

PATRIARCHY IN IBSEN' S *A DOLL'S HOUSE*

A GRADUATING PAPER

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for Gaining the Bachelor
Degree in English Literature



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Nomor: UIN.02/DA/PP.009/ 1191 /2014

Skripsi / Tugas Akhir dengan judul:

PATRIARCHY IN IBSEN'S A DOLL'S HOUSE

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Atas perhatiannya, kami ucapkan terima kasih.

Wassalamualaikum Wr.Wb.

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PATRIARCHY IN IBSEN'S *A DOLL'S HOUSE*

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ABSTRACT

Literary works are the media to express and reflect the life. *A Doll's House* is a literary work written by Henrik Ibsen, a playwright who criticizes the social condition of Norwegian society during the nineteenth century. The problems which occur at the time is social status, where women's position is under men's position. The social status in society influences the relation between men and women in society or family life, such as in finance. Here, the men work outside the home and the women focus on a domestic work. This condition then creates inequality in family. They have an important role until they then dominate and hold the family decision. In this case, the writer analyzes man's domination through patriarchal system in *A Doll's House* drama by using Marxist feminism theory. Firstly, the writer analyzes the relation between man and woman in a family life including work divisions. Then, the writer explains the influences received by woman. Besides, the writer also explains the message that is conveyed by Ibsen through *A Doll's House* and the Islamic perspective through patriarchal system in *A Doll's House*. From the research, the writer gets the results that the patriarchal system in *A Doll's House* harms woman because the woman does not have an important role in family until she is marginalized and oppressed. Then, the message conveyed by Ibsen through *A Doll's House* is to open an insight especially for women about social status to do many activities in public in order to compete with men. Besides, Islam arranges the Muslim's life to live together in justice in order to create a prosperous life for Muslim.

Keywords: *Drama, patriarchal system, economy, man's domination.*

PATRIARCHY IN IBSEN'S *A DOLL'S HOUSE*

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ABSTRAK

Karya sastra adalah media untuk mengekspresikan dan merefleksikan hidup. *A Doll's House* adalah karya sastra yang ditulis oleh Henrik Ibsen, seorang dramawan yang mengkritik kondisi sosial Norwegia pada abad ke Sembilan belas. Masalah yang terjadi di Norwegia pada saat itu adalah tentang status sosial, dimana posisi perempuan dibawah posisi laki-laki. Status sosial dimasyarakat itu kemudian mempengaruhi hubungan keduanya didalam rumah tangga. Dalam hal pekerjaan, laki-laki bekerja diluar rumah sedangkan perempuan fokus pada urusan rumah tangga. Kondisi ini kemudian menciptakan ketidakseimbangan. Laki-laki memiliki peran lebih penting sehingga mendominasi dan memegang aturan keluarga. Dalam hal ini, Penulis meneliti kasus patriarki didalam drama *A Doll's House* dengan menggunakan teori Marxist feminisme. Pertama-tama penulis menganalisa hubungan antara laki-laki dan perempuan didalam keluarga, seperti konsep pembagian kerja yang dilakukan oleh laki-laki. Kemudian, penulis menjelaskan pengaruh yang diterima oleh perempuan atas sistem patriarki tersebut. Disamping itu, Penulis juga menjelaskan pesan-pesan yang disampaikan oleh Ibsen dan pandangan Islam terhadap sistem patriarki yang terjadi pada drama *A Doll's House*. Dari penelitian ini, penulis mendapatkan hasil bahwa sistem patriarki yang terjadi pada drama *A Doll's House* telah merugikan perempuan karena perempuan tidak memiliki peran sentral didalam masyarakat maupun keluarga, sehingga perempuan terpinggirkan dan tertekan. Kemudian, pesan yang disampaikan oleh Ibsen melalui drama ini adalah untuk membuka wawasan tentang status sosial dan agar perempuan banyak melakukan aktifitas di ruang publik sehingga bisa bersaing dengan laki-laki. Disamping itu, Islam mengatur kehidupan umatnya dengan hidup saling berdampingan dan seadil-adilnya untuk menciptakan kesejahteraan hidup bagi umatnya.

Kata-kata kunci: *Drama, sistem patriarki, ekonomi, dominasi laki-laki.*

MOTTO

FIND ALLAH EVERYWHERE



DEDICATION

This final project I dedicated to:

1

**The honorable my parents (Utsman Ilyas and Amanah Hanafiah
Maksum)**

&

**My beloved brothers (Muhammad Aminullah Utsman) and (Muhammad
Al Muqtafi Utsman)**

2

My big family

3

All of my friends

4

My beloved person

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Assalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

I Thank Allah the Almighty who has given me his blessing, mercy and the good opportunity to finish my graduating paper entitled *Patriarchy in Ibsen's A Doll's House*.

This graduating paper is submitted to fulfill one of the requirements to gain the bachelor degree in English Literature of State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta.

In finishing this graduating paper, I really appreciate the people who have helped me. They are:

1. My parents, my brothers, and all of my big family. I thank for the support, love, praying, and everything you have given to me.
2. Witriani, M. Hum, my supervisor, who has given me her best guidance and teaching to finish this graduating paper.
3. Margo Yuwono, M. Hum., my lecturer, who has given me much motivation to study harder.
4. Danial Hidayatullah, M. Hum., Ulyati Retnosari, S.S, M. Hum., Fuad Arif Furdiyanto, Febriyanti Dwiratna, Ubaidillah, M. Hum., Jiah Fauziah, M. Hum., M. Hum. Ahmad Wahid, Bambang Harianto, M. Hum., Arif Budiman,

Sri Isnani Setianingsih, M. Hum., and all of the other lecturers of English Department of State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga Yogyakarta. I thank for their support and guidance.

5. My beloved friends: Ima Rif'atun Nafiah, Musthofa Kamal, Rahmad Dio Pratama, Irwan Zeini, Arif Faozi, M. Nurul Huda, Jeni Diana Wati, Kamal Abdul Aziz, Kukuh Subagio, and Ana Puspita Sari who have encouraged and motivated me. I could not get it all without your support.
6. All of my friends in English Literature of State Islamic University of Sunan Kalijaga, Yogyakarta.

I consider that this research is not perfect, so I hope many criticisms and advice from all the readers in order to make this paper better.

Finally, I hope this graduating paper can be useful for education and can inspire everyone.

Wassalamu'alaikum Wr. Wb.

Yogyakarta, 26 June 2014

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background of Study

Literature reflects and expresses the life. The authors express the social condition in a society to represent the community and the era (Wellek and Warren, 1977: 110). Literary sources are the phenomena that occur in a community such as in a family life. Literary sources have a function as the tool of human inspiration to make people aware of the meaning of life and to improve the quality of life (Wiyatmi, 2012: 42). In short, literary sources describe the elements of the society that occur toward men and women and it is quite interesting because it presents at the order of life both men and women socially and culturally. Literary works become the media that are used by the authors in conveying the ideas.

Drama is one of the literary works which is presented on stages. It means the literary forms are designed for the theater where the actors take the roles as the characters. They perform the indicated action and utter the written dialogue (Abrams, 1971: 43). Drama shows a great history of humans' life and social condition in the society and is presented on stages. One of the famous playwrights is Henrik Ibsen. He is a Norwegian playwright who creates many works such as *The League of Youth* (1869), *A Doll's House* (1879), and *The Lady from the Sea* (1888) (Watts, 1965: 18).

A Doll's House is a drama which tells about the woman who lives under man's domination in the household. The central character of this play is Nora. Nora is a housewife who is married to a businessman named Torvald. During eight years of their marriage, they have three small children named Emy, Ivar, and Bomby. Nora's daily life is spoiled and locked in the house by her husband. Materially, her life is very sufficiency, but it does not make Nora happy because her life depends on her husband especially in economic needs. Torvald, who is the only one financial source, controls his family whose all family decisions are held by him. Hence, Nora's existence does not influence her family. It causes her to leave her husband and her children. The character of Nora is a symbol of a woman who lives in a patriarchal system, where women are imprisoned by the system made by men in the household.

A Doll's House drama raises the problem which often occurs in the household and family life in Norwegian society during the nineteenth century. The central role of Norwegian culture during at the time is women's position, the household, and the family. Men and women are different species who live in separate spheres. Women do not have equal rights to participate in society as equally as men. Men live in the public sphere where they work and fulfill the family necessity while the women stay at home. As a result, men control the life of women in many areas of life (Norwegian National Commission, 2006: 6).

This analysis talks about patriarchal system occurring in Nora's household. Actually, the oppression felt by Nora about patriarchal system even occurs when she

lives with her parent. Her mother dies, when she is child. She lives with her father. A Small Nora just stays at home and plays with a doll while her father works outside. Her father never permits her to play outside of the home with her friends. When Nora is adult, she meets Torvald, and they got married. With her husband, however, she feels the same condition as she lived with her father; she is trapped and never given an opportunity to work outside home by her husband.

Women live in oppression and they do not have the same right in social status. It is caused by patriarchal system in the society. Patriarchy literally means the power of father which is originally only used to refer to a type of family that is dominated by men, in which all members of the family and household services are under the authority of men's rules (Bhasin, 1996: 1). Patriarchal system controls women in many area of life. It is divided into five concepts. They are productive effort, reproductive effort, women's sexual control, women's movement control, and economic control (As cited in Sugihastuti, 2007: 93).

In an economic scope, men control the family finance in the household. Husband divides the works for both man and woman in different areas. Woman focuses on domestic works and man focuses on public works (Tong, 2009: 102). Hence, husband has full power to his wife so that he can do whatever he wants to his wife. The wife economically is dependent on her husband because she cannot earn money by her own efforts.

Actually, women are human beings who should have the same rights as men. For example, in a marriage and household, it is women who most experience. Women rights such as the selection of work, sexual control, and reproduction are seldom to be got or have not been able to fully enjoy because of the hegemony of patriarchal ideology in all areas of life (Bhasin, 1996: 6). However, in *A Doll's house*, Nora is a weak creature who is always marginalized when dealing with her husband. In economy, Nora always obeys her husband in using the money because Nora who not works in public cannot earn money.

From the explanation above, the writer finds the practice of patriarchy to be a serious problem in the society where women cannot free in doing any activities in public area. Hence, the writer chooses *A Doll's house* to be the subject of the analysis and the practice of patriarchy in economic scope as the object of this research. The writer chooses *A Doll's House* to be the subject of this research because this drama is one of the famous literary works in the world and many practices of patriarchy are inside. Besides, this drama reflects Norwegian culture during the nineteenth century. The writer chooses patriarchy in an economic scope as the object of this research because the domination of men harms women's position as the wife in the household especially in economy, so this research is important to do.

In this case, the writer uses Marxist feminist theory to analyze the data. Marxist feminism is the theory which explores human relation in the society such as sexuality, the domestic production, and the household (Bertens, 1995: 102). The

oppression of women is not the result of deliberate action by one of individual, but the product of political structures, society, and economic life where the people live. Therefore, the purpose of Marxist feminism is to describe women's basic material weakness, the relations between model of production and women's status as well as implementing feminine theory and class on the role of the family (Tong, 2006:139).

The issue of man's domination in economics is one of the important issues to be addressed. It is because the man in *A Doll's House* is still a bias gender in the field of domestic work and the involvement of woman in the public sphere. Hence, the attention to the problems of gender equality is a very important thing to do. Then, through this research, the writer hopes that this research can be revealed to various things that cause the gender inequality in the household especially in economic terms that are represented in *A Doll's House*, and give the ways to overcome these problems.

1.2. Problem Statements

Based on the problem above, the writer formulates two research questions below:

1. How is the practice of patriarchy illustrated by Torvald Helmer as seen in *A Doll's House*?
2. How are the significances of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* against patriarchy?

1.3. Objectives of Study

The purpose of this research will be reached as follows:

1. To explain the practice of patriarchy as seen in *A Doll's House*.
2. To elaborate the significances of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* against patriarchy.

1.4. Significances of Study

This research has two significances, theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research can add the readers' knowledge about patriarchal system in Europe in the nineteenth century.

Practically, this research can be used as the reference and the discussion material for the students and the lectures. Besides, this research can add an insight about the practice of the patriarchy especially in economic scope in Ibsen's *A Doll's House*.

1.5. Literature Review

Ibsen's *A Doll's House* is analyzed by many researchers. This play is already used as a material for the researches in the literature field. The followings are some previous relevant studies of *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen.

The first prior research is a graduating paper entitled *An Analysis of Absurd Elements in Henrik Ibsen's Play A Doll's House* written by Putri H (2010). This research describes the absurd elements in *A Doll's House* and the writer focuses on the plot and the dialogue of the characters. Then, she uses the descriptive method to analyze the data of research.

The second prior research is a graduating paper entitled *A Deconstruction Analysis in Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House* written by Dwi Sulistyowati (2008). It tells about the characterization of Nora, the trace, and the binary opposition in *A Doll's House*. The writer of this research uses deconstruction theory to analyze the data.

The third prior research is a graduating paper entitled *An Analysis on Feminism in Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House* written by Wilujeng Asih Purwani (2009) University of Muhammadiyah Surabaya. This research describes how Nora and Mrs. Linde fight against the men's domination especially in the public scope. The writer uses feminism approach as an analysis method.

The difference between this research and those three prior researches is that, in this research, the writer analyzes the practice of patriarchy especially in the economic scope by using Marxist feminism theory. This research becomes the first research that analyzes the economic problem in Nora's family. So, the writer focuses on the sources of men's domination and the influences obtained from these cases.

1.6. Theoretical Approach

This research analyzes the patriarchal system in the household of the female character in *A doll's House* named Nora Helmer, so the proper theory used to analyze is feminist theory. Feminist literary criticism looks literature in awareness toward existence of sex which is associated with the culture, literature, and human life. Feminism emerges from dissatisfaction of the patriarchal system in society as the cause of women oppression. It refers to the conditions of social reality that put father

(man) as the holder of all family members, the ownership of goods, and the holder of the decision (Sugihastuti, 2003: 23).

Feminist theory is divided into two waves. The first began in the eighteenth century. It was very much influenced by the social and economic reforms bringing about the women's right and suffrage movements. The second wave of feminist theory was very much influenced by the various liberationist movements, especially in America, in the nineteenth century. Its central concern was sexual difference. The theorists of this wave criticized especially the argument that women are made "inferior" by virtues of their biological difference to men (Carter, 2006: 91-98).

Tong in *Feminist Thought* says that feminism is not a single thought, but it has a wide variety of the emergence and development which mutually supports, corrects, and denies earlier feminism thought. She also describes the diversities of feminism ideas, namely liberal feminism, radical feminism, Marxist feminism, socialist feminism, gender and psychoanalysis feminism, existentialist feminism, postmodern feminism, global and cultural feminist, and eco feminism (as cited in Wiyatmi, 2012: 19).

In the household, husbands have full power to their wives so that they can do whatever they want to their wives. The wives economically are dependent on their husbands because they do not earn money from their efforts. Engels argues that the source of the women oppression come from the exclusion of women from social production and the conversation of household tasks into private service (as cited in Brewer, 2004: 20).

Engels, in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884) says that men and women are differentiated by their relationship to the means of production historically. This condition makes a sexual division of labor in which women either are not allowed to work at all (outside the home). He also explains that the husband is a portrait of bourgeoisie and the wife is a portrait of proletarian. It occurs because the husband controls the bigger basic material where he obligates to look for the family's necessity. So, the husband has more power than his wife. Moreover, wife's position is weak because her life depends on her husband and even the wife is considered as a slave. It can be concluded that material possession can give power (As cited in Brewer, 2004: 7).

The gender work divisions that put women in the domestic sphere and men in the public raises an inequality because men as the workers in the public sphere will dominate the production area. Economically, the men produce the material while the women, although expend the power and use almost all of their time to work at home, do not earn an income. In fact, women as housewives depend on men economically. Women are not mastering the material (object ownership and money). Therefore, they must be submissive and obedient to their husbands. It is what leads women to be oppressed (Wiyatmi, 2012: 34).

1.7. Method of Research

1.7.1. Type of Research

The method that is used in this research is a qualitative research. Miller and Kirk (1986: 9) say that qualitative research relies on human observation in its own region and relates to these people in their language and in their terminologies. More specifically, qualitative research is the research that produces descriptive data in the form of words written or spoken by the people and behaviors that can be observed.

In this research, qualitative research is used to describe and understand the description of symbolic resistance through an ideology raised in *A Doll's House* toward the patriarchal system in the economic scope of the household as well as how the drama carries the ideology of feminism to fight the discrimination.

1.7.2. Data Sources

The researcher takes the data from *A Doll's House* by Henrik Ibsen. In addition, the researcher also uses some books, journals, and articles to complete the data to be analyzed. The data are taken in the form of conversations or scripts of the characters in the play which are related to the patriarchal system.

1.7.3. Data Collection Technique

The writer uses a library research to collect the data. The writer reads the drama written by Henrik Ibsen carefully and critically. The contents of the play are treated as the primary data especially about the patriarchal system in economic scope.

The results of collecting the data are written down into pieces of papers to be classified and verified, and then they are ready to be analyzed.

1.7.4. Data Analysis Technique

The writer uses mimetic approach to analyze the data. It is based on the background of *A Doll's House*. The writer firstly identifies the practice of patriarchy in Nora's Household. The second, the writer analyzes the data which is related to the patriarchy in economic scope and the influences of man's domination toward Nora. Then, the writer describes the significances of *A Doll's House* and patriarchal system based on Islamic perspective. The last, the writer concludes the analysis to answer the problem statements.

1.8. Paper Organization

The presentation systematic of this research is divided into four chapters. The first chapter describes the general information of the research including the background of study, problem statements, objective of study, significances of study, literature review, theoretical approach, method of research, and paper organization. This chapter describes the background of the writer in selecting issues and theories that are used to uncover the forms of men's domination received by Nora in *A Doll's House*. The second chapter describes the intrinsic and extrinsic elements of *A Doll's house* such as defining the play, dramatic structure, characters and characterizations, bibliography of the author, and the background of Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. This section describes some information about *A Doll's House* including the story and the

background of the play. The third chapter is the analysis of *A Doll's House* which is based on the patriarchal system in economic scope. This section talks about an inequality in Nora's household, the influences of the patriarchal system, Nora's attitude to fight against patriarchy, significances of *A doll's House* and the patriarchal system in Islamic perspective. The last chapter is the conclusion of the research.



CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the patriarchal system in Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* shows the domination of Torvald toward his family in economic scope. *A Doll's House* is attributed to Nora's character who is trapped in her house. As a result, Nora cannot do activity freely and lives under pressure.

Patriarchal system based on Marxist feminist is a system of relation between men and women in family where men dominate women and women live under pressure. Marxist feminism also says that work divisions and class gender create inequality between men and women in society and household. In *A Doll's House*, it occurs in Nora's family where Nora who works in a domestic area is put in a subordinate position and Torvald who works outside the home holds family rules in all aspect.

Torvald's attitude which asks Nora to work just in a domestic area and makes inequality in their household because Torvald can earn money and Nora cannot. Finally, Torvald is the only financial source for their family. Hence, he has full power to hold and manage his family in all aspects. Nora cannot use family finance without Torvald's permission. Instead, she must wait Torvald to give her money when she needs to buy something. Meanwhile, Nora must live under pressure in her family.

Torvald never gives her the time to solve the family problem. Finally, when Nora has a serious problem, she just keeps silence and never talks to Torvald.

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

Afterwards, the things that relate to human's problem in society are arranged in religion, especially Islam. Islam admires men and women. There are no rules which emphasize one gender, but both men and women are similar in front of the God. Patriarchal system which occurs in Nora's family contravenes the human rights in Islamic perspective because a family life is a life in togetherness. It is not only men or women. So, there is no reason to dominate others. There is no class system whether it is upper class or middle class.

In addition, social criticism toward Norwegian culture during the nineteenth century through *A Doll's House* awakes the women's spirit to go forward and do activity based on their abilities and their wishes. Ibsen opens the door for women to be aware toward condition which oppresses them and stimulates men to understand women's necessities.

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