

**JEALOUSY AS THE CAUSE OF RITA'S
MARRIAGE CONFLICTS IN HENRIK IBSEN'S
LITTLE EYOLF**



A thesis presented to the English Department, Faculty of Letters
University of Jember as one of the requirements
to get the Award of Sarjana Sastra Degree
In English Studies



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JEMBER UNIVERSITY
FACULTY OF LETTERS
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
2003

APPROVAL SHEET

Approved and received by the Examination Committee of the English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University.

Jember, July 30, 2003

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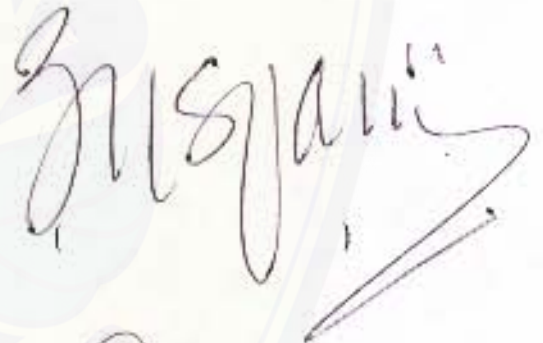
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DEDICATION :

Profoundly I dedicate this thesis to:

- My beloved mother Kusminiwati Sugijo and my beloved late father Kariman Ardjosuwito
- My dearest elder sisters Ninik Purwaningtyas and Tri Yuliasuti and my brother Widyanoro
- My Alma Mater

Motto:

Mature love and an ability to express it and give it
freely is an essential base for a good marriage

Abraham Stone, MD and Lena Levine, MD

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Profoundly, I would like to express my gratitude to Allah SWT. The All Merciful God who always gives me mercy and blessing that I am able to finish this thesis.

In this opportunity, I wish to express my sincere thanks to Drs. Marwoto, the Dean of Faculty of Letters, and DR. Samudji, MA the Head of the English Department, Faculty of Letters, Jember University who have given me a chance to write and compose this thesis.

I also like to express my gratitude honestly to Drs. H. M. Busjairi as my first advisor and Dra. Hj. Meilia Adiana, M.Pd. as my second advisor for their valuable advices, supports, and guidance concerning with the completion of this thesis.

My Gratitude is extended to all the lecturers of the Faculty of Letters, Jember University who have poured me with valuable knowledge of English studies, during my study. I would like to thank to all the librarians of Central Library and Faculty of Letters who have given me opportunity to borrow the necessary books as references to complete the thesis.

May Allah The Almighty God endow them with the proper virtue.

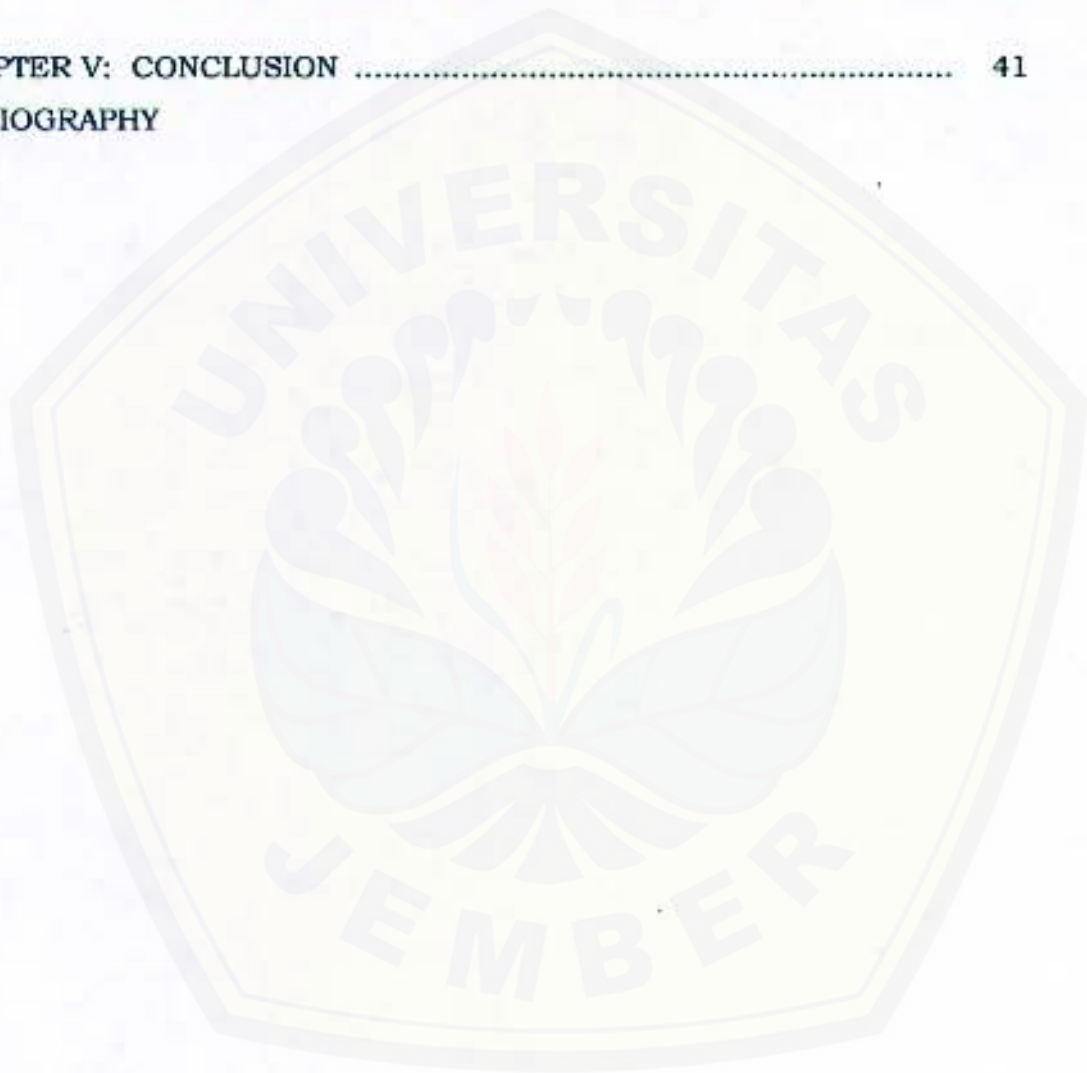
Jember, July 2003

Nunung Murniawati

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION



1.1 The Rationale

Man is created to fulfill his material or immaterial needs in his life. One kind of human immaterial needs is experience. There are many ways to fulfill it. Books, newspapers, magazines are all the ways of increasing our experience, for example of going places, of doing things in our imagination that we might never have a chance to do otherwise. It is stated by Jones (1968:1) that "literature is simply another way we can experience the world around us through our imagination".

In literature, there are two important elements, the author and the works of literature. There is close relation between the authors and their works. The experience that is written in a literary work is, sometimes, the author's personal experiences that he has got by himself in life, but sometimes, it is also the others'. According to Jones in *Outlines of Literature* the writer of literature applies truth, facts, and style to the basic emotions of man such as pity, fear, anger, disgust, yearning, pain, hope, joy, sorrow (1968:5).

Besides, literature is a means to refresh our mind or to entertain us. As Wellek and Warren say in *Theory of Literature* that the function of literature is to relieve us, either writers or readers from pressure of emotion (1956:36).

Literary work is typically divided into three categories, novel, play or drama and poetry. Drama is one form of literary works which delineates life and human activity by means of presenting various actions of characters through dialogues and it is also to be acted on the stage (Reaske, 1965:5).

For the above reason it is obvious that drama is dynamic organism, because it represents people in action. By studying drama, we can also study human life with all their problems by means of analyzing the dialogues among the characters.

Henrik Ibsen is one of the greatest Norwegian dramatists and writers. His works have spread and colored literature all over the world. One of his works is *Little Eyolf*. He wrote *Little Eyolf* in Christiania in the summer and autumn of 1894 when he was sixty-six years old. This drama consists of three acts. It presents an obvious crisis in Alfred and Rita's marriage. Being a possessive woman, she has an obsession to have her husband totally which makes her extremely jealous. When Alfred, restored by several weeks in the mountains, announces that he will devote himself to his previous neglected little crippled boy, Rita is jealous of the child. Alfred's announcement of his changed priorities and his close relationship with Asta, Alfred's half-sister, quickly reveal the suffocating elements in his marriage.

1.2 The Problem to Discuss

In writing a work of literature, sometimes a writer is influenced by his experience or others. The writer records many things he feels from his life or social condition as the source of his writing.

In *Little Eyolf*, the problems are closely related with the conflict in marriage as the unit of social environment and mostly based on love. As a human being, Rita has a desire to love and to be loved. She loves her husband passionately which causes her possessive nature increases toward her husband. She becomes exaggeratedly jealous when her husband has close relationship with his half-sister and has great intention toward their crippled son, Eyolf. Those jealousies which are directed to Eyolf and Asta cause the marriage conflicts between Rita and her husband, Alfred.

1.3 The Scope of Study

In drama, there are many elements that are related to each other. The scope of study is important to avoid the discussion turns away from the main point of the thesis. This discussion is focused on the main characters' marriage conflicts caused by Rita's jealousy to her own son and her sister-in-law.

1.4 The Hypothesis

"A hypothesis is an informed guess or prediction about the result; it indicates before the study is carried out what the result will be" (Mc Millan, 1992:15). In this play, the main character gets psychological problem that is jealousy which stimulates her into excessive marriage conflicts. It can be drawn the hypothesis whether or not the main character's conflicts are caused by her jealousy.

1.5 The Approaches to Use

In the discussion of the play, a suitable approach is used to get a clear understanding and detailed explanation about the problem. The approaches used in analyzing this drama are psychological and sociological approach because the study in this thesis is close to psychological and sociological matters. According to Scott, a psychological approach is an approach to art that generates three kinds of illuminations, provides more precise language with which to discuss the creative process, goes back to the study of the life of the author as a means of understanding their art and can be used to explain fictitious character (1962:71-72). The main character in the play has psychological problem, that is jealousy which has influenced Rita's attitude toward her husband. In this case the psychological approach studies the mental condition of the characters and emphasizes the analysis on the state of mind of the characters.

Whereas a sociological approach is applied to see the interaction of the characters in the drama that causes conflicts. Besides, it is used to understand the social milieu and extends to which manner in which the artist responds to it (Scott, 1962:123)

1.6 The Method of Analysis

The method is used to analyze the data. In *Little Eyolf*, inductive method is used which Hadi states that inductive method is a way of thinking to draw a conclusion from particular events and facts then from both of them can be drawn into general idea (1994:42). The application of

this method in writing the thesis is by finding some events supporting conflicts in the play. Those can be described as follows; the jealousy of the main character toward her own son and her sister-in-law reveals the most important thing that causes the conflicts. Her passionate love makes her become a possessive woman. From this evidence, it can be drawn into a conclusion that the jealousy of love is the cause of the main characters' marriage conflicts.

The materials are taken from some available books and references that are related to the main point of analysis, so library research will be appropriate in this case to support the complete data of this thesis.

1.7 The Goals of Study

There are some goals of study in this thesis, firstly is to make a deep analysis of the conflicts upon Rita's marriage caused by her jealousy toward her son and her sister-in-law as the main aspect of the analysis of the thesis. Secondly is to gain and increase the deep analysis about Henrik Ibsen's *Little Eyolf*. The third goal is to apply literary theories, which I have got during my study in Faculty of Letters. Finally, there is a hope that it will enrich our knowledge about literature.

1.8 The Organization of the Thesis

The organization of the thesis is important to get a neat arrangement in writing the thesis. This thesis is divided into five chapters. The first chapter is the introduction of the thesis. It shows the description of the thesis and as the guide to understand the thesis. The second chapter describes the biography of the author and the synopsis of *Little Eyolf*. The third chapter explains the meanings of the terms. The fourth chapter discusses the jealousy as the cause of Rita's marriage conflicts. Whereas the last chapter is the conclusion of all the discussions of the thesis.



CHAPTER II

THE BIOGRAPHY OF THE AUTHOR AND THE SYNOPSIS OF THE PLAY

2.1 The Biography of Henrik Ibsen

Henrik Johan Ibsen or more famous as Henrik Ibsen, was one of the greatest Norwegian playwrights of the 19th-century Norwegian literature. Ibsen was generally well-known as the founder of modern prose drama, because he presented problems and ideas of the day as the themes in his works. His family was classified into high class family because his father was a prosperous merchant. His father was Knud Henriksen Ibsen and his mother was Marichen Altenburg. Ibsen was born at Skien on the 20th of March 1828. In 1836, Knud Ibsen went bankrupt because he was extravagant and the family had to move to Venstoepp not far from the city. There, they lived in poverty. After finishing his school at Skien, Ibsen tried to apprentice as a pharmacist at another small town Grimstad. The poverty had made him a stubborn, rebellious and unsociable in relationship. Then, in 1846 he had to support an illegitimate child Hans Jacob. The baby was born because of his illegal relationship with a servant girl Else Borkedal and it made him depressed in finance.

He began to write poetry in nineteen years old. In 1848, a revolution swept Europe and Ibsen adopted its ideas into his work *Catiline*, in verse, which reflected the atmosphere of the revolution in Hungary and Germany. *Catiline* was his first work and published in 1849. Unfortunately, it failed in marketing. As his experience in pharmacy, he hoped to become a physician. Early in 1850 Ibsen left Grimstad to Christiania (now Oslo). He entered Heltberg's 'student factory', a preparatory school to enter University. He failed in entrance examination but his name was known in university circles because he was active in journalistic and wrote a piece or two for the stage. In the

same year, he wrote his second play *The Burial Mound* (also known as *The Warrior's Barrow*).

During the year, he made a very hard livelihood in Christiania as a journalist. However, in November 1851 he had a good fortune to be stage manager at the National Theatre in Bergen. He was discovered by Ole Bull a violinist who was looking for a talented assistant director and playwright. He was there during six years. He produced four plays, *St John's Night* (1852) was written during his travelling to Copenhagen and Dresden to study the theatre, *Lady Inger of Ostraat* (1855), *The Feast at Solhaugh* (1856) and *Olaf til Jekrans* (1857). He also met Susannah Thoresen, the daughter of Dean Thoresen in Bergen. She was a woman with high spirit, energetic and supported Ibsen in his misfortune of life. They were married in 1858.

Ibsen returned in 1857 to Christiania to become the new manager of the Norwegian Theatre. He kept the position until 1862 when finally it went bankrupt. On December 23rd, 1859, his son Sigurd was born, for the marriage between him and Susannah Thoresen. His family life seemed happy enough but it also pressed his financial difficulty. He had made some works but most of them failed.

In 1862 he wrote *Love's Comedy*, a modern verse satire, as his first work during five years of his absence in writing. It became the awakening period of his literary career. Continued by *The Pretenders* (1864) which was staged in Christiania and got a success. It led him to receive grant travelling from government to study in Rome and Paris. He left Norway in April to Italy and travelled abroad for the next twenty seven years. During this time, when he lived in Rome, Munich and Dresden, Ibsen wrote most of his best-known works. One of them was *Brand* (1866), a symbolic tragedy about a priest Brand who followed his high principles, at the end he died in an avalanche. The publication of *Brand* made Ibsen become famous throughout Scandinavia.

Following the success of *Brand*, Ibsen wrote *Peer Gynt* (1867) in verse when he was in Rome. This work was successful. It was a

magnificent work in modern Norwegian literature, put it equal with the finest European poetry at the century.

In 1868, after spending the time in Rome which gave him many inspirations and successes, Henrik Ibsen moved to Dresden and settled there. The next year *The League of Youth* was written. It was the earliest of his prose dramas, the political comedy, a photographic picture of liberal politicians of the day. Ibsen himself considered *Emperor and Galilean* (1873) was his most important play. It was completed after nine years, about Christianity. It had a subject of the unsuccessful struggle of Julian the Emperor to provoke the world against the rising tide of Christianity. Even finally he devoted himself to the religion of Christianity. This work preserved a colour of idealism and even of mysticism.

The new period of Ibsen began by *Pillars of Society* (1877) in Munich. Continued by *A Doll's House* (1879) a social drama on marriage, in which a woman refused to obey her husband and walked out from her perfect marriage. It was Ibsen's contribution to feminist movement. The work caused sensation and toured Europe and America. *Ghost* (1881) touched the forbidden subject of heredity venereal disease and attacked social conventions as destroyers of life and happiness. In *Enemy of the People* (1882) Ibsen attacked 'the compact liberal majority' and the conformity of mass opinion. In this play he tried to say that a majority might be wrong.

Ibsen's next drama, *The Wild Duck* (1884) is the story of people living in illusions because they are not strong enough to face reality. It was written when he was fifty four years old and got success. With *Rosmersholm* (1886) he rose to the height of his genius. He began to compose a series of symbolical dramas and poetical characters, these were the mystical *The Lady from the Sea* (1888), *The Master Builder* (1890) and *Little Eyolf* (1894). Continued by *John Gabriel Borkman* (1896) and *When We Dead Awaken* (1899) as his last drama.

Ibsen returned to Norway in 1891 and lived there for the rest of his life. He continued to write until a stroke in 1900. In 1898, on the

occasion of his seventieth birthday, he received the highest honour from his country and congratulations and gifts from all parts of the world. His health began to decline after his stroke and he died in Christiania on May 23rd, 1906. The last years of his life were clouded by mental illness. Although Henrik Ibsen was never fully appreciated during his life time, he had to be recognized as one of the greatest dramatists of all time and the 'Father of Modern Drama'.

2.1 The Synopsis of the Play

Little Eyolf is a play which consists of three acts. The action takes place on Allmers' beautiful estate, by a fjord in western Norway, a few miles outside the town. Alfred Allmers is a scholar. He is busy writing a book of the Responsibility of Man. He has a beautiful wife, Rita and a child, Eyolf. They often call him Little Eyolf. Asta, Alfred's half-sister, lives in town but she often takes the steamer out to visit her beloved brother and sister-in-law.

The marriage of Alfred Allmers and Rita has been extremely happy for the years of their marriage. As the years passed, Alfred feels that he is the subject to 'the law of change', a kind of transformation in human life circle of interest. In his life, the place of passion becomes less and less important, while the demands of his mind and his spirit are growing. His passion to Rita does not like their first years. However, Rita does not understand this condition. She still feels that her love-life with her husband will last forever in passion.

Alfred Allmers decides to go to the mountain and spends several days there. He tries to heal the crisis of emotional life. He takes his writing materials with him. Now his son Eyolf is nine years old. He is a crippled boy. The accident happened when he was still infant. He laid on the table and fell down when his parents did not keep an eye on him in a moment. The accident left them something unforgettable. His legs got injured and could not be cured. So, Eyolf became a crippled boy and used a crutch for the rest of his life.

Both Rita and Alfred are sad about the condition. Rita has great sorrow on Eyolf's calamity but she cannot love him truly as a mother to her son. She loves him but also jealous of him at the same time. She is scared that Alfred will neglect her and pour his love to the son and the family. As the time passed, she even wishes that Eyolf may not exist in her marriage's life.

After several days, Alfred Allmers has come back from his journey to the mountain. He announces that he will give up his book making and devote himself to the furtherance of his son's welfare. He feels that he has neglected the little boy. So, he wants to be a real father for him. He wants to help him to reveal his dream and ambition and bring him to self-fulfillment. Eyolf is a crippled boy but he wants to be able to swim because the children around the estate always mock him to his inability in swimming. Above all he wants to be a soldier which is something hard to realize. So Alfred wants to refer and shape Eyolf's dreams into the right way based on his real condition. Asta and Rita are surprised about this decision because as they know that he loves his work on the book very much. Rita cannot accept it because basically, she loves her husband passionately and does not want to share him with anybody else.

When they are arguing about Alfred's decision, a strange woman called the Rat-Wife visits the Allmers estate. She is a woman who has the power something like magic charm by which she could lead anything gnawing, crawling and creeping drawing away from the land and out to the deep water. Little Eyolf is scared and shocked when he looks at her, but later he is interested in her. He goes down to the garden and follows her. After a while, he gets on the jetty looking out over the fjord, falls into the water and gets drowned. Then the undertow comes and carries him out toward the sea.

Rita and Alfred are shocked at the news of the tragedy. Right now Little Eyolf only becomes a memory for both the father and mother. They remind how little Eyolf has become a crippled boy. They blame each other of the fault and how actually they do not love him because there is someone who is Eyolf close to, that is Asta. Rita accuses Asta has seized

the boy from her with her love and tenderness since the accident which had made Eyolf a crippled boy. The close relationship between Asta and Eyolf makes Rita jealous of her. Moreover the great affection which is given by Alfred to Asta makes her jealousy become worse. They have lost their passion each other and it makes their marriage seem going to be broken.

On another occasion, Alfred and Asta recollect how their lively childhood was. He remembered how he called Asta as little Eyolf because she was young and small and how they faced their life after the death of their parents. They lived happily and shared everything by two. Alfred feels that there is nothing to be maintained at all in his marriage. He urges Asta to live together in two as brother and sister like their past life because he thinks that such kind of relationship does not obey 'the law of change'. Surprisingly, Asta refuses this idea. Then she shows her mother's letters to Alfred. It says that Asta is not his sister. Asta is not the daughter of Alfred's father, but from another man. So, they are not biologically related.

Asta leaves Alfred and chooses to go away with Borghejm, an engineer who is interested in her because there is nothing to keep her any longer in the estate. There is no little crippled boy who needs her love and care anymore. She realizes that if she stays in the estate, Alfred's affection will be given to her and Rita will be drifted away.

Now, Rita and Alfred are left alone to face their next life. Rita is haunted by a huge open eyes staring at her and the voice 'the crutch is floating'. A memory of the accident when Little Eyolf got drowned. Alfred offers how if they part, because he wants to spend the rest of his life in the mountain. So, Alfred told his secret experience in the mountain. It was when he wanted to cross the lake. There was no one or a boat there. Then he tried to find another way. He lost all senses of directions and he thought that he would never come back again. He struggled alone and he felt a death was walking beside him. They were like two good friends. Strangely, he came on the other side of the lake. That experience had resolved him. He realized that he had wasted his time only in his work,

while there was something more important to be attended. He felt he had neglected his son. So he turned back and came back to Eyolf.

Finally Rita realizes that she cannot hold Alfred anymore. She plans to help the poor children in the village around her estate and takes care of them to fill the emptiness with something resembling love. After hearing his wife's desire he comes to his conclusion that Rita has changed a lot. At last he agrees that together they may find new satisfaction in life by helping and caring others.





CHAPTER III

THE MEANINGS OF THE TERMS

The thesis discusses about jealousy as the cause of marriage conflicts. To gain a better understanding of the discussion, it is necessary to catch clearly the definitions of the terms used in the thesis. It is important to do so because some of the readers may not be familiar with these terminologies which are related to the discussions.

3.1 The Meaning of Jealousy

Jealousy is the first term which is used in the thesis as the main subject of the discussions. To obtain the deep analysis of the term, it is necessary to know the word jealous as the root of the word jealousy.

In *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*, jealous is defined as:

1. feeling or showing fear or ill will because of possible or actual loss of right or love.
2. feeling or showing unhappiness because of the better fortune, etc. of others

Then jealousy is defined as:

1. being jealous
2. instance of this; act or utterances that shows jealous
(Hornby, 1987:455)

Based on *Random House Dictionary of the English Language*, Urdang *et al.* (1987:717) explain that jealous is:

1. fearful of losing another's affection
2. troubled by suspicious or fears or rivalry, unfaithfulness etc. as in love or aims
3. solicitous or vigilant in maintaining or guarding something

While jealousy is explained as:

1. mental illness, etc. as in love or aims
2. vigilance in maintaining or guarding something
3. a jealous feeling, disposition, state or mood

Another meaning of jealousy according to Reaske (1960:42) in *How to Analyze Drama* is " ... simply defined as human envy, other times

as over-whelmingly bitter hatred is operative in most human relationship". Hilgrad (1962:517) mentions that jealousy is a special form of anxiety arising from fear of loss of a loved one's affection to rival with both emotional and motivational consequences.

Based on the explanations above, it could be concluded that jealousy is a kind of emotional attitude toward another who is trying to seize someone's important thing. It is characterized by feeling of anger, depression and hatred. The main cause is based on someone's anxiety of losing another love or affection.

3.2 The Meaning of Marriage Conflict

The next term is marriage conflict. This term consists of two words: marriage and conflict. First of all, *The Encyclopedia Britannica* defines marriage as:

a legally and socially sanctioned union between one or more husbands and one or more wives that accords status to their offspring and is regulated by laws, rules, customs, beliefs and attitudes that prescribe the rights and duties of the partners (1973:926)

While Urdang *et.al.* (1967:819) explain that marriage is, "the social institution under which a man and woman establish their decision to live as husband and wife by legal commitments, religious ceremonies etc." Moreover Pei in *The Lexicon Webster Dictionary* states that marriage is the social institution by which a woman and a man are legally united and establish a new family unit (1976:584).

The second word is conflict. Every fiction and drama always have conflicts to support other elements of literature. Shaw (1972:92) states the definition of conflict is the opposition of persons or forces upon which the action depends on drama and fiction. The dramatic conflict is the struggle which grows of the interplay of opposing forces (ideas, interests, wills) in a plot; conflict may be termed the material from which a plot is constructed.

Whereas Hornby (1987:178) points out that conflict is,

1. fight; struggle; quarrel;

2. (of opinions, desires, etc) oppositions; difference be in opposition or disagreement with.

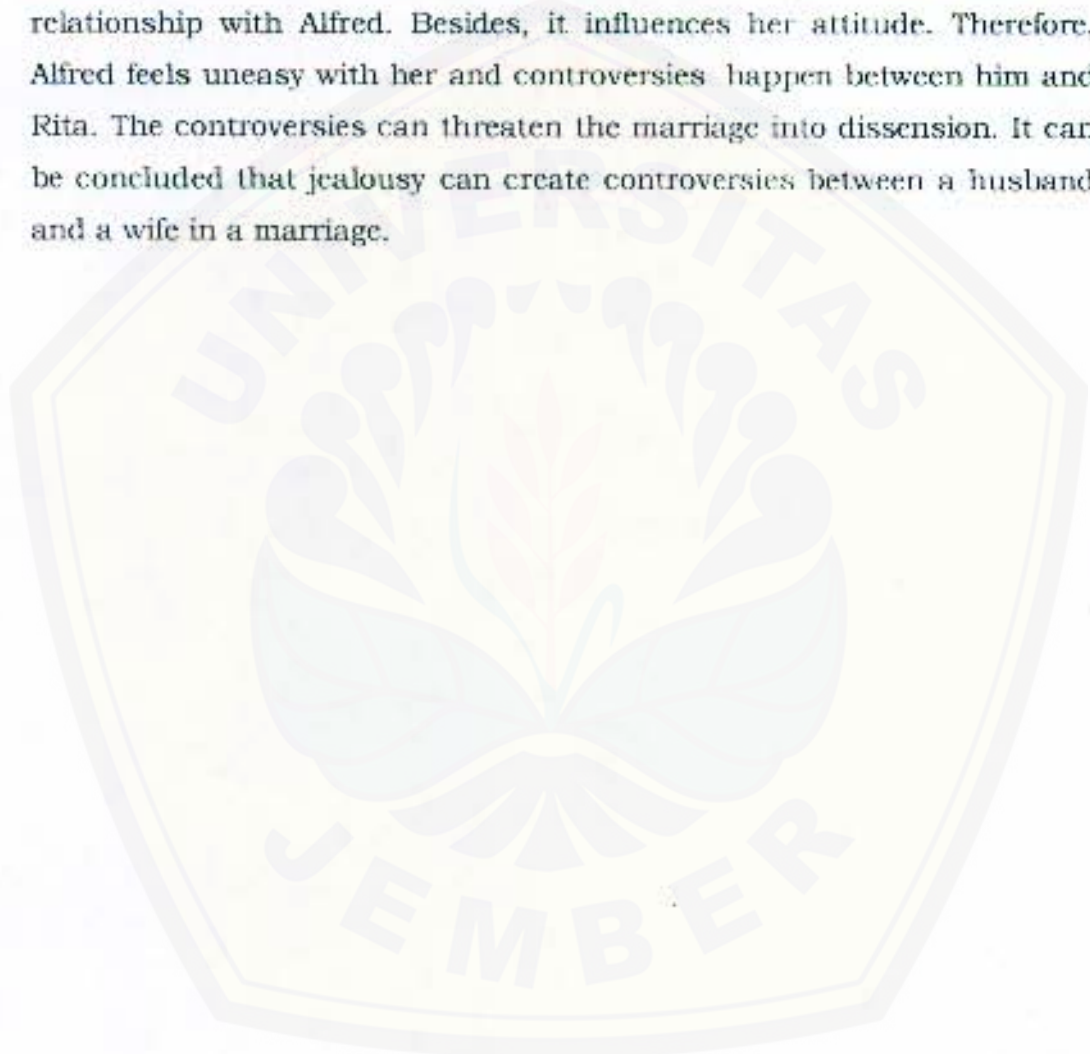
From the definitions above, it can be summarized that the marriage is the legal union between man and woman to form a family as a husband and a wife. In a marriage too, a husband and a wife will not be related only in sexual relationship, but also in maintaining house hold financial matter. This relationship also involves the children in it. They will bear children and others based on love and responsibility. Then conflict is the difference, disagreement or opposing persons in interests, ideas with himself, others or surroundings.

In short, marriage conflict is the difference of interests, ideas which happen to a husband and a wife in a marriage institution.

The marriage between Alfred Allmers and Rita is filled by happiness. Rita loves her husband very much and does not want to share him with anybody else. When Alfred gives much attention to his crippled son and his half-sister, Rita feels that she is drifted away. She is jealous of them who have close relationship with Alfred. Her jealousy may be hatred that influences her attitude. It causes the conflicts in her marriage especially with her husband.

jealousy with love. Jealousy and love are a kind of emotion. This feeling of love can change into jealousy if what he loves is seized by someone else. At last, jealousy can turn into hatred. Therefore, jealousy is usually followed by hatred.

In *Little Eyolf*, the jealousy of love is the main cause of Rita's marriage conflicts. It creates her hatred toward anyone who has close relationship with Alfred. Besides, it influences her attitude. Therefore, Alfred feels uneasy with her and controversies happen between him and Rita. The controversies can threaten the marriage into dissension. It can be concluded that jealousy can create controversies between a husband and a wife in a marriage.



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