

Effect of Butterfly Theory on *The Pillars of Society* in light of Northrop Frye's Criticism

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Abstract

Henrik Ibsen being the founder of Modernism in theatrical works and the father of Realism in scriptwriting, had revealed his values of Realism by writing the play The Pillars of Society in 1877. The play is about a corrupt businessman who made his fortune by stealing and blaming an innocent person and assumes himself to be a pillar of society. His affair with an actress results in an illegitimate and unacknowledged daughter. After his son is placed in a perilous position, he realizes the error of his ways and repents. The framework of the research was to apply the Butterfly Effect Theory and Northrop Frye's Criticism on plots and kinds of heroes to identify the types of the particular realistic hero (i.e. Karsten Bernick) and the ending. The analysis represents the minor events that took place in the four act play that leads to the defined ending. The results portray certain dialogues and events that were reasonable to reach the ending and describe the protagonist as a low mimetic hero with a redemptive ending.

Keywords: *Butterfly Effect Theory, Northrop Frye's Criticism, Low Mimetic Hero, Redemptive Ending, Realism*

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Introduction

In the times, when attracting the audience to theatre and providing it with remarkable and polished characters was difficult and challenging, Henrik Ibsen raised his pen to become a literary genius and wrote countable works that are cherished till the day. Henrik Ibsen was born in Norway in 1828 and died in 1906 after giving his very famous and realistic writings to the world. He wrote while in exile and produced the tragedy 'Brand'. He also wrote classics like *A Doll's House* (1879), *Hedda Gabler* (1890), and *The Pillars of Society*

(1877). Ibsen worked in Norwegian Theatre in Bergen as a writer and manager to get insight into theatrical ventures. Ibsen wrote a controversial work *Ghosts* but did not watch it being performed in theatre because it covered forbidden topics and was an attack on contemporary morality. Henrik Ibsen wrote social satires and realistic plays that draw attention towards moral issues and economic circumstances of that time through flawed characters belonging to a middle-class background (Adams).

His play *The Pillars of Society* was written in 1877 and performed in

**EFFECT OF BUTTERFLY THEORY ON THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY
IN LIGHT OF NORTHROP FRYE'S CRITICISM**

Munich and other theatres. The play comprises four acts and depicts the story of Karsten Bernick who has developed his business and false reputation through fraud and deception. He has spread rumours of robbery, affair, and elopement about Johan Tonnesen, who is his wife's brother. The return of Lona and Johan ignites Bernick's inner frights and causes mental dissatisfaction for him. Bernick plots the murder of Johan and does not share his intentions with anyone. He plans to drown Johan with the ship 'Indian Girl' but he falls prey to his trap when his son boards on the same ship. This triggers the fatherly emotions in Karsten and he ultimately repents. The greatest evil planned by Bernick shook him to roots when his son was in danger. Thus, he publicly renounces his past. This ending has been criticized and Ibsen seemed to have great trouble while writing this play with Norwegian Settings. This research aims to justify the criticized ending as to why it was only Mr. Bernick who revealed the truth and no other character or circumstance did so. To progress with this investigation, certain dialogues and events have been evaluated with the help of the Butterfly Effect Theory in the light of Northrop Frye's Criticism which further justifies the type of character Karsten Bernick is shown.

To evaluate and justify the ending of the play, dialogues and scenes have been selected which contributed as the minor steps that lead to a complex ending of the play. The dialogues and scenes were evaluated and analyzed as a flap of the wing of a butterfly with the help of The Butterfly Effect Theory.

Moreover, to rationalize the type of character and series of events, Northrop Frye's Criticism has been applied that aided to give the reason for the type of character and the storyline which progressed in a defined way.

Literature Review

A research conducted in 2011 by Cardullo sheds light on the slanting outlook of critics who do not consider Ibsen's play *Pillars of the Society* be worth studying today. The author made note of the assumption that this play is regarded as an "apprenticeship play" and often ignored or accepted with quite a reluctance in literary essays. This is due to the sense that modern audience is aware and educated; therefore, this drama appears to be old-fashioned and commonplace. Although this problem play transformed Ibsen among the prominent revolutionary writers and social crusaders, therefore he reconsidered and reassessed the reformist work of Ibsen (Cardullo 2011).

To study the contrasting and conflicting perceptions of America in Ibsen's play *Pillars of the Society*, Gulddal (2012) explicitly evaluated the discursive strings within the narrative of the play revolving around the notion of America. For this purpose, an amalgamation of textual and historical analysis was carried out. The researcher made a note of the dialogues on the biased and negative beliefs and judgments widespread and inculcated in the social setting of the play and discussed its various interpretations. The directed reading of the play sheds

light on the notion and realization that European prejudices regarding anti-Americanism are at the same time grounded in baseless opinions and also acknowledged the American culture with reverence though with hesitation. As represented by the actions and conversations of Bernick who simultaneously disregards the American culture yet strives to achieve the American Dream of success. Moreover, this comparative study also discerned the fact that although Henrik Ibsen was unable to extricate himself from the partial cognizance of the nineteenth-century European conception of American lifestyle and customs; nonetheless he expertly managed to represent this conception craftily in his play which hints at his adeptness as a dramatist (Gulddal). Through Henrik Ibsen's play, Pillars of the Society, he artfully depicted the distinction between the divine father and the authoritative fatherhood portrayed by Karsten Bernick, whose control spreads out of his family home to the labourers and citizens of the community. The research was orchestrated by Shideler (1997) to explore the relation between Charles Darwin's concept of biocentrism and the theory of natural selection and Ibsen's depiction of disarrayed patriarchal power in his drama to realize the transient attitude of nineteenth-century Norway. The results of this paper indicate that women often possess the strength required to challenge the obstructing patriarchal authority displayed by weak and displaced male characters of Ibsen's drama. This element contributes and is related to Darwin's attack and

challenge against Creationism and Divine Patriarch (Shideler, 1997).

Conceptual Framework

Hermann Northrop Frye, a Canadian Literary Critic who published two notable works, died at the age of 79 in 1991. The first book was published in 1947 with the name *Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake*. In this book, he studied the Visionary Symbolism in Blake's work. Literary Grounds were set by Northrop Frye in 1957 when he published a book named *Anatomy of Criticism*. The book emphasizes the modes and genres of fictional text and it was a challenge for the New Criticism. This book forecast the imaginative patterns upon which literary works were constructed instead of focusing on the character's language or analyzing the individual language in Literature works. The book also represents the importance of exemplars in Literature works. He organized the categories of protagonist/hero in the fictional works depending upon five means of Narration. i.e., 1) Mythic 2) Romantic 3) High mimetic 4) Low mimetic 5) Ironic.

1) Mythic heroes is superior in level and his surroundings. They represent the stories of Gods or Goddesses like in *Oedipus Rex* or *Medusa*. The heroes are Gods that is why they do not live among common people but they possess the qualities or characteristics of the common man i.e., anguish, war, jealousy, and love, etc. This dysfunctionality was found in Greek Gods.

*EFFECT OF BUTTERFLY THEORY ON THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY
IN LIGHT OF NORTHROP FRYE'S CRITICISM*

2) A romantic hero is superior in standard in contrast to the abode. This represents the Legends of the folk tales, for example, Hercules and King Arthur. The hero is not a typical hero destined to fall in love but the 'romantic' represents the 'imaginative idea' about a perfect hero who would be adventurous, mysterious, and a benchmark person. His actions are considered spectacular though he is a normal human being. He leads society to help.

3) A high mimetic protagonist is the one who is superior in rank to his surroundings and is the representation of Classic tragedies of Kings, Queens, Princes, and Presidents, etc. A high mimetic hero is a leader who is driven by authority, passion, and power but he serves nature and the people.

4) A low mimetic hero is not superior in extent or his surroundings. He is the realistic portrayal of a hero from real life and also a representation of Realism. The hero can be a common person who is basically 'one of us' and possesses a common sense of humanity.

5) An ironic hero is the one who is inferior in power or intelligence to his surroundings. The hero is unaware of his inferiority but the audience knows that the audience is superior to him/ her.

Sometimes, the hero may appear as an antagonist or may have anti-hero characteristics. He may struggle emotionally, psychologically, or in both ways but it also helps to engage the audience psychologically

and emotionally. The hero may be compulsive and appear to be normal but actually, he or she is driven by her or his mind. The hero may have a character flaw that would lead to an unforeseen ending, for example, the character of Hamlet.

In *Anatomy of Criticism*, Frye proposes various types of Plots. A plot is a sequence of events that occur on the principle of Cause and Effect. The series of events are connected and end at a particular point. The plot is also called a storyline or the journey of a hero. The types that are proposed by Frye depending upon the narrative elements are 1) Maturation Plot 2) Redemption Plot 3) Punitive Plot 4) Testing Plot 5) Education Plot 6) Disillusionment Plot.

1) In Maturation Plot the storyline revolves around the coming-of-age story of the protagonist that starts from his or her childhood to a ripened age where the story is at present for example *Harry Potter* series.

2) In Redemption Plot, the audience observes a moralistic change in the protagonist and he turns good from bad for example Dostoevsky's *Crime and Punishment*.

3) In the Punitive Plot, the protagonist turns bad and is punished, for example, *Oedipus Rex*.

4) In the Education Plot, the audience observes a change in the protagonist's view of life and he restrains from negative.

- 5) In the Disillusionment Plot, one observes a change in the protagonist's point of view regarding the world that turns negative from positive.
- 6) In Testing Plot, there is a conflict between willpower and temptations for example *Murder The Cathedral*.

Chaos Theory was proposed by Edward Norton Lorenz in the 1960s. In Chaos Theory, The Butterfly Effect Theory demonstrates how small and minimal changes alter the complex system. It was suggested that a butterfly flaps its wings and at a farther distance, this flapping can cause tornadoes. This originated the Butterfly Effect Theory. As for a human being, he might end in a complex situation. Minor actions lead to major consequences. For example, the tragic end of *Oedipus Rex* was a complex ending as his parents' actions of abandoning him and challenging fate lead to the defined ending.

Analysis

Henrik Ibsen's Pillars of Society casts a stark contrast and juxtaposition with the true definition of Society's Pillars: Someone who is an energetic, respected, and significant person of a local social bubble is considered to be a pillar of society. There are seven pillars of society that constitute, influence, and shape society i.e., Religion, Family, Culture, Government, Business, Media, and Education. The irony in the play is that out of the seven institutions that hold a community together and share the burden, there are only two characters that play the role of the actual seven

Pillars of Society i.e., Rorlund and Bernick. These two characters govern business and education as Bernick is a businessman who secretly holds all the major business of the town and Rorlund is a schoolmaster. Both characters voluntarily appoint duties to themselves to serve the town. Rorlund in his opinion, educates the female characters of the play whereas, Bernick plays the role of media in spreading the news of Johan's robbery, affair, and elopement. The women gossip regularly and never let the past die. The men of the town, who are rich, have formed the administration of their own and make the decisions for the town themselves. The pillar of culture is weak in the play as the culture of the town and its people are presented as being conservative and a hypocrite. The pillar of family is also weak and controlled by Bernick who has upheld a façade of having a strong family bond but his very own family hides the most powerful secrets which shake the foundations of Pillar of Family. The pillar of religion plays no role in the play as the characters have no religious standards or morals to uphold or follow. The story of Henrik Ibsen's *Pillars of Society* revolves around a town that is strangled in the talks and gossip of a sin committed by a town's resident fifteen years ago. Presently, having the allegations of robbery and having an affair with an actress and then leaving her and running to America, followed by his sister Lona, Johan returns to his hometown. Mr and Mrs Bernick are not happy with his decision of returning but Mrs Bernick is in a dilemma; neither can she ask her brother Johan to go back nor can she ask her half-sister Lona to

*EFFECT OF BUTTERFLY THEORY ON THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY
IN LIGHT OF NORTHROP FRYE'S CRITICISM*

take a decision. Meanwhile, Martha, who is a former teacher and Mr Bernick's unmarried sister, is raising Johan's and the actress's presumably illegitimate child. The girl is infatuated with Mr Rorlund who teaches her and is one of the *Pillars of Society*. Certain events reveal the truth that Dina is Bernick's illegitimate daughter and it was he who had an affair with the actress though Johan took the blame just to run away from the small town and get free air. Meanwhile, Bernick's son Olaf is also planning an escape in search of adventures. All of this was confessed by Mr Bernick himself.

The ending does not simply portray the honest confession of Karsten Bernick but also adheres to the fact that many stereotypes that were aiding the progression of the story led Mr Bernick to finally hold the truth together and face it in the eye. The society which he confronts was already blinded by many stereotypes and it was difficult for him to embody such truths in people's mind.

Karsten Bernick is the protagonist and more like the antagonist of the play *Pillars of Society* and this is a contradiction in itself. He represents small-town politics. Karsten is a businessman who owns a shipyard and is going to contribute to Railway lines in the town in Norway. He considers himself a Pillar of Society who looks after the town's people because he thinks that he has to serve them through the real reason behind this facade is his gains. Karsten Bernick had an affair with Lona Hessel in his youth but he married Lona's sister Betty

to raise his social standard and status. The truth is revealed when he confesses to Lona that he had to support his family and he married Betty out of circumstances and his marriage has been loveless.

Karsten had an affair with the town's actress and she bore an illegitimate daughter of Karsten, Dina Dorf. According to the characteristics of Northrop's protagonists, Karsten Bernick is a low mimetic hero because he is a common man and shares all the humanly qualities of manipulation, hatred, deceit, lying, plotting murders, fraud, and diverting allegations upon others.

The play starts in a drawing-room where some women are gossiping and sewing while Rorlund is also present, as he states:

RORLUND (drawing his chair nearer): Don't speak of it, my dear lady. Are you not all of you making some sacrifice in a good cause?--and that willingly and gladly? These poor fallen creatures for whose rescue we are working may be compared to soldiers wounded on the field of battle; you, ladies, are the kind-hearted sisters of mercy who prepare the lint for these stricken ones, lay the bandages softly on their wounds, heal them and cure them.(5)

Rorlund, being a manipulative male in society is altering women's mindset by instilling his ideas. He plays with their thinking and alters the fact that women are considered secondary. He is artistically calling them saviours

through attaching secondary and post duties to them.

Everyone gets shocked when Lona and Johan return because of being suspected guilty. Nobody is expected to return to the place of their dishonour. Therefore, the fact that Johan and Lona return must be seen as a courageous act. Alternatively, it could show that Johan was unaware of the rumours about him/ Whereas, Lona is suspected to be up to something as she removes the curtains from the window and says:

LONA: I will let some fresh air into it, Mr Parson. (26)

The fresh air symbolizes advancement and a novelty that is going to influence or alter the life of many people in the room. The dialogue foreshadows the decision of Dina to go to America and of Olaf to plan an escape, of Bernick to confess his truth and reveal his true self in front of Lona and his family. In Butterfly Effect, the return of Lona and her dialogue can be considered as the first step leading to the larger event as she has finally arrived after many years and seems certain for not returning.

As Mr and Mrs Bernick have conversed over the fact of their disliking the return of Lona and Johan, Mr Bernick clearly shows his disregard towards his wife's sister with whom he shares an infatuated past. The irony resides when in his wife's absence; Mr Bernick will confess his love for Lona and will explain his actions by portraying himself as a victim of fate and circumstances.

BERNICK: No--who is there? And to have them on my shoulders just at this moment! Without a doubt, they will create a scandal in some way or another--she, in particular. It is simply a calamity to be connected with such folk in any way! (28)

While Mr Bernick is busy disrespecting his wife's family by saying:

BERNICK: ...And to think of their coming home now--just now, when it is particularly necessary for me that I should stand well in every respect with the town and with the Press. Our newspaper men will be sending paragraphs to the papers in the other towns about here. ...In a community like ours--(Throws his gloves down on the table.) And I have not a soul here to whom I can talk about it and to whom I can go for support (28).

His words represent his insecurity that Lona might tell Betty the truth, and Betty might believe her thus, he also plays the role of a helpless victim who has to look after the community in the hard times of disgrace. He also insults his worker Aune (a worker at his shipyard) who symbolizes the helpless poor labourers who are dependent on their unselected leader, Mr Bernick. His sudden outburst of anger upon Aune reflects his disturbed mind and his chaotic thoughts. Bernick without considering is risking his reputation in hands of his selfishness because he had been thinking about the truth only which only he, Lona, and Johan knew. His constant insecurity about the disclosure

*EFFECT OF BUTTERFLY THEORY ON THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY
IN LIGHT OF NORTHROP FRYE'S CRITICISM*

of secrets had kept him alert for which he insults the two characters who are bound to bear his insults and stay quiet. Betty Bernick is a harmless woman who will be held responsible for Olaf's escape and Aune is an old worker who is bound to work under Mr Bernick to have meals and earn for his family. Mrs Bernick is also a harmless character because Mr Bernick has manipulated her to an extent that she thinks that her family was responsible for bringing disgrace to the family name by robbing and running away. It depicts the submissive behaviour and mentality of Mrs Bernick constructed through the years of manipulation, hypocrisy, and fraud.

Mrs Bernick: How can I help thinking of it just now? After all, he is my brother--still, it is not on his account that I am distressed, but because of all the unpleasantness it would mean for you. Karsten, I am so dreadfully afraid! (28)

Whereas, for Aune, Mr Bernick says:
BERNICK: You read and think too much Aune; it does you no good, and that is what makes you dissatisfied with your lot. (31)

His words 'dissatisfied with your lot' are ironically portraying his inner guilt and burden of his past sins and misdeeds that Mr Bernick is unable to apprehend and confront. All of these mixed feelings of controlling the labour at Shipyard and expressing his inner self while insulting Aune can be considered as another step towards him bursting his feelings all at once. Karsten, being a strong manipulative businessman, had

focused on building his business empire through lying and he never focused on his misdeeds, for which he never objected. He never thought to submit to any of his doings but the return of Lona Hessel had influenced him a lot and made him ponder upon his ignored and neglected past, otherwise, in the past 15 years, he had never felt so insecure and insensitive towards himself or others. A sudden awakening of his conscience had disturbed him and caused him to speak unintentionally to reveal his state of mind.

The next minor step that is considered as a flap of butterfly's wing in Butterfly Effect Theory is the scene of Act 2 in which Mr Bernick tries to give a false sense of security, respect, and of being in debt to Johan for Johan's favour of keeping Mr Bernick's hidden affair secret many years ago. He does this to manipulate Johan like his sister (Mrs Bernick) and builds a strong trust. As Johan had been away for so many years and by breathing the fresh air of America, he had built an impression of his town as a non-conservative society and this was also a reason for him coming back. He had misjudged his society, being unaware of the restrained and confined mentalities of the town's people. Johan had thought that the matter had been closed for so long and nobody would have remembered his silly mistake of taking up someone else's blame. Whereas, Karsten played his cards and manipulated Johan by saying:

BERNICK: My home and all the happiness that it means to me--my position here as a citizen--all these I

owe to you. (40)

The words 'I owe to you' also symbolize the inner fright of Mr Bernick for losing his position, family reputation, and money with the revelation of the truth. These words are a portrayal of his insecurity, consciousness, and guilt Bernick as he realizes that he has done wrong to Lona and Johan. The words also portray the cunningness of Bernick to persuade Johan in keeping his mouth closed and not discussing the fact with anyone.

The unlimited trust of Johan in Mr Bernick's goodwill and high morals also shakes the roots of Mr Bernick's facade though Johan is unaware of the fact that his name is never defended in his absence and that he after so many years is still the town's hot gossip. Mr Bernick through his scheming words had altered Johan's thinking which never bothered to question anything from him. Karsten Bernick has the natural knack of deceiving others by use of his simple words laced with insincere expressions and torn excuses. Through the gift of language, he falsely communicates and unjustly explains the fabricated events of Johan's escape to America, Lona's outburst at the news of Betty and Bernick's marriage, and the illegitimate heritage of Dina Dorf. Bernick is not only patently aware of his devious actions at every step of the way but also unabashedly provides justifications for his duplicitous deeds, just as the character of Humbert from *Lolita* by Vladimir Nabokov is distinctly sensible of his sinful exertions, "One moment I was ashamed and frightened, another recklessly

optimistic. Taboos strangled me" (Nabokov, 1.5.9). Through the power of words, Bernick eloquently establishes his superior nature and facade of the ideal of society. The cunningness, tact and need to control everything and everyone around him for his gains are comparable to the control of the manipulative deftness of *Big Brother* in 1984 by George Orwell, where the ruling party contorts and distorts reality for their purpose of exerting absolute control as "Power is in tearing human minds to pieces and putting them together again in new shapes of your choosing" (Orwell, 266). Similarly, Bernick spreads malicious rumours and gains control by stepping on the heels of his forced labour, his submissive wife, the gullible community, and the absent Hessel siblings. Moreover, Bernick stoops low like the character of Aurangzeb Khurram from *Moth Smoke* by Mohsin Hamid, who traps his rival unjustly in a false criminal suit to get rid of him permanently. Bernick traps Johan in false rumours and gossip to get rid of him.

JOHAN: Put your scruples to rest, my dear Karsten...I understand that now-- but I was proud of it! Who would not have been? Who would not willingly have sacrificed himself for you?-- especially as it only meant a month's talk in the town, and enabled me to get away into the wide world. (41)

In the forthcoming events, Mr Bernick interferes with Hessel siblings and does not let Mrs Bernick talk to Lona or Johan for a long time and does not want them to talk long as he fears

*EFFECT OF BUTTERFLY THEORY ON THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY
IN LIGHT OF NORTHROP FRYE'S CRITICISM*

that Lona might tell Betty about their previous infatuation towards each other. He even talks to Lona in Betty's absence and asks for her forgiveness for marrying Betty. The reason that Bernick expresses his abhorrence towards Lona and Johan was that his restless conscience hunted him that if the siblings talk, Lona might tell Betty the truth. Bernick was morally incorrect, corrupt, and shallow whereas Johan and Lona were morally correct and pure. This strong contrast added more to Bernick's insecurities and remorse. The concept of family bonding and sibling love shivered to Mr Bernick and made him insecure. Bernick not only subtly threatens but also admits part truths in front of Hessel siblings to convey his false sincerity and veil his true intentions just as Nick Dunne, to cover himself admits, "I am a big fan of the lie of omission." (Gillian 133). Similarly, Bernick spreads the news of the theft but with the sheath of the lie of omission, fails to accurately inform the society of the actual culprit. The manipulation, chiselling and the acts of con conducted by Bernick Karsten are not restricted to genders, such as the character of Amy Elliott Dunne from the novel *Gone Girl* by Gillian Flynn, who beautifully portrays the depths of deception people can fall into to gain power, influence, and control. Bernick, in his cleverness and ill-intentions, divulges his secret of buying up the land near the intended railway tracks to not only deftly threaten the Hessel siblings but also rile them up with himself. He tries in vain to make the siblings' accomplices in his dubiousness to ensure their cooperation and

pledge of secrecy, just as the sentiment expressed in the novel 1984, "By sharing a small act of thought crime he turned the two of them into accomplices" (Orwell, 157). However, by the end of the play, it is Bernick himself who concurs the trade secrets openly. This profession of Bernick is brought out due to his unexpressed emotions of guilt and contrition that nagged him constantly and would not let his consciousness rest as the sentiment expressed in 1984 sheds light at "If you want to keep a secret, you must also hide it from yourself" (Orwell, 283).

Bernick cannot bear the idea of Betty Bernick conversing and mingling with her relatives, due to the ill-assumed notion and fear that the Hessel siblings will disclose his secrets to his ignorant and unaware wife. Other than the conscience and qualm of Bernick disturbing him, Bernick in a way still loved Lona Hessel and even admitted the truth in a vain attempt to rile her and partly because he was unable to move on from the past and memories just as Nick Carraway assumes of Jay Gatsby, "He talked a lot about the past, and I gathered that he wanted to recover something, some idea of himself perhaps, that had gone into loving Daisy" (Fitzgerald, 88). However, these contradicting acts of Karsten resemble the selfish and conceited personality of Tom Buchanan of *The Great Gatsby* who indulges in an extra-marital affair but is unable to understand and tolerate the happiness of his wife, Daisy Buchanan.

BERNICK: Yes, that is

excellent, Krap--capital! Send twenty pounds to the fund for dinners to the poor. (Turns round.) Lona! (Comes forward.) Are you alone? Is Betty not coming in? (48)

LONA: No. Would you like me to call her? (48)

BERNICK: No, no--not at all. Oh, Lona, you don't know how anxious I have been to speak openly to you--after having begged for your forgiveness (48).

His sentimental excuses to manipulate Lona refer to hidden propaganda: to hide the truth. Very vaguely and unnecessarily, Karsten admits his love for Lona in awe to persuade her to seal her lips and not tell anyone the truth. He renders himself as a man strangled in confusion and family honour in the past who had to save himself. His selfish deed was out of circumstances but Lona is guilt-tripping him. The reason for Lona pricking on Karsten was to make him move on and accept Betty as his lovable wife. Till now, Bernick was in denial of his actions because he was satisfied with what he did. But Lona out of concern could not bear with it. It was unacceptable for Lona to see her youth hero ignoring his conscience and dwelling more in the false life. Contrary to this, Lona wanted to bring justice to Dina and Johan; this is why she wanted to reveal the truth to everyone but in a harmless way. She kept on irritating Bernick with his deeds which ultimately played a role as a minor action that formed the major ending. Lona's struggles to get Dina and Johan

engaged were also a guilt-tripping plan for Bernick because, in this way, he ultimately had to give a name to his illegitimate daughter. Bernick admitted his greed in buying the Railway property in front of Lona and that clicked Lona in knowing the restlessness in Bernick's mind.

BERNICK: Let me tell you the plain truth of how things stood with me then. My mother, as you remember, was at the head of the business, but she was absolutely without any business ability whatever. I was hurriedly summoned home from Paris; times were critical, and they relied on me to set things straight. What did I find? I found--and you must keep this a profound secret--a house on the brink of ruin. Yes--as good as on the brink of ruin, this old respected house which had seen three generations of us. What else could I--the son, the only son--do then look about for some means of saving it? (50) Karsten very smartly plays the blame game and is not ready to confess the truth that he is the actual father of Dina Dorf and he had an affair with Lona and the actress and there was no robbery for which Johan was responsible, instead it was Bernick himself. His blame game and his manipulation of Lona sound another flap of the butterfly which will cause a tornado by the play's end.

BERNICK: Do you suppose I acted as I did from selfish motives? If I had stood alone then, I would have begun all over again with cheerful courage. But you do not understand how the life of a man of business, with his tremendous responsibilities, is bound up with that of the business

*EFFECT OF BUTTERFLY THEORY ON THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY
IN LIGHT OF NORTHROP FRYE'S CRITICISM*

which falls to his inheritance. Do you realize that the prosperity or the ruin of hundreds--of thousands--depends on him? Can you not take into consideration the fact that the whole community in which both you and I were born would have been affected to the most dangerous extent if the house of Bernick had gone to smash? (51)

In Act 3, a fatherly fear of abandonment in Karsten is revealed as he frets about his son Olaf's carefree nature. And offspring's love and concern are more than lover's. The threat given by Olaf of running away is ironic as Karsten never defended Johan's elopement in the town. Out of anger, he mockingly suggests Olaf run away. This is ironic as Olaf does run away, however, unsuccessfully.

BERNICK (speaking to his wife, who is in the other room): There! ...And then the young scamp dares to threaten that he will run away! Just let him try it!--... I have no fancy for being left childless... (57)

Bernick does not stop at this point. While demanding within regarding "Indian girl" he expresses himself and mentions his conscience. One who truly knows him (Lona) could have easily judged what Bernick is referring to. But he is still anxious about his reputation and money that he has gathered through ill means all these years. His guilt and insecurities are taking over him but very tactfully, he is concealing the state of his mind but somehow, his expressions or his dialogues reveal his state of mind, upon which other characters do not focus

except Rorlund and Lona, one being an old friend and the other being an old lover, do recognize his agitated feelings but Mr Bernick does not agree to the fact.

BERNICK: Report the affair...I could not have such a thing on my conscience... (60)

As the side events progress and Bernick becomes more conscious about the circumstances, he unwillingly confesses to Lona that he would be devastated with the revelation of the truth. This may have been done to gain Lona's sympathy by portraying himself as a helpless victim or this may have been confronted out of the horror of being caught and judged by the town's people whom he has been ruling for so long. Another flap of Butterfly's wing as the villain himself admits his insecurities and inner frights.

BERNICK: After what you heard yesterday, you will understand that my whole life will be ruined if the truth comes to light. (62)

Bernick does not only struggle to clear his slate but also thrives in getting his deal done for the Railway Track. A venomous attribute of a leader who runs a town forcefully defines Karsten's deeds. Act 3 ends with a visible tension on Karsten's face that has been observed by Rorlund too. Karsten's face grew paler as if something held his mind captivated but Karsten did not have the courage and any plan of confessing his truth. His appearance hints that Karsten has been pondering upon something lately.

Meanwhile, Olaf has made plans to escape on Indian Girl the next day when the story progresses to Act 4. The scene starts with the preparations for the upcoming event and all the administrative men are busy, Karsten is happy inside as he had previously planned the drowning of Johan by Indian Girl. Such heinous plotting to kill his relative was acceptable to Karsten but he gets traumatized on getting the news of his son's misplacement. The last selfish act of his son can be considered as the triggering effect for Bernick that ultimately hit him with reality. Though Bernick had been pondering upon the matter later this had not been highlighted in the play but the love and sense of fatherhood stand out. Despite being a manipulative liar, Karsten lost his cunningness as a father when he said,

BERNICK: I shall never see him again, I tell you. I have lost him, Lona; and--I see it now--he never was mine... (91)

The insecurity and anguish of never seeing his only son, the threat of killing his son by his plotting, breaking his family, and the fright of losing his position in the community-led Karsten Bernick to take the decision of confessing his crimes in front of his family and reveal his true identity in front of his community. This helped him let go of the burden which he had been bearing for so long. Another significant flap of the Butterfly's wing that contributes immensely to the confession of Bernick is the incident of Olaf's temporary disappearance. Bernick wrecks with guilt and

compunction over the fear of losing his beloved son, whom he considers his legacy. Due to his pivotal trepidation, Bernick forgoes his Machiavellian and fallacious ways just like the character of Niklaus Mikaelson from the TV show, *The Originals*, disavows his tendency of vampirism for the sake of his daughter.

All the previous steps led to the major complex ending of the play and Karsten living a sinful life finally ends at a pure destination i.e. the path of truth and honesty. Also, when Rorlund brags about the generosity and honesty of Mr Bernick in front of the town during the sermon, this adds more restlessness to Mr Bernick's conscience because he was well aware of his hypocritical nature and deceit in his appearance. As Roland says:

RORLUND: I have only a few more words to say, Mr Bernick. What you have done for your native place we all know has not been done with any underlying idea of its bringing tangible profit to yourself. ... (97)

As only Bernick was aware of his cruel nature and of the fact that he was a merchant of deceit, fraud, and lying; thus, he could not at any cost continue with his denial of the truth. He realized that it was the time of acceptance, repentance, and of acknowledging the truth, and confronting the true face of his character. Bernick through all the restlessness and anxiousness had realized that revealing his true identity will bring him peace of mind and as a saviour of the town, he needed to be as

transparent as possible.

According to Northrop Frye's types of plots, the storyline of 'Pillars of Society' is of Redemption and Education. A visible moralistic change has been observed in Karsten Bernick's character as he has accepted his fate and has coped with his previous sins by confessing the truth and realizing his mistake. The point of view of Bernick about has also changed as previously he thought that life was only meant to fraud people and gain something but by the end of the play, he recognized the true meaning of life and clearly uttered that everyone is responsible for his'/ hers' conscience. He accepted the reality of life that family is the greatest treasure and not every wealth is related to money.

BERNICK: But come to no decision tonight. I entreat everyone to go home--to collect his thoughts--to look into his own heart. When once more you can think calmly, then it will be seen whether I have lost or won by speaking out. Goodbye! I have still much--very much--to repent of; but that concerns my conscience only. Good night! Take away all these signs of rejoicing. We must all feel that they are out of place here. (101)

Discussion

This paper investigates the surface happenings that led to the redemptive end of Karsten Bernick in Pillars of Society. The play Pillar of Society was written in 1877. The writer faced a lot of criticism due to the unscratched ending of the protagonist

and how easily the protagonist had been saved by fate or by consequences. The paper aims to unleash the comprehended minor actions that would have led to the complex and unbearable ending of a villainess and anti-hero protagonist.

The textual analysis of this play carried out through the Butterfly Effect Theory and Northrop Frye's criticism reveals that certain minor and collectable happenings in the play have been a result of the non proposed unacceptable ending of such a character that is Karsten Bernick. In the first Act, the return of Lona and Johan represents that history is going to reveal itself. Bernick is at unease since the return of his previous lover. Whereas, he restrains his wife to talk to Lona as Lona is the only person who knows the real identity and harmful motives of Bernick.

According to Northrop Frye's types of protagonist Bernick is perceived to be a low mimetic hero because he is one of the common men but considers himself a superior one who is responsible for serving the community he is a part of. Though he has given this responsibility to himself without anyone's consent or consideration. Karsten is revealed to be a low moralistic fraud, who married the sister of his secret girlfriend for greed and money. He spends his whole life in a loveless marriage maintaining a facade of his reputation.

Though he is considered a respectful person and a leader in his community at the return of Lona and

Johan he feels insecure and unsafe due to which a constant bug hits his mind about the revelation of the truth that he has been hiding for so many years. For the sake of his deceptive appearance in the community, he has let the rumours live up to the present time for the last 15 years about Johan's affair, robbery, and elopement. He plays the victim very tactfully and Johan considers him his loyal friend but actually, he has not defended Johan's name in his absence. Another minor and collectable action is that Bernick confesses his love for Lona and blames his wife and circumstances for his loveless marriage. Then he also challenges his son Olaf to run and abandon the parents. His inner fright is portrayed when he challenges his son and his son runs away.

Meanwhile, he was plotting Johan's murder by drowning him with the Indian girl to kill the person who kept his secrets all along but falls prey to his trap when his son is caught on board of Indian Girl. This was the last triggering action that led to the realization of family love and family bonding and the importance of freedom and light in people's life. Instead of finding happiness in money or building a business empire, Bernick realized that his family mattered more than anything. Moreover, Lona's dialogue of letting fresh air in foresight that she is up to guilt-tripping Bernick because now she wanted to get home and get her the hero of her youth back.

The greed, ambitions, and desires of Bernick become more irrepressible the more crimes he

commits with time. This desire of acquiring more material and tangible wealth pumps Bernick's criminal sprees. He not only lies, steals, manipulates, threatens but also partakes in an attempted murder conspiracy of Johan Hessel. This tendency of gaining wealth through questionable means and to commit sporadic crimes to attain his objectionable goals is similar to the cunning manipulation and cleverness of Hannibal Lecter from *The Silence of the Lambs*, who acknowledges "He covets. How do we begin to covet? We begin by coveting what we see every day" (Harris). Moreover, this desire and need for affluence and possessions of Bernick are similar to that of the character of The Stork from the 2008 novel *The White Tiger*, who commit the criminal acts of bribery, extortion, and violence to restore their fortune, dominance, and authority.

Nevertheless, this tragic flaw of greed and accumulation gives wind to the Butterfly's wings as it leads Bernick Karsten to his redemptive end, just like the vindictive end of Lady Macbeth from Shakespeare's tragic play *Macbeth*. Lady Macbeth in her ambitious drive forced her husband Macbeth to rebel and orchestrated the murder of King Duncan. By the end of the play, the guilty conscience of the headstrong Lady Macbeth strikes her and leads her to eventual madness. Correspondingly, like Humbert and Lady Macbeth, Bernick also accedes to his transgressions leading to a redemptive end. Bernick will be led to admit his wrongdoings and tear up his carefully crafted appearance in front of

**EFFECT OF BUTTERFLY THEORY ON THE PILLARS OF SOCIETY
IN LIGHT OF NORTHROP FRYE'S CRITICISM**

his community, through the realizations of remorse and self-reproach.

These small happenings have led to the un-scratched ending of the play which is now justified, comprehensible and redemptive. The flawless ending of Bernick by confessing the truth of his actual misdeeds educates him morally and changes his point of view about life i.e. to give, not only gain. He adapts a positive behaviour by the end of the play and in Northrop Frye's types of plot, the plot is redemptive.

Conclusions

The ending of the play is un-scratched and not tragic because the storyline is shown to be redemptive. The protagonist possessed all the common human characteristics and thus is a low mimetic hero. Secondly, the attributes were negative but the ending leads to a wake-up call of conscience and realization of the truth which makes the plot a Redemptive Plot.

The wake-up call occurs out of nowhere rather certain accountable triggering factors lead to realization and revelation of the truth which can be explained on the principle of the Butterfly Effect.

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