



An Extensive Observation Of Ibsen's The Pillars Of Society: Women's Strife Against Patriarchy

Ms. Sulekha Varma¹, Anuj Singh²

¹Assistant Professor, Humanities and Social Sciences, Graphic Era Hill University, Dehradun.

²Department of Computer science and Engineering, Graphic Era Deemed to be University, Dehradun, India, Anujsinghrawat72@gmail.com

Abstract:

In the play "The Pillars of Society," written by Henrik Ibsen, the social interactions that exist between men and women are analyzed in this inquiry. The first part of the investigation focuses on male characters who, within a patriarchal society, exercise hegemonic dominance and oppress female characters. The female characters come off as being reticent, quiet, and submissive. The second part of this investigation delves into the question of whether female characters who defy prevalent patriarchal authority have a revolutionary role in the narratives they inhabit. They are opposed to institutions that were developed by men and have resulted in women being silenced and marginalized in society.

Ibsen's female characters emerge to challenge accepted cultural notions about femininity and domesticity because of their dissatisfaction with those who maintain the patriarchal status quo. They engage in a struggle to validate their place and identity in the society as men's equals. In this action-packed drama, the three main female characters, Lona, Martha, and Dina, raise a revolutionary banner in open defiance of male superiority over women. They come out on top, whereas the male characters in the story come out on the losing end of the fight. This study analyses the voices of these major female characters within the perspective of feminist theory advanced by scholars such as Kete Millett and Sylvia Walby.

Keywords: Engage, Patriarchy, Oppression, Liberation, Protest, Authority.

Introduction:

Henrik Ibsen's "The Pillars of Society" is one of the first examples of the genre of social drama known as "gender inequality and differentiation" (1877). The gender conflict that was typical in nuclear or bourgeois houses throughout his time may be considered as the backdrop of

the play. This struggle occurred throughout his time. Ibsen's intention was to shed light on cultural and family inequalities, particularly those that gave the impression that men had more authority than women. He was dissatisfied with the way society worked and the prejudice that men had against women, so he attempted to utilize his theatrical skills to fight for underrepresented women. He was unhappy with both the social structure and the prejudice that men held against women. In addition to this, he desired to heighten women's understanding, namely in the areas of equality, freedom, and liberty.

Because of this, in order to express his own point of view, he creates revolutionary female characters that defy the roles that are traditionally portrayed, and which are associated with patriarchy. Because of this, the male protagonists in Ibsen's works often wind up being pathetic and completely out of place. According to Shideler, Ibsen's social tragedies frequently feature the weakening or displacement of the male protagonist, who is typically a husband and father whose understanding of his duty as a "father figure" impacts his conduct. These male protagonists are typically depicted as having a "father figure" role in real life (1997 p. 278). In his words, "these plays are a reflection of the fight between the patriarch-oriented males and the biocentric-oriented women who argue in favor of a new social order via allusions to a knowledge foundation centered on human freedom and equality." He went on to say that "these plays are a reflection of the fight between the patriarch-oriented males and the biocentric-oriented women."

He goes on to say that "Ibsen becomes one of the most influential activists for the progress of women in the second half of the 1800s" (Lorentzen, 2006 p. 818). It is impossible to deny that the "father figure" in this work comes out as feeble and confused. Karsten Bernick, who is both a prominent person of the neighborhood and the consul, depicts a parent who is both absent and helpless.

The Pillars of Society is a dramatization of the true story of the local patriarch Consul Bernick, who is shown in the play as living a life that is replete with lies and dishonesty. After returning from the United States, Lona Hessel and Johan Tonnesen have returned with the intention of exposing Bernick's deception, which serves as the basis for both his marriage and his business. The story focuses mostly on the patriarchal position that Bernick plays in the seaside town he lives in. Because he is one of the town's pillars, he accords the citizens of the town the status of gods. He acts as a directing influence on the whole of the community. He acts as a directing influence on the whole of the community. The residents of the town are unaware of his secret method for achieving financial success in the village once the train is there.

Bernick's solid family and social foundation has been eroded, however, because of Lona's integration into his culture. Lona plainly uncovers the hidden secret of Bernick's character as a hypocrite, liar, and dishonest father during a party held in Bernick's honor

when the hypocritical spokesman Rorlund extols Bernick's virtue. Now that he has arrived at this moment, Bernick acknowledges the mistakes he has made in the past and understands that his quest for fame and power has poisoned and blinded him. When his eyes are opened, he publicly proclaims that "women are the pillars of society," and for the first time in his life, he invites his sister Martha and wife Betty to join him in his professional life, from which they had been barred for a long time. This is the first time in his life that he has done either of these things.

The purpose of this article is to demonstrate that there is a disparity in the relationship between men and women. The treatment of women and the manipulation of women by the male protagonists in this study are centered on how the male protagonists retain their control, as well as how the female characters oppose patriarchy and find acceptance in a society that is ruled by males. As a result of this, the research places a particular focus not just on female roles but also on their voices, words, and language. I have investigated the roles of both females and males in the animal kingdom from a feminist standpoint. According to a wide range of feminist activists, who each have their own unique perspective on the matter, patriarchy is a system that oppresses women. My research focuses on Sylvia Walby, Veronica Beechey, and Kate Millet's feminism-informed analyses of patriarchy since they are the most influential in the field. According to Kete Millett, patriarchy is an example of how power is expressed, and it manifests as male domination over females in all aspects of life. Millett says this is an example of how power is presented. Sylvia Wlaby, on the other hand, places an emphasis on patriarchy as a social framework in which men dominate, oppress, and degrade women.

The findings of this research indicate that there is still a large gender gap. [Citation needed] It encourages women to publicly advocate for their cohabitation with males. In a same spirit, it seeks to instil in guys a sense of equality and to educate them how to treat and respect women as equals in society. Additionally, it hopes to teach males how to treat and respect women as equals in the workplace. In addition to this, the study advises women to acknowledge who they are, to fight against oppression directed on them, and to participate in a wide range of activities to maintain access to all of the primary facets of life. Some Philosophical Reflections on the Patriarchy and Its Dominance The word "patriarchy" refers to macho ideas that highlight men's overall authority over all other human beings and the way in which this controls the lives of women.

People constantly develop mentalities as a result of the social, political, psychological, and cultural isolation of women. In contrast to the celebration of men's roles, patriarchy often refers to the weakening and dehumanization of women in all sectors of life. Man is seen by the patriarchy as the "self," the "representative of God," and the "power," whereas women are seen as the "other," the helpless companion of man. Women suffer restrictions, reliance, an excessive number of internal duties, and subjugation in a patriarchal society and culture.

Man's dominance over women and Ibsen both lead to the subordination of women. The Foundations of Society: Women's Resistance to Patriarchy's Physical or Coercive Control Over Her Interests, Wants, and Desires The domination that men hold over women is organized through social behaviors, institutions (the church, family, and state), and cultural representations, according to Leslie Heywood. (2005 p. 239).

In a patriarchal culture, men hold the majority of the power and benefit from social privilege, political leadership, moral superiority, and property ownership. According to Maggie Humm, the structures of this kind of society oppress women on the social, political, and economic levels. The dominance of patriarchy is due to men's greater access to and control over the advantages of authoritative institutions both within and outside the home (2003 p.200). In this society, males have hegemonic control over women. It marginalizes and stifles women, seeing them as the sexual "others." In doing so, it "appropriates authority for males and limits women's social standing." (1991, Walkington, p. 65) According to Peter Barry, the maintenance of sexual inequality was influenced by both men's and women's cultural "mind-sets." (2013 p.117)

Nevertheless, they insist that patriarchy is a pervasive bias against women and that oppression of women is a result of this underlying prejudice in patriarchal countries, even though the viewpoints of feminist activists on this word change throughout time and space. Feminists, according to Valerie Bryson, have accepted a social framework in which men rule and women are submissive (2003 p.166). "The difficulty in understanding patriarchy is acknowledging the exploitation of women throughout cultures, regions, and time," she says (2003 p.170). To make women believe that men are superior, patriarchy upholds male supremacy over and subjugates them. The patriarchy therefore "provides a framework of control and law and order." (Eisenstein cited in Walby, p. 215, 1889)

It keeps women in a little cage where they are intimidated and forced to speak the same language that they have been taught since they were children, denying their emotions, intellect, and potential. In such a society, women often "present as objects of men's wants or worries, but never as sophisticated autonomous persons." Tolan, 2007, page 321. Many women's movements have engaged in heated discussion on the term "patriarchy." However, feminist groups have examined the underlying assumptions that lead to the oppression of women by using the concept of patriarchy.

The goal of the theory of patriarchy, according to Verona Beechy, is to provide a cogent explanation of the foundation of subordination that underlies the unique experiences and manifestations of women's oppression. (1979 p.66). In her definition of patriarchy, Silvia Walby refers to "a system of social structure and practices in which males' dominate, oppress, and exploit women." According to her, patriarchy may exist in a variety of contexts and is not a universalist concept. Her two key examples are private and public patriarchy.

Private patriarchy is obvious in homes where the father figure rules over every male and female family member.

In this case, the patriarch appropriates each woman's services in the purportedly private setting of the house and forbids women from engaging in social activities outside of those pertaining to the home. Instead, then keeping women out of cities, public patriarchy degrades women everywhere. In this kind of feminine appropriation, collective activity predominates over individual action (Walby 1989 p.228). As a result, we may draw the conclusion that patriarchy begins with early socialization inside the family and spreads its roots to include all spheres of life. After that, it manifests in institutional contexts such as social, political, legal, religious, and policymaking.

According to radical feminist from the United States Kate Millet, God and nature both acknowledge a father's complete dominion over his family. Therefore, she claims that "the principles of patriarchy seem to be twofold: man shall control female, senior male shall dominate young." She bases her assertion on such family domination. She writes, "Relationships between the genders have been established on power in all known societies, and as such, they are political," in her 1985 book *Sexual Politics*, describing power-based sexual relationships. One expression of this power is the domination of males over women in all aspects of life. Gender domination, which provides the most basic notion of power in our society, is perhaps the most ubiquitous ideology in our civilization owing to how all-encompassing, universal, and all-pervasive it is. It therefore seems "natural" and vanishes into thin air.

This exemplifies how patriarchal dominance over women pervades all cultures and defies established hierarchies of power. In what Millet terms "internal colonisation," women might display internal signs of male hegemony including self-hatred, self-rejection, and inferiority. To examine Henrik Ibsen's *The Pillars of Society*, we have ample information from feminist activists on their views on patriarchy. The main female characters in the play reject the conventional roles that women are supposed to fulfil in patriarchal countries and oppose the dominating nature of the system. These powerful female characters skillfully resist male domination in the old patriarchal society and establish their own places. The primary female characters in the drama battle for their independence, equality, and individuality rather than acting as passive supporters and adherents of the repressive past. Instead, than continuing to embody the image of conventionally submissive daughters, wives, and sisters, they regarded themselves as whole human beings who were responsible for their rights regardless of their gender.

Men are in charge and women are subordinate:

At the play's outset, Ibsen provides a model of a traditional lady who has absorbed patriarchal norms and aspirations. Because they bow to patriarchy and adhere to its rules

and regulations, Betty Bernick, Mrs. Rummel, Mrs. Holt, and Mrs. Lyngne are instances of "good girls" (Tyson 2006, p. 89). They lack the guts to speak out in opposition to the discrimination they endure at the hands of the male characters, including Consul Bernick, Rorlund, the teacher, and Shipwright Aune. Both male and female inhabitants of the coast are under Bernick's command. These women, whose only activity is needlepoint in a large garden room at Bernick's house, are governed and controlled by Rorlund for the sake of morals.

To uphold their status quo, he employs patriarchal tactics, telling them undercover that they are "sacrificing in a good cause" and persuading them that they are "the First Aid Detachment, a Red Cross unit that prepares the lint for these unhappy victims, lays the bandages gently upon their wounds, cures and heals them." (Act I, p.28). Women are gathered, and Rorlund reads aloud from "Woman as the Servant of the Community," a gilt-edged book that emphasizes the glaring imbalance between men and women. In a similar vein, Bernick, together with two other businessmen, Rummel and Vigeland, exploit women by locking them in a dark room and forcing them to support and praise their husbands. They are limited by social and economic factors and desire motherhood completely.

Ibsen was inspired to write this play by watching the mirror-image of social connections in the nineteenth century. Sylvias Walby offers a realistic picture of women's plight in a patriarchal culture in *Theorizing Patriarchy*: middle class women were kept out of the public glare. Women often worked from home, especially those who were married and came from middle-class households. Non-marital sex was strictly discouraged for such females. In addition to being denied basic citizenship rights like the ability to vote and, if they were married, the right to own property, husbands were also permitted to mistreat their women. Women were likewise excluded from the state's public sphere. Cultural institutions like the Church supported the country's view that a woman belonged in the home. (1989 p.228).

In "The Pillars of Society" by Ibsen, women fight patriarchy. Bernick has smothered his wife's emotions, intelligence, and points of view. He contends that women wouldn't have been able to comprehend the actual nature of business, putting an end to her desire to pursue a career in transsection. (Act I, p.44) Virginia Woolf makes the following claim in *Room of One's Own* on this: "Our mothers were not given the opportunity to acquire the trade of creating money, and it is this economic poverty that has underlain the intellectual impoverishment of women." (2001 p.13)

Bernick and Rorlund, who stand in for parents from the seventeenth century, represent women who have been taught to change their character to fit their husbands' way of thinking, and who are therefore held behind a curtain. The famed feminist Betty Friedan called this kind of ingrained sexism and mistreatment of women "The feminine mystique."

Various sins have contaminated Bernick's patriarchal foundation. He once made Johan Tonnesen the victim of a crime by unlawfully using his physical superiority to attract Mrs. Dorf, the mother of circus star Dina Dorf. He bought her with money to hide his unethical behavior. He also disregarded Lona's love and feelings by getting married to Betty to advance his social and financial standing. Tonnesen prospers despite his misdeeds, gets stronger, and becomes more emancipated when he moves to America with Lona who takes responsibility for Bernick's charges and crime.

Thus, the corrupt Bernick has benefited and solidified his high social standing as a pillar of society. Bernick and Lona: Patriarchy vs female protest. In a role-play, Ibsen depicts strong, independent women who defy gender theory and conventional ideas of femininity. Lona Hessel, Miss Martha, and Dina Dorf are examples of female warriors who openly criticise the unjust social order based on male supremacy. Susan Torrey Barstow claims that rather of dealing with starvation, shipwrecks, or assaults by wild animals, Ibsen's heroines struggle with domesticity and the limitations of conventional femininity (2001 p.389).

These female heroes not only challenged male dominance and worked to change the society that men created, but they also challenged the masculine ideal of women as devoted daughters and submissive wives (Banerjee 2006 p.1). The dynamic woman Lona Hessel joins the public realm and gains authority in the broad American society by singing in coffee shops, delivering public lectures, and writing contentious books. She sacrificed her life to aid Johan Tonnyson, from whom she discovered the background of Bernick, a previous lover, which she later knew to be a secret. She has disproved the patriarchal mindset that defines clothing as "feminine" by cutting her hair short and wearing in masculine gear. She doesn't appear to be a machination of the helpless woman created by patriarchy.

Lona returns to Bernick's narrow-minded society after fifteen years of self-exile with a revolutionary agenda. Her trip back home involves a variety of objectives. She must first "assist Bernick create firm foundation under his feet" before she can confront his fakery, dishonesty, and false idealism (Act II, p. 81). Bernick's repressive patriarchal egoism must be made to change, which is the opposite side of the same coin. Her second objective was to send Dina Dorf to America, where she could live free and independent of Bernick's harsh patriarchal culture. She must teach the group of ladies in Bernick's society who have long lived in seclusion and under the influence of puritanism.

The drama therefore illustrates two significant events: the demise of male authority, symbolized by Bernick, a pillar of society, and the rejection of patriarchy by women who assert their freedom from patriarchal norms that exclusively considered women as wives, mothers, or spinsters. In Lona's presence, patriarchal ideals and morals are abandoned. As soon as Lona enters the stage and Bernick's room, she quickly attacks the ladies who are changing their attire. She detects the aroma of death because she is "accustomed to the air of

the plains," and dresses in white (Act I, p.50). The male hegemony is instantly threatened when Lona informs those patriarchs Bernick and Rorlund of her goal.

When Rorlund asks her what she can do for society, she responds metaphorically, "I am going to release some fresh air" (Act I, p.51). In essence, to let in some fresh air she has brought from American prairies reflects her ambition to overthrow the corrupt Norwegian patriarchal family and replace it with a new, more democratic family, according to Ross Shideler's description of Lona's symbolic statement (1997 p. 251). Before departing for America, she showed her boldness and bravado by smacking Bernick in the ear. Her slapping might be seen as a manifestation of female power and a challenge to patriarchal ideas. Bernick needs Lona to make up for the lifetime falsehoods and bad conduct that make up his patriarchy, which she wants to mend. Lona warns Bernick that his life's deception, which has harmed his family and position of authority, puts his good name and reputation in jeopardy. His son Olaf disobeys him and makes plans to leave. In this important situation, Bernick cedes to Lona in the following manner: Bernick: Ever since you returned, and particularly this evening, I've been thinking a lot. Why didn't I notice you back then, Lona, in your true form? (Act IV, page 120).

All Bernick's masculinity is destroyed when he loses. He makes atonement for the fact that he only looked out for his own interests and not those of society or its cohesiveness and publicly accepts his responsibility for the crime. He believes that he is irresponsible and undeserving of the title "pillar of society." He asserts that "Women are the foundations of society" instead (Act IV, p.137). Sylvia Walby asserts that society does not have a strict patriarchal framework. Women may challenge it and bring about change by steadfastly resisting it. After meeting Lona, Bernick undergoes a full transformation. He relinquishes his dominating parental and marital duties and allows women to infiltrate the patriarchal realm in the following ways: No, says Bernick, not at all. With whom have I been? When you find out, you'll be shocked. I feel as if I've been poisoned, and I'm just now beginning to come to. But I believe I can be a strong, young man. Oh, scurry closer to me. Come on, Betty and Olaf, my boy! And you Marta, it feels like it's been a long since I've seen you. (Act IV, page 136)

Lona realizes she has achieved her objective of becoming a feminist when Bernick acknowledges his error and sincerely thanks her for aiding him. "Thank you, Lona, for saving the finest in me and for me," Bernick adds (Act IV, p.135). Lona's goal wasn't only for her benefit. It intended to create a beautiful and ideal society free from prejudice and power in human interactions. By the end of the play, Bernick's patriarchal dominance has been successfully contested by Lona's egalitarian goal.

In the performance, these two female performers also portray Lona's soul. Both do their utmost to combat Rorlund's fallacious view of the foundations of society and Bernick's discriminatory conception of equality. like *The Pillars of Society: Women's Fight Against*

Patriarchy by Ibsen They represent freedom, Lona, and might be seen as a rebel group against the patriarchal social order. Marta, like Lona, fights for Dina's freedom and advises her to break off her forced marriage to alleged idealist Rorlund and elope as soon as possible to America, which she herself thinks would be lovely because "the skies are larger, the clouds move higher than here, and freer breeze blow over head." (Act IV, pages 116–17) Dina's dormant energy is bolstered by her throughout this exchange: Frau Bernick: I don't think so, and I didn't plan on it happening to me. But there came a turning point that was unavoidable. Oh, how we eat when being ruled by custom and religion. Dina, resist it by fighting back. become his wife. Let something exist that contradicts all of this tradition and routine.

Marta is on a quest to end Dina's prolonged confinement at her own brother's house, even though she is less extroverted than Lona. According to Ibsen's notion of an active female part and Clement Scott's depiction of these two women's revolutionary spirit in *The Daily Telegraph*: We appreciate a playwright more the more he speaks. He is a comrade and a friend.

It is also essential to place an emphasis on Dina's contribution. She is developing into a "New Woman" and has the goal of achieving independence. She is sick and tired of the unjust, commercialized, and denatured society that Bernick and Rorlund are leading, and she yearns to live in a society that is free and open, one in which "neither the men nor the ladies are respectable and moral, but natural." She has a crippling fear of being taken seriously (Act IV, p.115). Dina acts on the good faith belief that Rorlund has romantic feelings for her. She desires to turn her back on the deceitful masculine civilization that subjugates women even as it presents itself as a paradise of love and goodness. She places a high value on being able to pursue her own interests without concern for others. She believes that getting married and falling in love are the two most effective means of stifling a woman's drive and independence. Simone de Beauvoir's words are echoed by the author when she refers to marriage as "oppressive and exploitative economic management" that "fosters sexual inequality and confines women to domesticity" (qtd, in Tolan p.321).

Dina chooses to prioritise her career over the traditional role of a wife so that she can achieve independence and free what Lona refers to as "the spirit." Dina does this by forgoing the traditional role of a wife. In typical Beauvoir fashion, she promotes the idea that the genuine sources of pleasure are freedom and liberty, rather than marriage, because these factors contribute to a life that is calm and comfortable rather than chaotic and upsetting. When a woman marries, her life becomes more akin to that of an animal, and the only activity she is permitted to engage in is bearing children. This severely limits her freedom. According to Valerie Bryson, one of the pioneering radical feminists of the 20th century, marriage "perpetuates a sort of dominance masked by love."

Love is not based on equality in a patriarchal culture; rather, it is based on the economic and social dependence of women, which ensures that they will not dispute their lower social status. This keeps women in their subordinate roles (2003 p.178). Shulamith Firestone, a radical feminist, was quoted as saying that "love, perhaps even more than childbearing, is the pivot of women's subjugation today." (1979 p.121). According to Kandiyoti, women "have very little to gain and a lot to lose by being fully dependent on husband," and therefore, women "very properly fight project that shift the essential balance they need to keep," she says. (1988 p.277). Since Dina is already familiar with these organizations, she has decided not to accept Tonnyson's proposal of marriage. She states that "work first and become something me, just like you are" is her objective and primary source of motivation in the United States. I'm not going to be something that can be thrown away (Act IV, p.116). By pursuing her academic and emotional potential, she will demonstrate that she is an independent person who is able to provide for the joyful life she has chosen for herself. Instead of bemoaning the fact that she is not as good as men, she is going to assert her equality by acting, thinking, and working like a man.

Conclusion:

The female characters in this play boldly challenge the long-standing conventions of a society that is mostly controlled by men. They are not merely accepting the way in which men treat women; rather, they are working to establish their position and foundation as independent human beings. The fact that it deals with the struggle for equal rights for women is one of the show's most compelling aspects. Ibsen's portrayal of an angry female character is a reflection of his search for individual freedom, equality, and societal acceptability, which can be seen throughout the play. He made the shocking discovery that women were lacking these essential requirements, which is why he has the courage to speak for women's rights. In this play, which is built on comedy and deception, we investigate the lives of women living in a patriarchal culture that holds them in lower social standing. In a society dominated by males, women are seen to be "others" and treated as such. Within the confines of this sexist culture, it is impossible for women to lead lives that are meaningful to them or to freely express who they are.

The male characters of Ibsen's play, however, find themselves uprooted and their world of Christian patriarchy turned upside down by the events of the play. This play draws attention to the conflict that exists between idealized depictions of the patriarchal family and the struggle of women for equality. In the novel "The Pillar of World," the female characters struggle against patriarchy to establish a society in which women are respected on an equal level with other members of society.

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