking of her rights. Ibsen's concern about the position of women in society brought to life in "a doll's house".

"But our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have been your doll's wife, just as at home I was father's doll child, and here the children have been my dolls. I thought it great fun when you played

with me, just as they thought it great fun when I played with them. That is what our marriage has been, Torvald.” (ADH:67)

In *A Doll's house*, Nora Helmer as the major character has become a subordinate in her patriarchal society. She faces many problems cause by her patriarchal society especially her family. In the drama she has become a victim of her father when she was child and also a victim of her husband in her marriage. Then, she becomes a second sex in her society especially in her marriage with Torvald Helmer. He always tries to take her in the second rights as a woman and a human being. She is under the control of the invisible hands and the pressures of patriarchal system in society. Nora cannot do activity freely and live under pressure.

“I mean that I was simply transferred from father’s hands into yours. You arranged everything according to your own taste, and so I got the same tastes as you or else I pretended to, I am really not quite sure which I think sometimes the one and somtimes the other. When I look back on it, it seems to me as if I had been living here like a poor woman just from hand to mouth. I have existed merely to perform tricks for you, Torvald. But you wanted it like that. You and father have committed a great sin against me. It is your fault that I have made nothing of my life.” (ADH: 67)

In *A Doll's House*, the patriarchal system is also presented by other major character, Mrs. Linde. She also becomes a subordinate in her patriarchal society. She faces many problems in her life. In the drama she has become a victim of her society, and become the second sex also in get job in public sector. Her society does not give her a well position in public to earn money.

“Linde : I had to turn my hand to anything I could find, first a small shop, then a small school, and so on. The last three year have seemed like one long working day with no rest. Now it is ended Nora. My poor mother needs me no more, she is gone and the boys do not need me either, they have got jobs and can fend for themselves.

Nora : What a relief you must feel it

Linde : No indeed, I only feel my life unspeakably empty. No one to live for any more. That was why I could not stand the life in my little backwater any longer. I hope it may be easier here to find something which will busy me and occupy my thoughts. If only I could be lucky

enough to get some regular work, office work of some kind.” (ADH: 11)

In the end of the story, Nora leaves Torvald and her family. It is the symbol of Nora’s freedom and her effort to fight against the patriarchal system. She gives back her ring to Torvald and slams the door. It becomes the end of her marriage. Henrik Ibsen opens the way for women to fight the men’s domination, they must be brave to take and act a big decision to reach freedom against men’s domination.

Because of their condition, women struggle to grab their own right by rebelling against patriarchal society. In the drama Nora seems to be a symbol of feminist fighter who fights against the construct that woman is always weak, dependent on man and incapable to do something. Nora bravely breaks the type of women’s position, role, right and participation which are categorized by patriarchal society. Thus, Nora Helmer struggles of her patriarchal society for her right can be categorized as a feminist attitude. *A Doll’s House* awake the women’s spirit to go forward and do activities based on their abilities. It is also open the door for women to be aware toward condition which oppresses them and stimulates men to understand their necessities.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Abrams, H.M. 1971. *A Glossary of Literary Terms*. USA: Library of Congress catalog.
- Barnet, Sylvian, et al. 1961. *An Introduction to Literature*. Boston: Little Brown and Co.
- Beauvoir, Simone de (1949 (translated 2009)). *The Second Sex*. Trans. Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier. Random House: Alfred A. Knopf. [ISBN 978-0-307-26556-2](#).
- Bhasin, 1996. *Menggugat Patriarki*. Yogyakarta: Kalyanamitra and Bentang.
- Djajanegara, Soernarjati. 2000. *Kritik Sastra Feminis Sebuah Pengantar*. Jakarta: PT. Gramedia Pustaka Utama.
- Eisenstein, Helen. 1984. *Contemporary Feminist Thought*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Finney, Gail. 1994. *Ibsen and Feminism*. The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen. Ed. James Mc. Farlane. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Groulier International. 1983. *Groulier Academic Encyclopedia (Vol. II)*. Groulier: Groulier International.
- Hornby, As. 1995. *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of current English*. Oxford University Press.
- Humm, Maggie. 2002. *Ensiklopedia Feminism*. Yogyakarta: Fajar Pustaka Baru.
- Kennedy, j. 1983. *An Introduction to Fiction, Poetry and Drama*. London: Scott Foresman and Company.
- Kennedy, XL. 1983. *Literature and Introduction to Fiction*. New York: Simon & Schuster.
- Kenney, William. 1966. *How to Analyze Fiction*. New York: Monarch Press.
- Klarer, Mario. 1998. *Feminism Issues Race, Class and Sexuality*. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall.

- Kutha Ratna, Nyoman. 2004. *Teori, Metode, dan Teknik Penelitian Sastra*. Denpasar: Pustaka Pelajar.
- Mandell, Nancy. 1995. *Feminist Issues Race, Class, and Sexuality*. Scarborough, Ontario: Prentice Hall Canada Inc.
- Marshall, Rosalind K., 1983. *Virgins and Viragos. A History of Women in Scotland from 1080 to 1980*. London: William Collins Sons & Co. Ltd.
- Mc. Kay, John P et. Al. 1983. *History of Western Society*. Bostonn: Houghton Muffin Company.
- Meyer, M. 1931. *Ibsen: A Biography*.
- Mills, Sara, Lynne Pearce, Sue Spaul, Elaine Milliard. 1989. *Feminist Reading's on Feminist Reading*. Great Britain: Bidles Ltd, Gurldford and King's Lynn.
- Moleong, Lexy J. 2004. *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: PT Remaja Rosdakarya.
- Murphy, Coenelius F. 1995. *Beyond Feminism*. Washington, D. C: The Catholic University of America Press.
- Peterson, M.J. 1989. *Family, Love and Work in the Lives of Victorian Gentlewomen*. Bloomington and Indiana: Indiana Univesity Press.
- Rubenstein, David. 1987. *Before the Sulfregettes*. Great Britain: The Harvester Press.
- Shafer, Yvonne. 1985. *Henrik Ibsen: Life, Work and Criticism*.
- Sugihastuti. 2001. *Cerita Sebagai Wacana: Analisis Kritik Sastra Feminis*. Yogyakarta: Bigraf Publising.
- The Encyclopedia Americana* International Edition, vol. 29. 1990. Canada: Grolie Incorporated.
- Tong, Rosemarie Putman. 1998. *Feminist Thought's A More Comprehensive Introduction*. USA. West View Press.
- Umar, Nasaruddin, 2001. *Argumen Kesetaraan Jender Perspektif Al-Quran*. Jakarta: Paramadina.
- Wellek, Warren, trans. 1977. *Theory of Literature*. Jakarta: PT Gramedia.

- William, Raymond. 1980. *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence*.
London: Chatto & Windus.
- Wiyatmi: 2012. *Kritik Sastra Feminisme: Teori dan Aplikasinya dalam Sastra Indonesia*. Yogyakarta: Penerbit Ombak.