TREATMENT OF MORALITY IN THE SELECTED PLAYS OF HENRIK IBSEN

SYNOPSIS

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Representation of Social Issues in the Selected Plays of
Henrik Ibsen

PURPOSE OF STUDY

Henrik Johan Ibsen, today, is considered a legendary figure in the world of European Drama. During his lifetime, he was a controversial writer. He turned theatre from place of entertainment and occasional catharsis into a place from which men emerged with a compulsive feeling to reconsider basic principles which they had never before seriously questioned. It became a realistic portraiture of human life. His realism and treatment of contemporary social issues have influenced dramatists such as George Bernard Shaw, August Strindberg, Herold Pinter, and Edward Bond, James Joyee, Thomas Mann and Stephen George are among those who studied Norwegian, to be able to read Ibsen in his original language. During his lifetime, Ibsen wrote twenty six plays. The work through which we judge Ibsen today is an unbroken series of seven plays all dealing with contemporary life. The plays are called “Social Plays” o modern “Realistic Plays” and establish him as a Dramatist of Ideas.

The Seven plays are:

- Pillars of Society 1877
- Doll’s House 1879
- Ghost 1881
- An Enemy of People 1882
- The Wild Duck 1884
- Rosemersholm 1886
- The Lady From the Sea 1888
Ibsen’s protagonists are second-class citizen of Victorian Society who find themselves caged within the society. These characters are struggling for freedom and realization of self. He was the first one who sensed in the 19th century what was to become perhaps the dominant force of the 20th century, namely, man’s feeling of alienation from his own society.

Throughout his career Ibsen Dramatized the plight of men within a restricted society. He avoids sentimentally in presenting the struggle. He does not offer us heroes or heroines of inviolate integrity defending their own idealism. Against the external onslaught of corrupt society, he insists that his protagonists must themselves be permeated by the very power that they, consciously and instinctively oppose. Even they are subject to conditioning by society and it penetrates deep into their personalities. Thus Ibsen present his characters in worldly torn, each has a special endowment and essential self, yet at an almost equal depth, there operates the social self. The conflict that fascinates Ibsen, the testing, which proves and disapproves the heroic qualities of this and that individual, is internal. It is within the character and minds of individual that the tensions of living in a modern society are best explored. Society is a trap into which an individual falls unaware.

The proposed plan of the research will be based on the study of the five social focusing on social issues. The five plays are all blows against the petty forces in the society that hinder man from obeying the motto “Be Thyself”. The following shall be the tentative chapter division:
Chapter I

Introduction: Making Of the Artist

Chapter II

Contemporary Socio-Cultural of Europe

Chapter III

Social Morality: The aspect of the social morality will be focused on the following Plays of Henrik Ibsen

1. A Doll’s House
2. The Wild Duck
3. Ghosts
4. Pillars of Society
5. The Lady From The Sea
6. An Enemy of People

Chapter IV

Religious Morality: The hypocrytic and religious pretentions shall be explored in this chapter with reference to the following plays

1. Ghosts
2. A Doll’s House
3. Pillars Of Society
4. The Wild Duck

Chapter V

Conclusions
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