

**WOMEN'S INDEPENDENCE IN HENRIK IBSEN'S *THE LADY FROM
THE SEA PLAY* (1888): A FEMINIST APPROACH**



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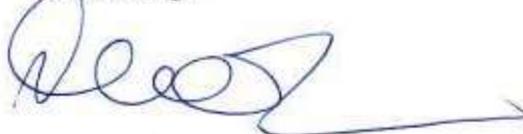
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SEA PLAY* (1888): A FEMINIST APPROACH

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SUMMARY

The research is proposed to analyze the women's independence which is represented by the character in Henrik Ibsen's The Lady From The Sea play by Feminist Approach. The research sets two objectives: first is to analyze the play based on the Feminist Approach. This study is qualitative using the play of Henrik Ibsen's The Lady From The Sea play (1888) as the object. There are two kinds of data source: primary and secondary. The primary data source is the play of Henrik Ibsen's The Lady From The Sea 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 follow: based on feminist approach, women's independence system The Lady From The Sea harm's women's because marginalized and oppresed.

Keywords: women's independence. The lady from the sea. Feminist Approach.

Introduction

1. Background of the study

Every person needs independence. There are four essential human independences such as: the first is independence of speech and expression, the second is independence of every person to worship God in his own way, the third is independence from want, the fourth is independence from fear, (Franklin Delano Roosevelt in his State of the Union Address delivered on January 6, 1941). Besides that, Human right consists of some independences, such as independence of speech, independence of religion, independence of thought, and independence of expression. Human rights are not of a legal nature, but a moral nature: the enforcement of human rights is needed and should be universal so that the human race can continue to advance and flourish. (Darraj 2010:24).

Literary work has a close relationship with human life. One of literary works is play. In reading a play, the obvious features can be easily spotted by the theme, characters, plot, and any others of structural elements that greatly influence how the play is perceived by the reader. Literature shows the feelings and opinion to the public. Literature is also one of main avenue and quantity of material that gives information about human life in all time period, region, classes and races. One of the most well known humanistic psychologists is Abraham Maslow. His theory is called Hierarchy of Needs. Maslow formulated a theory of human motivation in which the human's being many varying needs are seen as arising in a hierarchical fashion. That is, certain basic needs, such as hunger and thirst, must be satisfied before other needs. Maslow (in Hjelle, 1992:448).

The Lady from the Sea have eight character, they are Ellida Wangel, Dr. Wangel, Boletta, Hilde, Arnholm, Lyngstrand, Ballested, and a Stranger (*The Oxford Ibsen*, Volume VII, Oxford University Press 1966). Doctor Wangel is a doctor in a small town on the west coast of Norway. He has two

daughters by his first marriage, Bolette and Hilde. After the death of his first wife, he married Ellida, who is much younger than he is. She is the daughter of a lighthouse-keeper, and has grown up where the fjord meets the open sea. Ellida and Wangel had a son who died as a baby. This put an end to their marital relations, and Doctor Wangel fears for his wife's mental health. He has written to Bolette's former tutor, Arnholm, and invited him to come and visit them, in the hope that this will be beneficial to Ellida. But Arnholm misunderstands, thinking Bolette is waiting for him, and proposes to her. Reluctantly, Bolette agrees to marry her former teacher, seeing it as her only possibility of getting out into the world. Some years earlier Ellida was deeply in love and engaged to a sailor, but because he murdered his captain he had to escape. Nevertheless, he asked her to wait for him to come and fetch her. She tried to break the engagement but he had too great a hold over her. The sailor then returns all these years later to claim her. However she then has to choose between her love or her husband. Dr Wangel finally recognizes her independence to choose since he understands that he has no other options. This goes in his favour as she then chooses him. The play ends with the sailor leaving and Ellida and Wangel taking up their lives together again (Fanshawe, 2008:6)

2. Literature Review

This study which has relevance with the research that was conducted by many researchers. Some of the researchers focused on female sexuality, feminist point of view, and about feminism. They are as follows:

- a. Researcher by Christina Kelley Forshey (Liberty University:2008) entitled "Ibsen's Female Characters in Captivity: An Exploration of Literature and Performance".
- b. Researcher by Bernard M. Paderes Litt 506 (Literature and Psychology) in his research entitled “ *The Lady from the sea: A Dilemma on Freedom Vs. Security*”.

- c. Researcher Researcher by Cynthia Paula Dan (University of Oslo:Spring 2007) in her thesis entitled "The Faces of Feminine Devotion in Ibsen's Theatre".
- d. Researcher by Yaw Lee (2012) in her essay entitled "Ibsen's *The Lady From The Sea*": A Symbolic Discourse"
- e. Researcher by Christophe Den Tand (Universe Libre de Bruxelles 1997) in his essay entitled "Oceanic Discourse, Empowerment and Social Accommodation in Kate Chopin's *The Awakening* and Henrik Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea*".
- f. Researcher by Jennette Lee (1910) in her article entitled "The Ibsen Secret: A Key to the Prose Drama of Henrik Ibsen".
- g. Researcher by Otto Heller (1912) in his article entitled "*The lady from the sea*: An analysis of the play by Henrik Ibsen".
- h. Researcher by Quentin Letts for MailOnline (Rose Theatre, Kingston) in his article entitled "*The lady from the sea*: Claustrophobic tale of a woman denied her freedom".
- i. Researcher by Olivia Noble Gunn (Spring 2015) in her article entitled "Adaptation, Fidelity, and the 'Reek' of Aesthetic Ideology: Susan Sontag's *lady from the sea*".
- j. Researcher by Lyn Gardner (3 June 2014) in her article entitled "Sexual and emotional madness...Neve McIntosh as Ellida in *the lady from the sea*".

From the literature review above, the writer assumes that there is independence in Henrik Ibsen's *The lady from the sea play* (1888); Feminist Approach.

3. Problem Statement

The problem statement of this research is "how is Women's Independence in Henrik Ibsen's *The Lady from the sea play* (1888)?"

4. Objectives of the Study

1. To analyze the Women's Independence in Henrik Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea play* (1888) based on the Feminist Approach.

Independence is freedom from outside control or support : the state of being independent (Merriam-Webster:2014). Independence is a condition of a nation, country, or state in which its residents and population, or some portion thereof, exercise self-government, and usually sovereignty, over the territory. Independence does not necessarily mean freedom. Whether the attainment of independence is different from revolution has long been contested, and has often been debated over the question of violence as a legitimate means to achieving sovereignty. While some revolutions seek and achieve national independence, others aim only to redistribute power — with or without an element of emancipation, such as in democratization — *within* a state, which as such may remain unaltered. Nation-states have been granted independence without any revolutionary acts (Wikipedia:2014).

2. To reveal Women's Independence of the major character in Henrik Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea* play (1888). A Feminist Approach.

There are many characters presented in Henrik Ibsen's *The Lady From The Sea* play that can be divided into Women's Independence of the major characters.

- a. Major Characters

- 1) Ellida

Ellida grew up on the island of Skjoldvik and is drawn inexplicably to the sea. She swims each day and constantly desires to return to the water, feeling trapped by the land and the mountains. She knows Arnholm from the island, and rejected his marriage proposal because of her love for the Stranger. She is very much torn between the sense of belonging to a husband and the notion of free will which the Stranger and the Sea offer her.

2) Boletta

is the older sister of Hilde and has resentfully adopted the role of mother where Ellida has failed. She has felt love for Arnholm since she was young but refuses his proposal at first as she feels he is buying her with promises of travel. She finally agrees to marry him, as he is her ticket away from the town by which she feels so very trapped. Boletta fails to grasp her own destiny and believes she can't do anything to help herself, resigning herself to a life of stagnant misery at the family home until Arnholm offers her a different way out.

3) Hilde

is Wangel's younger daughter. She is a clever and cruel young lady, with a sarcastic humour and fascination with all things dark and morbid. Lyngstrand suffers at her hands in particular as she covertly taunts him about his sickness. She has felt the death of her mother keenly and in defense of her feelings turns against Ellida, only acknowledging at the end of the play that she craves the love of a mother figure.

5. Limitation of the Study

The writer focuses this independence of the major character Independence in Henrik Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea* play (1888) based on the Feminist Approach.

Research Method

Type of the study used by the writer to make this research is descriptive qualitative research. The purpose of descriptive qualitative research is to analyze Henrik Ibsen's *The lady from the sea play* (1888). Feminist approach. The first step of conducting the research is determining the type of the study. The second is determining the object of the study. Then the third is determining the data sources. The fourth is determining

the technique of data collection, and the fifth is determining the technique for data analysis.

Research finding and Discussion

The Lady from the Sea has eight characters, they are Ellida Wangel, Dr. Wangel, Boletta, Hilde, Arnholm, Lyngstrand, Ballested, and a Stranger. Ellida Wangel, a woman dominated by the sea. She feels stifled in her new home after she marries and goes away from the sea to live in the mountains. She feels strangely drawn to a sailor who had known and loved her years earlier. When he appears again, she feels his hold over her, as well as feeling the conflicting hold of her husband. Left to her own choice, she stays with her husband. She feels that she has retained her sanity by being able to make a choice for herself. Dr. Wangel, Ellida's husband, a physician. He tries to understand the strains on his wife's mind and gives her a verbal release from her vows so that she can decide for herself weather.

Boletta and Hilda Wangel, Dr. Wangel's daughters by his first wife. They find their stepmother a difficult person with whom to make friends. Arnholm, Boletta's former tutor and another early sweetheart of Ellida. She refused in the past to marry Arnholm because, she said, she already was betrothed. The stranger, a sailor who has a powerful psychological hold over Ellida because he makes her think she has been betrothed to him in a strange ceremony by the sea. He has murdered a man and is a fugitive from justice. Ellida finally decides to stay with her husband and breaks Lyngstrand, a traveling sculptor who stops at the Wangels' house. His story of a sailor and his wife reawakens in Ellida's mind memory of the sailor who had betrothed himself to her years earlier.

Henrik Ibsen creates the setting of place, setting of time, and the social setting to make obvious the story and theme support. He does not mention the year directly, but he describes the timing in his play. The act 1

begins in the summer morning in the Wangel's house. The act 2 begins in the summer evening when Lyngstrand went to consult with Wangel. It supports with the explanation in the beginning of the act that has written directly. Next, the act 3 begins in the afternoon when Arnholm has conversation with Bollete at part of Wangel's garden. Next, the act begins in the morning when Bollete is sitting on sofa at Wangel's garden room. And the last in the act 5, Ibsen describes the timing directly in the summer night.

The setting of place in the play only in the Wangel's house. But it is divided into some parts, there are in the veranda, inner room, prospect, and garden. It is mention a directly in the description in the beginning of each act. And then the social setting the life style, that is described in this play is high life style, it shows from the character of each person.

The plot of Henrik Ibsen's *the Lady from the Sea* is dramatic or progressive plot. There are exposition, complication, climax, and resolution. It starts when Ballested is painting the fjord and Lyngstrand explains his desires to become a sculptor as the pair meet for the first time. Lyngstrand is staying in the area for the summer to improve his health as he is treated by Dr Wangel and suffers with his lungs after a sailing accident. Lyngstrand assumes Ellida is Boletta and Hilde's birth mother and that the flowers are for her birthday.

The story has climax when a stranger arrives to see Ellida, it is her lost, drowned love and he has come to claim her for his own, after the binding of rings ceremony they performed when they last saw each other. Once Wangel confronts the stranger, the stranger offers Ellida her own free will to choose whether to go with him. She is left with a devastating choice.

The author wants to convey the idea of conflict between society and individual. Anyone that lives in this world absolutely has conflict or problem of life. To solve the problem, one person to another has different way to do that. They can do anything that they want to solve it and to get

rightness. In this play, the author wants to show how the character solves the problem with something different from any person's think.

As the theme of this play, Ellida Wangel as the main character has many conflicts between herself. She feels stifled in her new home after she marries and goes away from the sea to live in the mountains. She feels strangely drawn to a sailor who had known and loved her years earlier. When he appears again, she feels his hold over her, as well as feeling the conflicting hold of her husband. Left to her own choice, she stays with her husband. She feels that she has retained her sanity by being able to make a choice for herself. She chooses to stay with her husband, and the play ends with the stranger leaving, while Ellida and Wangel take up their life together again.

The lady from the Sea's play uses such as standard and non standard grammatical structure because some character uses them to adjust the situation that supports formal conversation. Ibsen uses standard English and French dialect to build a whole story it. The grammatical structure is used by Ibsen in the dialog to make the reader easier to understand it. Ibsen also uses the rhetorical, such as personification, hyperbole and repetition. And the last Ibsen uses symbol to make it more interesting.

Women's Independence the analysis of feminist approach in *Henrik Ibsen's The Lady From The Sea play* (1888) includes five major principles feminist they are woman's position, woman's role, woman's right, woman's participation.

1. Women's position

It can be long story that women are always under men. Since many years ago, women have hard position to position them selves in society. Due to their subordination, they are placed in second place. In society, women are viewed in second class societies. This position makes difficult for women to enhance their level to the higher level. Many important positions are occupied by men and women are assigned to the low-level

job. According to Mandel (1995: 14) in *Feminist Issues*, women were subordinated by a special form of life called patriarchy through which man has all superior social roles and maintains women subordinated and exploited position.

ELLIDA.

Dear, you understand me so little! I care nothing for such formalities. Such outer things matter nothing, I think. What I want is that we should, of our own free will, release each other.

WANGEL.[bitterly, nods slowly]. To cry off the bargain again--yes.

ELLIDA[quickly].

Exactly. To cry off the bargain.

WANGEL.

And then, Ellida? Afterwards? Have you reflected what life would be to both of us? What life would be to both you and me?

ELLIDA.

No matter. Things must turn out afterwards as they may. What I beg and implore of you, Wangel, is the most important. Only set me free! Give me back my complete freedom!

WANGEL.

Ellida, it is a fearful thing you ask of me. At least give me time to collect myself before I come to a decision. Let us talk it over more carefully. And you yourself--take time to consider what you are doing.

ELLIDA.

But we have no time to lose with such matters. I must have my freedom again today.

WANGEL.

Why today?

ELLIDA.

Because he is coming tonight.(Act 4)

2. Women's Role

Because women are trapped in domination of men, women's role becomes limited. It makes them difficult to take higher role in society. According to Mandell (1995: 54), women are normally defined by their roles as daughter, wives, and mother. They are fully given charge to look after their children, handle household matters, or to be seasoning for men's life. Women are habitually related to domestic roles.

WANGEL

You are not suited to be a man's second wife.

ELLIDA

What makes you think that?

WANGEL

It has often flashed across me like a foreboding. Today it was clear to me. The children's memorial feast—you saw in me a kind of accomplice. Well, yes; a man's memories, after all, cannot be wiped out—not so mine, anyhow. It isn't in me.

ELLIDA

I know that. Oh! I know that so well.

WANGEL

But you are mistaken all the same. To you it is almost as if the children's mother were still living—as if she were still here invisible amongst us. You think my heart is equally divided between you and her. It is this thought that shocks you. You see something immoral in our relation, and that is why you no longer can or will live with me as my wife. (Act 2)

3. Women's Rights

Basically, feminism action arose, because there is an encouragement to equalize the rights between men and women which is as if women were not respected in taking chance and decision in life (Mandell, 1995: 5). Women are restrained by the superior of men. It makes women trapped in their life. Actually, human beings are born by God in the same way and have the equality of rights between men and women. However, there is a gap which makes them different. That is why feminism comes up. It is a way to demand the rights equality between men and women and eradicate subordination and women exploitation.

ELLIDA

You can never prevent the choice, neither you nor anyone. You can forbid me to go away with him—to follow him—in case I should choose to do that. You can keep me here by force—against my will. That you can do. But that I should choose, choose from my very soul—choose him, and not you—in case I would and did choose thus—this you cannot prevent.

WANGEL

No; you are right. I cannot prevent that.

ELLIDA

And so I have nothing to help me to resist. Here, at home, there is no single thing that attracts me and binds me. I am so absolutely rootless in your house. (Act 5)

4. Women's Participation

In society, it can be clearly seen that the participation of women is lesser than men's. Women are less participated in society because they are assumed that they are not capable in managing and in being a leader in a company. In running company, women are supposed to be more emotional than rational (Mandell, 1995: 5). It makes all decision, thought, and critique of women disregarded in society by men. They thought that men are more appropriate in occupying society institutions. Notion of Independence.

WANGEL

Why, then, it is in our power to make him harmless.

ELLIDA

Oh! do not think that!

WANGEL

It is in our power, I tell you. If you can get rid of him in no other way, he must expiate the murder of the captain.

ELLIDA

[passionately]. No, no, no! Never that! We know nothing about the murder of the captain! Nothing whatever!

WANGEL

Know nothing? Why, he himself confessed it to you!

ELLIDA

No, nothing of that. If you say anything of it I shall deny it. He shall not be imprisoned. He belongs out there—to the open sea. He belongs out there!

WANGEL

[looks at her and says slowly]. Ah! Ellida—Ellida!

ELLIDA

[clinging passionately to him]. Oh! dear, faithful one—save me from this man!
(Act 4)

5. Notion of Independence

Independence is freedom from outside control or support : the state of being independent (Merriam-Webster:2014). Independence is a condition of a nation, country, or state in which its residents and population, or some portion thereof, exercise self-government, and usually sovereignty, over the territory. Independence does not necessarily mean freedom.

In this play “Ellida seems even to frighten her. She is moody after hearing it, which makes her husband think she is unhappy because she is away from the sea. He offers to move his family to the seashore so that Ellida can regain her peace of mind, but Ellida knows that a move will not bring her happiness, whereas it certainly would make him and the girls unhappy to leave their home. She tells him the real cause of her misery. Some years before, she had come under the spell of a sailor whose ship was in port for only a few days. He, too, loved the sea and seemed to be part of it. Indeed, he and Ellida seemed to be animals or birds of the sea, so closely did they identify themselves with the vast waters. When the sailor murdered his captain, he was forced to flee. Before he left, he took a ring from his hand and one from hers, joined them together, and threw them into the sea. He told her that this act joined them in marriage and that she was to wait for him. At the time, she seemed to have no will of her own and to be completely under his spell. Later, she regained her senses and wrote to tell him that she did not consider the joining of the rings a lasting bond. He ignored her letters, however, and continued to tell her that he would come back to her”.

6. Notion of women’s Independence

Every person needs independence. There are four essential human independences such as: the first is independence of speech and expression,

the second is independence of every person to worship God in his own way, the third is independence from want, the fourth is independence from fear.

In this play, "When this seaman suddenly appears from a ship that arrives in their town and comes to claim her according to their promise to each other, Ellida is alarmed and Wangel wants to protect her. But Ellida feels she must face the seaman and make a free decision about marriage. She seems to be full of contradictory feelings, telling Wangel, "I love no one but you," yet also saying to him, "You came out there [to her village] and bought me. I accepted the bargain and sold myself to you.... It was not of my own free will that I went with you... the secret lies in those words...I see that the life we two live together is really no marriage.... We should release each other of our own free will-to cry off the bargain." Wangel protests, "I have no right to set you free. I exercise my right to and my duty to protect you... You have no right to choose, no right without my permission." But Ellida, says, "you can never prevent the choice... The longings and desires of my soul-you cannot bind these...." Wangel asks her if she wants a divorce, but Ellida responds that "It is not formalities like these I care about. Such outward things don't really matter, I think. What I want is that we should release each other, of our own free will."

Conclusion

The story of drama covered some aspects of life. They are moral values, struggles, the character's self's personalities, principles, believes, religion, politics, and economic. But, the strong case that the writer wanted to reveal was Women's Independence. By using feminist approach to analysis *Henrik Ibsen's The Lady From The Sea play (1888)*, the writer knows about women's position, women's role, women's right, women's participation and women's independence which are reflected on the drama.

The Lady From The Sea in Henrik Ibsen's play (1888) depicted inequality of women's position over men. Women were described in the second position over men. The writer described the women were male from men's rib; it indicated that women tended to be weak. It also indicated the women's position was being a part men's. The description of men an ogre indicated men's power and authority. Implicitly, it means that women was inferior that men, because there was no description of women's power in the story. The story of drama also told that there were some limitations for women.

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