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Neurosis as a Feminine Resistance in Henrik Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea* and
Hedda Gabler

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Letter of Approval

This thesis entitled “Neurosis as a Feminine Resistance in Henrik Ibsen’s *The Lady from the Sea* and *Hedda Gabler*” submitted to the central Department of English, Tribhuvan University by Binod Kumar Shrestha has been approved by the undersigned members of the research committee:

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Abstract

The research analyses on the strategic use of neurosis of female as a site of domination and resistance against male dominated society in Ibsen's two plays, *The Lady from the Sea* and *Hedda Gabler*. Hedda in *Hedda Gabler* and Ellida in *The Lady from the Sea* are the female protagonists of the plays who strive for freedom from patriarchal society by pretending as if they are real neurotic persons. Neurosis here is their strategy of resisting and fighting against male centrism imposed upon them for years. Both Hedda and Ellida eventually snatch their full-fledged freedom from the gender-biased society but their ways are different while achieving such liberation. Ellida ultimately grabs her emancipation from her husband but does not want to break harmonious familial relationship therefore, she acclimatizes with same family. By doing so, she epitomizes that freedom for women is not only to enhance autonomous self but also to conduct the family smoothly and strongly. On the contrary, Hedda has to sacrifice her life to take freedom from the dominant institution of patriarchy. So as to gain the freedom she better kills her rather than dying time to time by the slavish nature of patriarchy. Even after death she affirms herself as a free woman and completely secures her feminine quality. By acting as though neurotic programmed by androcentric society she boldly struggles for feminine rights till the last moment of her life. Hedda's action to get rid of gender biased society is different than Ellida's that is through suicide when there is no other alternatives; otherwise she has to be trapped again on the same course of patriarchal rules and norms.

Contents

	Page No.
Acknowledgements	
Abstract	
Letter of Approval	
I. Henrik Ibsen's Neurosis as a Feminine Trope in <i>Hedda Gabler</i> and <i>The Lady from the Sea</i>	1-15
II. Dramatizing Women's Neurosis as a Site of Domination and Resistance in Ibsen's <i>Hedda Gabler</i> and <i>The Lady from the Sea</i>	16-47
III. Strategic Use of Female Neurosis in Ibsen's <i>The Lady from the Sea</i> and <i>Hedda Gabler</i>	48-50
Works Cited	

I. Henrik Ibsen's Neurosis as a Feminine Trope in *Hedda Gabler* and *The Lady from the Sea*

This research simultaneously explores the neurosis that reflects the cruelty of patriarchy on the one hand and it is made as a tool by pretending neurotic selves to challenge and disrupt the injustice of patriarchy on the other hand in Ibsen's two major plays, *The Lady from the Sea* (1888) and *Hedda Gabler* (1890). This project argues that the neurosis in woman is less libidinal but more social and political. However, they employ imposition on them by male-centered society to assert their feminine qualities and defy the male norms and values. The gender conflict by exposing the evils of the gender dramatizes society and emerging challenges to the tradition long male supremacy. For that both the dramas play dominant roles by suppressing the rights of women. In this way, these two female protagonists, Hedda and Ellida assert and affirm their feminine roles through the strategic use of their neurosis. At the end, they succeed what they have desired that is emancipation striving to gain from the beginning by imposing their trope of neurosis.

The Lady from the Sea's central character, Ellida unveils her excessive behaviour that is a symptom of neurosis in one sense that's why people around her rename: "The lady from the sea" (237). This evidence depicts a proof of her neurotic behaviour but it denotes the several hints behind her neurosis. The term neurosis coined by Sigmund Freud, the founder of psychoanalysis who defines neurosis from the libidinal point of view as Betty Friedan theorizes: "Freud's aphorism 'anatomy is destiny' means a women's reproductive role, gender identity, and sexual preference are determined by her lack of penis, and any woman who does not follow the course nature sets for her is in some way abnormal" (133). As per Friedan who captures Freudian notion which blames women on the basis of their biology and compel

women to follow what men have programmed the rule for women otherwise women are regarded as abnormal. But Ellida's neurosis does not belong to the lack of sexual desire rather it is the male mentality to interpret woman from different perspective because she does not follow what whole male centric people wished.

The reason why people call her 'the lady from the sea' is centered on her daily routine of swimming, in this context Ellida's husband Wangel makes it more clear while conversing with Anholm, his daughter's tutor: "Well, there's our mermaid" (237). This dramatic extract brings the mythical allusion, 'mermaid' which defines her from abnormal point of view in terms of her repetitive habit. Besides, it clearly mentions that it is the society that interprets her from various sub names. In this regards, Nancy Easterlin's statement seems relevant: "The half-human status of the woman is a sign of degradation, and that, finally, it is just the patriarchal bias reproduced in multiple constraints on the mermaid that so fuels the human imagination" (256). As Easterlin argues that because of the patriarchal social thought women are characterized as mermaid in derogatory sense in the male centric society.

Similarly, in the play, *Hedda Gabler* where its protagonist Hedda is also characterized as neurotic female character. Like Ellida, Hedda is also a victimhood of same patriarchy who reflects her radical activities since the beginning of the plot. In this regards, her housemaid, Berta states to Aunt Juliana, "Because she's so very particular" (598). Berta means Hedda is an abnormal being because she does not follow the patriarchal rules. Both the female characters, Berta and Aunt Juliana are guided by the conventional patriarchal norms and values otherwise they don't mock at Hedda's personality.

Though, Ibsen presents Hedda's psychology in a different sense than Ellida who despises marriage, familial activities and child bearing. She gets married with

George Tesman for fulfilling the patriarchal ritual not by her own desire. She likes to fly freely like a bird but all her freedom is broken after her marriage. She focuses on her autonomous self rather than social self which is oriented on male centrism. It is the sexual politics which is guided by male supremacy that snatches her freedom to live without any bondage therefore she acts as if she is neurotic and that is her feminine tool to resist masculine discrimination. In this regards, Kate Millett's idea seems applicable to elucidate this above textual reference: "This is so because our society like all other historical civilizations, is a patriarchy" (175). Millett reveals the whole historical civilization that is formed by patriarchy in which women have no ways except being neurotic and abnormal as well. Hence since the beginning of human civilization patriarchy has been ruling over women so that Millett blames the whole historical civilization where women are always repressed.

Furthermore, Hedda's neurotic symptoms can be explicitly seen when Ibsen identifies Hedda's character in Act I: "Her face and figure show breeding and distinction; her complexion is pallid and opaque. Her steel gray eyes express a cool, unruffled calm" (600). Therefore, playwright's depiction of her complexion and gestures unravels her personalities that display her inner psychology.

According to the textual interpretation of the playwright her gestures, mood and other outward articulations picture her more personalities of neurosis which displays her multiple identities, multiple meanings that is impossible to calculate by so called males. To justify this dramatic reference Kari Weil borrows Irigaray's vision: "When our lips speak together, a lyrical mediation on the multiple organs- both oral and genital – through which women expresses her desire renders the borders of identity a fluid exchange between self and other and effaces distinctions between singular and plural subjects" (166). Weil defines the multiplicity of women's desire

through their bodily movements manifest many meanings, which is not merely sensual rather more social and political even though she talks about women's two lips. That is to say, there are multiple ways to express their desires which are more social, individual, political rather than libidinal. Before marriage Hedda had to stay under the tight rules of father so that her desires were controlled. After marriage what she thought about her husband turns opposite, who always focuses on his study which plants the seed of neurosis in her mind. Her obsessive psychology can be felt through her dialogue: "I want to have a power over a human being" (619). This statement of Hedda is purely neurotic who challenges the whole human being that is a sign of abnormal psyche but indeed her rage is directed towards the all patriarchal system set in the society. The social systems, cultures, different circumstances have played the crucial role to think her like this.

Both Hedda and Ellida expose their abnormal behaviours in front of patriarchal society. On the one hand they are compelled to become neurotic on the other hand that is the way that lead them to the path of emancipation therefore they are not ready to come into the normal condition until they get freedom from patriarchal society. When Ballested and Lyntstrand discuss about the painting, Ballested says, "I've thought of calling it 'The Dying Mermaid'" (229). The line of Ballested, a male character informs he is drawing a portrait of 'dying mermaid' that is symbolically Ellida. She orders to paint such picture because after marriage with Wangel; her identity converts from 'Ellida' to 'Mrs. Wangel' to 'the lady from the sea,' to 'mermaid' including many others which push her into the abyss of neurosis. Regarding women's neurosis Cixous opines: "You see? No? Wait, you'll have everything explained to you, and you'll know at last, we're going to do your portrait, so that you can begin looking like it right away" (217). In accordance with Cixous's

vision, because of patriarchal system women internalize such picture that shows their symptom of neurosis. Therefore in this play, Ellida's action of making the painting of dying mermaid shows her own picture of being abnormal figure. Actually, Cixous reinforces the women to change their psyche, to behave like modern and to fight against the masculine trends. She invokes women to be conscious by looking your own picture and march ahead to do something.

Similarly in the play, *Hedda Gabler* there is other symptoms as well which encompass Hedda as a neurotic fellow made by gender-biased society. For instance, in the last scene of Act I Hedda speaks to George, "(Looking at him with veiled scorn): My pistols, George (608)". The scene above represents her obsessive view towards George in particular whereas towards the society in general. Pistols in traditional concept were symbolically stood as phallus which used to fill the gap of bodily desire but here Hedda frightens George through it that is explicitly seen below: "Tesman(in fright): Your pistols!" (608). The two dramatic scenes expose Hedda's neurotic behaviours but that really creates fear in her husband's psychology. In other words, it reflects Hedda's psychology to disrupt this masculine tendency. Hence, Hedda, by playing with gun is an act of neurosis but she is going to use it to warn the members of phallogocentric world. To make it more vivid, Cecelia Sjöholm reviews on the basis of Irigarayian briefly theorizes:

The overdetermined figure of the two lips, both mouth and sexual organ is generally regarded as a key to her notion of sexual difference. They are generally interpreted as an alternative to the phallus, suggesting a discourse of contingency and intimacy where the phal-lus suggests domination and power. (101)

According to Cecelia the language which women speak by using their two lips sounds mysterious, divergent, and opaque but the phallic psyches charge them illogical, neurotic, and hysteric and so on. That is to say, the term phallus is regarded as a symbol of male power but Hedda uses 'pistols', the symbol of male domination to harm her male counterparts.

By frightening so called brave men, Hedda represents the bold and modern woman who tries to control the phallic figure through pistols or the phallic symbol. The most poignant scene appears in the play when Hedda commits suicide which the end of her neurosis as well as male domination. Suicide is her last weapon to challenge the patriarchal society, being as a neurotic woman she ultimately applies it to get full-fledged freedom from hierarchical society. Regarding the suicide of woman Margaret Higonnet remarks:

Suicide, like woman and truth, is both fetish and taboo. A symbolic gesture, it is doubly so for women who inscribe on their own bodies cultural reflections and projections, affirmation and negation. In the nineteenth century, women's suicide becomes a cultural obsession.

(103)

Her definition about 19th century's women whose suicide belonged to cultural obsession means patriarchal culture and politics which lead women to the mouth of suicide but society blamed it as women's obsessive behavior. And this play, Hedda Gabler also set in late 19th century Europe therefore her suicide is caused by same patriarchal factors. At first, Hedda becomes neurotic later on that grows more and more and eventually leads her to killing herself which is her victory over gender biased society not her defeat by patriarchal authority.

Likewise, the heroine of *The Lady from the Sea*, Ellida who is also a neurotic figure is moving her step slowly and gradually. Ellida does not choose the path of suicide and to elope with her stranger lover, even though, she is also regarded as neurotic character by various evidences. Her feminine assertion completes after she gets freedom from her husband, Wangel whom she answers in the final act: “Oh, don’t you understand that the change came-that it had to come-when I could choose in freedom” (320). This scene interprets that neurotic Ellida automatically changes into normal position after getting freedom which signifies that up to now she is using her neurosis as her strategy to overcome the masculine characteristic.

Moreover, her neurosis is designed by patriarchal norms rather than other causes that’s why she is acting as if a pure neurotic being to resist masculine norms. The ways to take emancipation is different from Hedda that means Ellida like the sea becomes ‘calm,’ cool,’ ‘active,’ and ‘violent’ therefore Wangel argues: “Ellida, your mind is like the sea-it ebbs and flows” (320). This textual reference displays men’s weak and half knowledge to find out the psychology of women. That is to say, Wangel is unable to know the different forms of Ellida’s neurosis and finally it compels Wangel to express his real feelings. So, Ellida better decides to acclimatize and reconcile with her own husband and her two step daughters after she is freed by her husband. Hence for both heroines the most important things in life is to get freedom, to live life without any bondages and so on.

In order to justify these neurotic personalities on the basis of Hedda and Ellida’s actions in which one commits suicide whereas other acclimatizes with her own family so that Karen Horney’s definition seems adequate: “The theory of neurosis places the ‘basic conflict between the attitudes of moving toward,’ ‘moving against,’ and ‘moving away from’ people” (79). As Horney theorizes that in such

conditions some goes against society and people and finish their lives whereas some better reconcile with their familial environment. Thus, on the behalf of Horney, it is understood that Hedda moves against society and its old customs thus she commits suicide; similarly, Ellida moves away as a result she chooses to live again in the same family where she has been dominating for long time by forgetting every bad aspects of society.

The Lady from the Sea and *Hedda Gabler* have been commented and criticized by numerous critics, commentators, readers. Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* is one of the most controversial and influential play which has been criticized as well as praised by plenty of critics. Though both plays have been analyzed from various perspectives but the psychological issue deserves its first place in its analysis. Thus, this project also rereads these two plays from psychological point of view but it tries to prove women's neurosis as feminine resistance to overcome the rules and regulations of phallocracy.

At the beginning *Hedda Gabler* produced much negative responses from the audiences. Most critics denounced this play stating: "As a base escape of moral sewage gas and Hedda herself as acrawl with the foulest passions of humanity" (594). The comment explicitly exposes the real picture of genderly biased society in early 20th century which readily underestimates woman who goes against its biasness. The traditional followers of patriarchy even banned the plays because it was against male centrism. Hedda Gabler, the protagonist of the play is an intense, powerful woman living her life by threatening the whole masculine custom.

Similarly, Ibsen's biographer Michale Meyer in a commentary on the play refers to *Hedda Gabler*: "Merciless self-portrait of Ibsen to Hedda in stakes" (596). Though Meyer criticizes the playwright Ibsen but it is Ibsen's rage against the biased

society which he presents through the character, Hedda. Some view this from libidinal perspective whereas some view it from social and political perspectives. In this context, Kot Jan states that:

Two pistols in *Hedda Gabler* are not only the props exploited by Ibsen with iron-clad dramatic logic and preordained consequences. They have also sexual undertones. By shooting herself, Hedda kills the shadow of her father and the child she never wanted. The shadow of the father kills daughter. (651)

Here Kot Jan's idea looks like Freudian libidinal concept but in deeper level he has heavily criticized the phallogocentric world. Her father is an archetypal of patriarchy who controlled her freedom since her childhood as a result finally she killed herself and freed from the shadow of her father who is torturing her every time.

Ellida is also less radical and violent than Hedda though her action is remarkable to take her freedom from her husband. Both, Hedda and Ellida are psychologically obsessed though the critics criticize from their own perspective because their abnormal psyches highly touched the critics.

Regarding the psychical complexity of Ellida Matt Wolf reviews: "Ellida's hysteria is the sort with which Freud would have had a field day: This *Lady from the Sea* inhabits a limbo in which longing and loss have merged as one" (53). Matt views Ellida that she is clinging between desire and its outcome. On the one hand, she wants to be free from the familial bondage on the other hand she has fear by thinking its result because to break the patriarchal wall is not easy job. However Matt relates hysteria of Ellida with longing and loss of her libido and social freedom. It is vivid that Ellida's disturbed mentality is not because of lack of sexual desire rather it is the freedom which she is searching in phallogocentric world. She has no position and

agency at all in her family. Her life is heavily influenced by the various forces of masculine politics.

Hedda's strong neurotic psyche is formed out of long-term domination of patriarchal forces finally lead her to finish off her own life. The pistols given by her father, General Gabler is her toys which are the symbol of phallic domination not the symbol of phallus as conceptualized by Sigmund Freud. In this context, Irigaray remarks: "Women should mime the mimes men have imposed on women. Women should take men's images of women and reflect them back to men in magnified proportions" (Rosemarie 157). As Irigaray claims that by miming men's activities, gestures and actions women can challenge and counter argue the patriarchal norms. For instance in this play, Hedda, by playing with father's pistols she is warning and creating fear in George and Judge Brack's psyche. Irigaray means through miming women can passivize the effects of phallogocentric discourse but in the play Hedda's mime is her pistol which is attacking against male counterparts.

Ibsen's purpose behind neurotic female characters, Hedda as well as Ellida is to spread consciousness in the psychology of women of the nineteenth century Europe who composed both plays in two years' difference. Ibsen was very much conscious of women's liberation during his time. He tried to explore the ill nature of gender discrimination, problems created out of patriarchal society by presenting neurotic females. Hedda's hysteric psyche looks libidinal outwardly but inwardly along with various evidences make it clear that it is less libidinal but more social, cultural and political. In other words, it is because of the phallogocentric and phallogocentric views of society.

Frederic W. Roe critiques: "We have seen that Ibsen from the beginning tends to be psychological and realistic in his theme even when his manner is romantic"

(312). Roe argues that Ibsen, by applying psychological issues like neurosis, hysteric, abnormal attitudes in his characters tries to show the real picture of society. And Roe's idea matches in these two plays. Furthermore, some critics have compared Hedda with Nora, Ibsen's heroine from his previous play *A Doll's House*. Hedda's and Nora's action at the last of the plays are quite unique and meaningful so the critics often analyze both characters' action on the basis of their actions. In this regards, Arthur Ganz's review becomes applicable:

The sound of pistol shot at the end of the *Hedda Gabler* and of the closing door at the end of *A Doll's House* have the same symbolic reverberations; for both heroines they announce the end of a life of dependence and deception; for Nora the signal inaugurates a new quest for the self; for Hedda it asserts her quest's cruelly triumphant conclusion. (11)

So, as per Arthur Ganz though the end was fatal in *Hedda Gabler* but she proves herself as a free and autonomous self even after death. The action what Hedda takes at last is very dangerous but there is no other option except doing this bold step.

Therefore, according to Ganz Nora's action is to slam the door at last is like Hedda's suicide, both are neurotic in a sense but both did to challenge this gender biased society. And the case seems different while Ellida achieves freedom; in this context, Richard Schechner also justifies some facts about Ellida: "She faces the stranger, rejects him, and immediately he becomes for her "a dead man washed up by the sea," I no longer fear you, I no longer want you. In terms of such rejuvenation, Ellida's acceptance of Wangel is entirely plausible" (122). Schechner opines Ellida from the perspective of gender equality that means Ellida's acclimatization with her

husband exemplifies that in a family both husband and wife play equal role to run the family harmoniously and smoothly.

In this way, the woman like Ellida who is not a classical woman rather a modern woman wants freedom from her husband not to break the familial relationship but to eliminate the bad aspects of nuclear family which is controlled by male. Therefore, to do such great action some kinds of inner psychological forces move them towards the road of independence which is clearly seen in Brian W. Downs comment:

The obscurer forces that do battle for the mind, the psychic abnormalities, the neurosis, the mysterious logic by which the deeper layers of the human personality are ordered; the torturous motives, the ambivalent drives and impulses with their power to hold the individual helpless in their grasp. (776)

As Downs makes clear that the neurosis, abnormalities, the mysterious logics are the cause of neurosis programmed by hierarchical society in women's psychology that has power to dismantle this whole system. Downs has comprised the whole circumstances which the women have to face in the socio-politico-cultural construction of patriarchy as a result women have to use various techniques to hold their power and right from opposite gender. On the basis of women's neurosis and hysteria so called savior of women, men always blame the biology of women but never go on researching minutely on the very system of society that's why the situation is still on the status quo. But these two brave women, Hedda and Ellida establish their feminine identity at last.

The Lady from the Sea in comparison of Ibsen's other plays has got few popularity but some critics regard it more feminist work than others but way of

presentation is varied from others and it ends in comedy rather than tragedy. So, to make it more clear James Leigh writes: “*The Lady from the Sea*, even if it falls as a play, can be shown to be perhaps more feminist than even *A Doll’s House*, it can not be said to be didactic in a feminist way” (2). Leigh differentiates *The Lady from the Sea* with *A Doll’s House* in terms of its action by the protagonist. For example, Nora’s action leads nowhere in one sense in *A Doll’s House* whereas Ellida’s action reconciles the whole family matter despite her neurotic psyche which provides a lesson that in a family the role of husband and wife should be identical and they should work hand-in-hand to run their family. Hedda and Ellida’s actions in the play are feminine resistance to counter against masculine biasness. Due to the lack of feminine language in male dominated world its natural to remain hysteric, neurotic, violent, silent in front of male society. To justify the women’s language, Lois Tyson writes:

And for many French psychoanalytic feminists, the possibilities for women’s psychological liberation must be investigated at the site at which most, if not all, of their psychological subjugation occurs—language—because it is within language that detrimental patriarchal notions of sexual difference (what patriarchy believes are the essential, or inborn, differences between women and men) have been defined and continue to exert their repressive influence. (100)

That is to say, according to Tyson who borrows idea from French feminists focus on the separate language of women to reveal their multiple, subtle, diversified desires because they can’t express their feeling through the constructed language of men to downgrade women. Similarly, they also emphasize on the psyche of women which is determined by the male language. In this way, Hedda and Ellida are programmed in

male language that's why they decide to act as neurotic selves, for they have no separate words to express their inner desires and feelings.

This project primarily researches on the women's neurosis from Ibsen's two major plays, *The Lady from the Sea* and *Hedda Gabler*. Ellida and Hedda, whose neurotic personalities have been analyzed from the perspective of French psychoanalytic feminism by subverting Freudian libidinal notion. This study draws the major ideas from French psychoanalytic feminists such as Julia Kristeva, Luce Irigaray and Helene Cixous. Along with these three major French feminists it has also borrowed some ideas from other feminists as well. It is a universal fact that psyche of human being is most important factor but the problem is so called men differentiate women's psyche from men therefore it is necessary to know exactly what women's psyche is. Women are protesting against patriarchal values and norms by applying different psychological methods like neurosis, hysteria, mimicry and so on. Women so as to get liberation from men can sacrifice their lives which are understood by the action of Hedda who kills finally to achieve complete freedom.

The classical Freudian psychoanalysis was phallogocentric which defined women's neurosis was just the product of lack of sexual desire and also accused on women's biological features. But the reality is no woman can demand sexual pleasure by confining under the four walls of patriarchal periphery. First and foremost, each and every human being wants to live freely then he/she can demand other desires therefore libidinal desire is not important than the basic human requirements. Thus, this study focuses on those two female protagonists whose liberal feminine psyches are imprisoned in the patriarchal boundary.

These texts have been researched from various other perspectives like existentialism, Marxist feminism, radical feminism and the like but the most crucial

issue is psychological study of female characters. It is true there are various researches have been done on their psychology but most of the researchers have applied the libidinal method of Freud but this research dismantles the classical Freudian libidinal notion and foregrounds the modern methodologies of French feminists whose ideas are embedded on language and subtle bodily pleasures of women. This study is able to show the various facts and symptoms that women's neurosis is less libidinal but more political, social, and cultural construction.

While talking about the outline and organization of this research work, the whole research has been divided into three chapters in which the first chapter has covered the part of introduction of thesis. It includes the portion of hypothesis of the research, limitation and delimitation of the research, appropriateness of the research. In nutshell, it interprets about the whole project information. It also includes the scholarly criticism as well as appropriate reviews of the plays. Similarly, the second chapter has been the major part of the research in which the analysis of the text has been carried out through the various comments borrowed from numerous theorists to elucidate the neurosis as a feminine resistance and fight as well to overcome the patriarchal values and norms erected in the foundation of phallogocentrism.

II. Dramatizing Women's Neurosis as a Site of Domination and Resistance in

Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea* and *Hedda Gabler*

Both the plays are based on women's obsessive psychology that is neurotic in a sense. Ellida, a female protagonist from the play, *The Lady from the Sea* displays her abnormal behaviour by swimming everyday in the nearby sea that is why people in town including her own husband Wangel states to Arnholm, an old tutor of his daughters: "I can tell you. The life out there has left its mark on her. The people in town here can't understand her. They call her the lady from the sea" (237). This textual reference from *The Lady from the Sea* portrays how woman is treated in male dominated society. Ellida, a heroine in this play has been made a mocking character as if she is just an object.

The whole society is running after her to label as 'lady from the sea'. Her identity is lost since she is called lady from the sea. She is being fooled by the crowd of so called civilized society. Besides, her own husband, a doctor by profession is misrepresenting her through different names. In this way, she has been categorized as 'sea lady' who is modified from subject to object. So as to justify this textual reference Beauviour's idea plays vital role that is remarked by Habib: "Thus humanity is male and man defines women not in herself but as relative to him; she is not regarded as an autonomous being, she is the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential. He is the subject, he is the Absolute- she is the Other" (683). As Beauviour argues that women have no existence like men, they have been defined by various binary thoughts like subject/object, essential/inessential, and absolute/other and so on. In this way, Ellida's behaviour to swim each day in the nearby fjord has been dramatized in her community by civilized people.

The Lady from the Sea as a psychological play focuses on the neurotic psyche of Ellida who often seems calm, always swims in the sea so that such habits are enough to dramatize her personality. The following dramatic scene also makes clear her symptom of abnormality when she wishes to paint the picture:

Lyngstrand: Yes, of course

Ballested: It was the lady of this house who gave me the idea

Lyngstrand: What you will call the painting when it's finished?

Ballested: I have thought of calling it "the dying mermaid."

Lyngstrand: Very effective. You certainly can make something fine out of this. (229)

Aforementioned scene, taken from this play, *The Lady from the Sea* vividly picturizes her mental state that has been constructed by the conventional values and language of society. In this dramatic scene, her comparison with 'the dying mermaid' signifies her position in her family as well as in the society which is full of prejudices. Here in this scene these two male figures are dramatizing her through painting. That is to say, dying mermaid is her own image painted by society where she is living. Therefore, here Dinnerstein's theorization seems quintessence to prove Ellida's portrait:

The treacherous "mermaid" seductive and impenetrable female representative of the dark and magic underwater world from which our life comes and in which we cannot live, lures voyagers to their doom. The fearsome Minotaur, gigantic and eternally infantile offspring of a mother's unnatural lust, male representative of mindless, greedy power, insatiably devours live human flesh. (28)

Dinnerstein's definition clearly mentions that even myth is also against women which portrays women as 'mermaid' and men 'minotaur'. Moreover, mermaid is regarded as

‘seductive’ ‘impenetrable female representative’, who are comparing with dark underwater but on the contrary men are represented as ‘gigantic’, ‘eternally infantile offspring of mother’s unnatural lust’ and so on.

That is to say, since the time of myth women have been defined by various negative pictures and this ‘mermaid’ is just an example of manifolds as mentioned by Dinnerstein. Unlike Ellida, Hedda, Ibsen’s another female protagonist from other play, *Hedda Gabler* whose personality is also found neurotic according to the events, situations and language from the play. Hedda demonstrates her radical behavior in comparison with Ellida. Ellida’s resistance seems silent whereas Hedda’s direct but actually both are neurotic and hysteric to some extent. Like Ellida Hedda’s psyche is too unknown and odd to her husband, George Tesman, her aunt Miss Juliana, family friend Judge Brack, and house maid Berta and others around her house. Hedda’s neurosis has been dramatized by her house maid Berta when she complains to Aunt Juliana: “Because she is so particular?” (597). This dramatic reference in which Berta’s question raises the issues of two worlds: one from traditional male dominated society whereas other from modern uprising society.

Except that Berta represents Hedda’s psychology is not in right place. In other words, the term ‘particular’ represents Hedda who is different than normal persons. Thus this textual reference indicates a symptom of neurosis so other characters who are the supporters of patriarchy are dramatizing Hedda’s psychic behaviours. Berta further puts forward to Juliana: “I never would have dreamed then that she and George Tesman would make a match of it” (598). In this dialogue, Berta is ironically critiquing the women’s psychology and feminine qualities because her mind is set by conventional patriarchal values. Hence she dramatizes not to Hedda’s psychology but also the whole conventional concept to view male and female.

Through this textual reference Hedda's status is shown as incomparable with her husband which is not actually stated by male character rather female character, Berta, for her mind is full of patriarchal biasness. For instance, George Tesman is a head and whereas Hedda is a tail, that is purely discrimination between two sex. There is not presented equal status between male and female. In this context, the notion of Cixous justifies this dramatic scene: "Language reveals what she reveals *patriarchal binary thought*, which might be defined as seeing the world in terms of polar opposites, one of which considered superior to the other" (qtd. in Tyson 100). As Cixous argues that due to this binary thought in patriarchy there is no match between man and woman because man is called as superior whereas woman is inferior. Therefore, in this play, *Hedda Gabler*, the character, Berta is guided by patriarchal binary thought as conceptualized by Cixous who did not imagine the bond between George Tesman, a scholar and Hedda, just a woman.

Ellida and Hedda both behave as if they are hysteric and neurotic but that is their feminine resistance against phallocracy, nevertheless, their way of treating with people is not identical. It is a great blunder of male dominated society of nineteenth century Europe not to understand the feminine psyche properly. Until and unless the society is unable to understand what their desire is actually, the progress in society is impossible. Actually, Ellida is utilizing her neurosis, a mental disease in medical definition, but here it is her trope through which she is resisting the values and norms of conventional society.

In this sense, she is pretending as a neurotic fellow who knows nothing about the biasness of sex but it is means to protest the violence done by the men. She is time and again tortured and made fun by same phrase 'the lady from the sea'. Because of

repetitive linguistic domination she sometimes expresses her inner psychology that is as follows:

Wangel: Was the water nice and fresh today?

Ellida: Fresh! Good lord, this water's never fresh. So stale and tepid.

Ugh! The water's sick here in the fjord

Arnholm: Sick?

Ellida: Yes, it's sick. And I think it makes people sick, too. (238)

This dramatic scene vividly elucidates Ellida's neurotic psychology as well as outer nature. Wangel's term 'water' represents the society that is contaminated by the masculine trends and cultures. The line of Ellida 'the water's sick here in the fjord' reveals the whole community is sick and weak that characterize others also sick and mental. Through this textual reference Ellida is criticizing the male mentality to view women who goes against this gender biasness.

Besides, Wangel fails to understand her psyche so that he blames whole people; Wangel further states: "If you would talk to her now and about the old days" (239). This statement symbolizes Wangel's unwillingness to treat Ellida including he tries to handover her like an object in her treatment. That is to say, it shows Wangel's new method to control Ellida by treating her from third person, Arnholm. In this way, they are programming to exploit Ellida's psyche one after another but actually Ellida is minutely observing the whole program of her male counterparts. Thus, it is her neurotic movement to assert against this biasness. So as to justify this textual reference Irigaray's notion seems adequate:

What other path than mimicry is open to women, Irigaray asks, implying, thereby, that all women are to some extent, hysterics. How could she be anything but suggestible and hysterical when her sexual

instincts have been castrated, her sexual feelings, representatives, and representations forbidden? (Irigaray 59-60)

In this way, as per Irigarayan vision women's hysteric is not a problem rather it's a common feature found in all women's psychology. Therefore Ellida's problem after all nothing and whatever she is doing that is the revolt against androcentrism.

Irigaray's term 'hysteric' is like Ellida's neurotic personality constructed by the patriarchal culture. Time and again, Wangel treats Ellida not by her name but from other names which is his domination against women's right. When Ellida appears in front of Arnholm and Wangel introduces her like this to Arnholm: "(Smiling and reaching his hands towards her). Well, there's our mermaid!" (237). Thus, Wangel, a representative of Phallogocentric world pretends to help in treating Ellida but his hidden psyche is to exploit her by making healthy and strong as she was before. The scene above reveals that the domination upon woman starts first of all from family. Hence, so called boss of the family, Wangel often ridicules her by stating 'mermaid, 'lady from the sea'.

On the contrary, Ibsen's other protagonist, Hedda from *Hedda Gabler* whose neurotic psyche looks sometimes up and sometimes down. On the one hand, she plays an active role, mysterious lady whereas on the other hand she stands like calm, placid, mute and the like. Therefore, her husband, George Tesman is unable to understand her fully but he never realizes that why Hedda is behaving like this. As a neurotic character, Hedda's psychical symbols can be seen apparent through the following dialogue with her husband:

Tesman: (retrieving the slippers from the floor; what are standing and
Looking at, Hedda?

Hedda: (again calm and controlled): I'm just looking at the leaves-

they are so yellow and so withered

Tesman: (Wraps up the slippers and puts them on the table): Yes, well,
we're into September now. (601)

Above scene of this play, Ibsen's female protagonist portrays two sorts of nature: outer and inner nature in deeper level. Hedda symbolically exposes her inner reality in front of her husband by stating 'at the leaves they are so yellow and withered' is really her extreme condition of neurosis. In other words, the falling leaves from the trees manifest her falling desires, feelings and emotions. Her symbol 'September' is a beginning of cold month in which nature becomes passive that's why she tragically compares her mental states with the falling leaves of trees. Moreover, her inner nature correlates with the outer nature. George Tesman is unable to recognize her internal plight who is actually in the position of life and death.

Therefore, Hedda's role is taken as an example in the society and presents the socio-political realities of woman in early 20th century in Europe. Mary Daly's view seems quite relevant to justify this dramatic reference who writes: "The value system that has been thrust upon us (women) by the various cultural institutions of patriarchy has amounted to a kind of gang rape" (9). Daly's theorization as 'gang rape' upon woman by patriarchy is really tragic that displays women's pitiable status in men's society. Right now Hedda is also thinking same but she expresses her feelings in symbolic and indirect way.

Thus both plays: *Hedda Gabler* and *The Lady from the Sea* are full of women's sorrows, plights, desires which are thwarted by patriarchal codes and conducts. Through these two psychological plays Ibsen tries to present the real situation of women facing in European society during the early 20th century. The languages have been constructed by males which are based on the phallogocentrism.

The paternal language cannot incorporate women's desires and feeling so that French feminists insist on creating women's separate language in order to dismantle the phallogocentric linguistic structure. Women's language which is attached with their mother is found diversified, multiple, enigmatic that is why it is hard to explain for men; so in the play *Hedda Gabler*, such languages can be seen in Hedda's conversation with her friend Mrs. Elvsted:

Hedda (goes over to Mrs. Elvsted- smiles, and speaks softly): How's that! Now we have killed two birds with one stone...

Mrs. Elvsted: what do you mean?

Hedda: Didn't you see that I wanted him out of the room?

Mrs. Elvsted: Yes, to write the letter-

Hedda: But also to talk with you alone. (603)

Ibsen in this drama, *Hedda Gabler*, exposes women's resistance, search for 'room for their own' and the means of self expression and women bonding. In the drama, the women characters, Hedda and Elvsted do not only poke and make fun of their husband and lover while they let their partners out of their room, but also compare the males with 'birds'. The dramatic scene exposes a situation of gender relation and reversal gender hierarchy not only in their daily social life but also in the literary convention by creating the room as a women space for their bonding and expressing the traditionally so called feminine symbol 'birds' used for the male counterparts.

Similarly, the scene also includes their attempt for writing 'letter'. The epistolary means of expression which in the past was considered filthy feminine genre of writing, is valorized in the text which shows women writers' literary form of resistance by rupturing the generic hierarchy practiced in male literary hierarchy. In

this scene, the lady characters interact in this way. In this regards, Cixous' vision on writing justifies this dramatic scene: "First and foremost feminine writing acknowledges its rootedness in the body, write yourself, your body must be heard" (qtd. in Habib 704). Cixous insists on the women's writing to fight against male language and ideology, so through neurosis Hedda and Ellida are expressing their mysterious nature in which their resistance is against patriarchy.

As Cixous defines through writing women can expose their infinite desires and that is not understood by males because it is purely women's language. That is to say, Hedda and her friend Mrs. Elvsted in the scene also practice writing in order to reveal their feminine thoughts which are like their subtle body. It is a language that makes women submissive, docile, domestic, inferior, meek, other, moon and the like. Similarly, to men such as powerful, intelligent, superior, rational, wise, active and so on. Therefore, French feminists endeavour to eliminate this linguistic discrimination between man and women.

Because of this binary opposition of phallogocentrism men have been suppressing over women for years that's why feminists insist on to create separate women language to contain the female feelings and desires and also to dismantle the patriarchal language that is centered on phallus. So such binary opposition can be explicitly seen in the conversation between Arnholm and Ellida: "But to me, the two of you seem different as night and day" (240). This dramatic scene where Arnholm's words 'night' and 'day' is based on male's binary thought.

This dramatic reference above stated by Arnholm like night and day symbolically denotes female and male. And exactly what Arnholm remarked Wangel by treating her as if she is nothing like the night where nothing is visible. And Ellida replies to Arnholm, "You're right. We are" (240). Thus, Ellida confidently discloses

her true feelings to her close companion, Arnholm, nevertheless, she has doubt whether he believes her or not. In other words, through Arnholm's words that night refers to Ellida which is dark, mysterious, and subtle whereas day concerns with Wangel which is crystal clear, bright, glowing and so on. Night is also symbol of the moon whereas day is for sun. Similarly, the moon symbolizes the women and subsequently sun stands for men. These all binary oppositions are the creation of phallogocentrism. As Helene Cixous elaborates this idea below:

Language reveals what she calls patriarchal binary thoughts which might be different defined as seeing the world in terms of polar opposites, one of which is considered superior to other. Examples: father/mother, sun/moon, head/heart, etc. Traditionally, the question of sexual difference is treated by coupling it with the opposition activity/passivity. (100)

That is to say, language is also the main power to distinguish between man and woman. If there is no binary opposition of male language as Cixous mentioned, there will be no discrimination between man and women; so that these French feminists often emphasize on creating women's own language to dismantle the patriarchal structure which has been dominating women by different style of language.

Therefore, patriarchal society where her husband is a typical representative of it compels Ellida to think her as night. Her feminine qualities have been confined by her husband and her feelings are subjugated by phallogocentrism. Her conviction and faith towards society has gone forever so she better remains calm and silent than to state her situations to any member of the family as well as outsiders. Her doubt towards phallogocentric world can be understood when she even feels inconvenient:

Ellida: Yes, yes, definitely! Good Lord, Arnholm, it's not what you are thinking at all. It's something so incomprehensible. I don't know how to begin telling you. You'd only believe I was ill or out of my mind

Arnholm: My dear Ellida-there's no other way: you've got to tell me everything. (242)

The following dramatic scene above from the play *The Lady from the Sea* where Ibsen vividly presents women's dying faith towards male centric society. In the dialogue where the protagonist Ellida utterly denies to share her inner realities in front of any male counterpart even though he is her close companion of past. Her line 'something so incomprehensible' reveals how much her hatred towards this gender biased society. The prejudiced society has pushed her into such corner that sometimes she thinks herself whether she is really sick or neurotic or not. The so called friend, Arnholm goes on asserting to unveil her emotions.

Moreover, this scene also denotes that the consistent subjugation and subordination by ideology of patriarchy obliges her to think as ill person. In this way, she denies anyone's help. Ellida's faith on society is losing day by day because the whole community is on one side and she is on the other side. In order to justify this textual reference, Helene Cixous theorizes: "Women must write their bodies, write their desires and so unleash their power" (162). Cixous, through this quotation tries to empower women by speaking as well as writing to expose powers. But neurotic Ellida has no faith over society so that she hides her pains ahead of her male counterpart, Arnholm. By doing this she is storing her feminine power for the appropriate time to resist the domination of men.

Similarly, in the other drama, *Hedda Gabler* where Cixous idea seems relevant when she remarks her friend being bold women: “Mrs. Elvsted, you have to call me Hedda” (604). So, in this piece of textual reference Hedda opens powerfully her feminine quality and teaches her friend to summon her by her first name. In the past and even at present in many male dominated societies the so called educated and intelligent men as well as traditional women never call women by their first name that is one of the linguistic domination over women. In this dramatic scene, Hedda’s friend Mrs. Elvsted’s name is Thea but she is identified by Elvsted’s wife or Mrs. Elvsted that shows Thea is not conscious of patriarchy’s cultural and linguistic domination. On the contrary, though she is regarded as ‘so particular’ but she is a modern woman who tries to establish equality between both sexes: male and female.

In other words, it is the rule of patriarchy not to call women by their first name but Hedda is valiant woman who wishes to decenter the centre between woman and man. Like Hedda’s neurotic behaviour that is not easy to know by any male characters so her language is also mysterious. So, Ibsen has presented Hedda bolder than Ellida; moreover Hedda is a lady who loves her autonomous space in the society than just lingering with the trivial familial matters.

Hedda teases Thea who does not care what society is doing at women. Sometimes, Hedda’s fearful word which is also symptom of so called neurosis frightens Thea when Hedda reminds her past event: “He said that when they broke off she was going to shoot him with a pistol” (605). This reference above from *Hedda Gabler* where Hedda’s dialogue subverts the conventional perspective of male society that concerns with the sensual pleasure of women by this object. The following dialogue also represents that the ‘pistol’ is not a symbol of phallus rather it is the killer of phallic being that Hedda uses to kill her counterparts. This scene in which

other female character Mrs. Elvsted is shocked by Hedda's words, for she is a woman who thinks male always has to rule over female. In this regards, Kristeva's philosophy is seen appropriate to elucidate this textual reference from the view of Judith Butler who argues: "For Kristeva, the semiotic expresses that original libidinal multiplicity within the very terms of culture, more precisely, within poetic language in which multiple meanings and semantic non closure has been seen prevailed" (105). In accordance with Butler, the semiotic languages of women have multiple meanings along with sexual desire but which is based on the socio-politico-cultural systems. In this way, as per Butler who derives her idea from Kristeva talks the multiplicity in women's language that's why Hedda's shooting is connected with diversified meanings which are hidden like poetic language of mother done with the child.

That is to say, Ibsen's Hedda is not submissive like Ellida in *The Lady from the Sea* though both are hysteric in one sense. Ellida displays a bit fragile nature than Hedda in front of the patriarchal society where they are living despite the fact both are the women of nineteenth century Europe. Time and again, Ellida's abnormal psyche which is drawn by patriarchal society who sometimes thinks herself as mermaid though she is just a normal human being.

In case of Hedda, nobody directly warns her and renames her because she seems courageous from the beginning. Ibsen's motive is to present Ellida as less neurotic than Hedda that demonstrates how the patriarchal society treats them in which one is presented as calm, docile whereas another is violent, radical and bold. Every woman becomes abnormal to some extent if her basic rights have been snatched by the society. Sometimes, women are blamed without any proof and the fact that can be obviously understood in the scene below:

Lyngstrand: Oh, yes, there'll be one other figure. A kind of specter,

you might say. It would be her husband that she'd been unfaithful to while he was away. And he's been drowned at sea

Arnholm: What-?

Ellida: He's been drowned? (245)

The dialogue between two male characters in the scene of the play, *The Lady from the Sea* vividly shows that how women are treated in phallogocentric society. As Lyngstrand's speech 'she'd been unfaithful to while he was away' indicates his half knowledge who once heard the story in his sea voyage. His over confident with man as well as his direct disbelief towards women is his pure patriarchal thought. He directly blames her as 'unfaithful' according to hearsay.

Similarly, he blames woman as if he was real eye-witness in their relationship. The scene also presents that both male characters, Lyngstrand and Arnholm are accusing a woman who has deceived her lover and who has been drowned in the sea. Their interaction exposes that woman is made as main cause behind the death of her lover in the sea. In this way, without doing anything the system of patriarchal society imposes women the tags of sin, misdeed, and treachery.

The Lady from the Sea has raised the issue of female rights, gender role where central character, Ellida's abnormal psyche has been dramatized through various scenes and evidences. She slowly moves her pace to use her neurotic psyche in front of her male counterparts. She is gradually emphasizing her voice against local patriarchy that is her husband. Her action is found change through the following scene talking with Arnholm:

Ellida: Oh, no. That's as it has to be. I have no right to demand that

my husband be mine and mine alone

Arnholm: I would say have that right

Ellida: Yes. But, even so, I don't. That's the point. I also have a life-
that the others aren't part of it. (248)

The dramatic scene above presents Ellida's falling and rising action while interacting with her male partner, Arnholm. Her quote 'my husband is not mine and mine alone' with Arnholm denotes being a wife of Wangel she is made alone at her home. Ellida is not ready to accept to call her husband as her own because she has not got right of human. Her final line 'I also have a life-which the others aren't part of it' exposes her rising action and her conscious towards this biasness. Ellida's final response indicates her neurosis which she is applying to break the social norms of hierarchy in which men are superior and women are inferior. In such society women have no right to say their own rather everything is owned by society.

This dramatic reference can be understood vividly through K. K. Ruthven's idea presented in the text *Feminist Literary Studies*: "Linguistically, 'women' is a sign, not an essence and hence whatever meaning that word happens to have does not inhere in it 'naturally' but is conferred upon it by the society which uses it; its meaning is determined by custom or convention" (36). Therefore, Ruthven defines woman just a linguistic sign in the society of male domination where whatever they say have no value so that Ellida in the scene does not like to accept her husband as husband from her psychology.

Especially, this research dramatizes the two major characters, Hedda and Ellida's psyche one by one through different textual references. Both one way and together show their traits of obsessed psychology. So that Hedda, from the play

Hedda Gabler clearly exposes her obsessive mentality again at the last scene of Act I when she discusses with her husband George:

Hedda (crossing the room): Well, at least I have one thing left to
amuse myself with

Tesman (beaming): Ah, thank heaven for that; what is it, Hedda, oh?

Hedda (in the center doorway) Looking at him with veiled scorn): My

Pistols, George Tesman (in fright): your pistols. (608)

The scene above from the play, *Hedda Gabler* where Hedda's neurotic behaviour frightens again her husband, George. Hedda, by standing at the center of the door at the situation of to be or not to be looking for her pistols is a very stressful scene in the play.

Similarly, the door represents only two things that either in or out; thus she is on the verge of do or die situation. Hedda's actions of searching pistols really portray George's horrible and terrible psychology. The dramatic scene also displays pistols that Hedda is looking for is an image to scare her male counterpart rather than amusing her in order to accomplish her sensual desire.

Conventionally, according to Freud it was used to get pleasure by women but modern women Hedda applies it to see the fear of the male characters. Thus, pathetic and neurotic Hedda's action to seek the pistols is also a strategy to challenge the patriarchal society who just being a phallus boasting themselves more courageous than women. So as to justify this textual reference, Lynda Hass presents Irigaray's quote: "We have a lot of things to do. But it is better to have the future before us than behind us. Let us not wait for the phallus god, because whilst many repeat that "God is dead", they rarely question the fact the phallus is alive well" (159). Hass opines

here that still the existence of phallus has not collapsed though it is said god is dead by men.

Hence, as per Hass definition Irigaray tries to make conscious to women not to believe that the hierarchy is finished between male and female. She asserts that still men are proud of being phallus which means she invokes to go against this biasness. Her definition is applicable to Hedda's purpose to want her pistols because she is conscious that male's psyche of thinking themselves as superior has not eliminated.

Time and again, Hedda applies her neurosis, her feminine element to frighten the hypocrites of phallocracy and that really gives her satisfaction. Once when she tries to shoot Judge Brack, so called lawyer who really afraid with her. Hedda states to Judge Brack, "Oh, I was just shooting into the sky" (608). This scene picturizes Hedda's neurosis happened because of the discrimination rampant in the society. Neurotic Hedda time and again creates fear in men's heart by showing her pistols. Therefore, by showing pistols in front of her male rivals she is protesting against masculine politics and tries to affirm her feminine courage in the society. Actually, 'shooting into the sky' symbolically shoots into the world of men because of the discrimination between same human beings. Judge still tries to take advantage of her sickness: "There wasn't a day that I didn't wish you were home again" (608). This textual evidence indirectly clarifies his motive behind his friendship with Hedda. That is to say, Hedda is frightening her male counterpart through her pistols that is her strong revolt against gender biased society.

Hedda: But then the most unbearing thing at all-

Brack: what!

Hedda: To be everlastingly together with –with one and the same person.

Brack: (nodding in agreement): Morning, noon, and night- Yes. At every conceivable hour

Hedda: I said 'everlastingly'. (609)

Above quote where protagonist, Hedda asserts her feminine desire which is not libidinal. Her neurosis is explicitly seen here not to get any bodily pleasure rather for the sake of freedom. Hedda's psychology feels that she is imprisoned at the domestic wall of George so that she asserts that 'to be everlastingly together with-with one and the same person' does not indicate for the another man to get pleasure. She wants to free from any kinds of bondage imposed not only by her husband but by the narrow social rules and regulations. Hedda's final term 'everlastingly' shows her desire to live life freely forever. Her male counterpart, Judge Brack always tries to take benefit physically from Hedda who portrays as a real black spot of patriarchy. Hedda's desire is less libidinal but more social freedom but the person like Judge Brack always looks woman from sensual point of view.

The dramatic scene also shows the long gap between man and women. In this regards, Virginia Woolf in her essay, "A Room of One's Own" writes: "Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their effort as much as their brothers do" (822). Thus, Woolf argues for the separate room to enhance their potentiality then they can do what men do therefore Hedda tries to live separately to develop her feminine abilities.

Ibsen's presents the psychology of Hedda is far more subtle which in a sense is regarded as neurosis. Severe neurosis sometimes leads to the death but her neurosis is caused by patriarchy. Through neurosis she asserts her feminine resistance against masculine forces. Her words, motive, thought all are the symptoms of neurotic person

that she is doing to get her rights of being same human. She reveals her desire which is not concerned with pleasure principle as the psychoanalyst, Sigmund Freud used to think on woman but she does just for creating her own identity. Her neurosis that is not libidinal can be understood through the dialogue below:

Brack: Well, then what you do is jump out – out and stretch yourself a

Little, Mrs. Hedda

Hedda: I shall never jump out

Brack: Never?

Hedda: No. Because there's always someone on the platform who –

Brack: (with a laugh): Who looks at your legs, is that it?

Hedda: Precisely. (609)

The aforementioned dramatic scene in which the male character Judge Brack who is searching a chance to exploit Hedda but her desire is far more different than what he has thought.

In this sense, her thought is beyond such trivial matter of sensual pleasure with any third person rather she is wishing for her own individual self than social self.

Hedda's sentence 'I shall never jump out' through this above reference to Judge Brack vividly exposes her neurosis is not for physical activity rather who asserts her feminine elements in which just like males, females too come out from the four walls of domestic compound.

The neurotic language of Hedda seems some sorts of libidinal signs thus her male competitor's masculine psyche endeavours to trap her in his net. This scene also denotes her subtle language which has multiple meanings which is purely feminine quality. In order to justify this dramatic reference, Kari Weil's view becomes relevant:

The starting point for such expression is women's discovery of her repressed desires and more specifically, her repressed pleasure or *jouissance*. The implication for Irigaray, as for Cixous, is that women's libido is not only repressed, but essentially different from man's. That difference, furthermore, gives rise to different language. (165)

As Weil argues that women's libido is distinct from men therefore their language and meaning also differ from men. In such a way, Hedda's male counterpart, Judge Brack is utterly unable to know what Hedda means. Weil's definition of women's pleasure is repressed by men along with other rights thus they create neurotic personalities through which they use different diversified words which is complex to understand by any males.

Ellida does not suddenly assert her feminine roles against her male counterparts. Some neurotic persons show their violent and sudden reaction like Hedda does towards any other whereas some behaves calmly as Ellida in this play. In this regards, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* which defines neurosis as "(medical) a mental illness in which a person suffers strong feelings of fear and worry, any strong fear or worry ANXIETY" (1023). Thus Oxford Dictionary clarifies that neurotic person often suffers from fear or worry that is to say Ellida's problem seems same because of the patriarchal biasness. Ellida's one form of symptom of neurosis can be understood through her conversation with Wangel:

Wangel: And yet, I do. Ellida, you're such an honest person. So, loyal

Ellida: yes, loyal

Wangel: Any relationship in which you could feel secure and happy
would have to be completed and unreserved

Ellida: Why do you say that – now? (256)

The dramatic scene above captures some points of her mental illness through male character Wangel.

Wangel uses the terms 'so loyal' to Ellida means Ellida is showing her calmness and loyalty to her husband from the beginning and who always wants her same. It is one of the major trends of patriarchy that men usually intend women to be faithful and subservient towards their husbands. This piece of dramatic scene also reflects Wangel's attempt to persuade Ellida to bring into normal track. Thus, so called husbands of male dominated society play various roles to control women; they lure women by applying several means. This scene also exposes that Ellida is still not showing her major strong feelings though she is regarded as sick by her husband time to time.

Ellida has still terror towards her husband thus she is looking for the chance to assert her feminine elements. The neurotic behaviours in the play not only concern with Ellida but also with other minor female characters like Bolette and Hilda who are the two step daughters of Ellida. Bolette has been made neurotic by local patriarchy that is her father, Wangel as this textual reference epitomizes:

Arnholm: In those days when I was tutoring you, your father often said
you'd be going on to the university

Bolette: Oh, poor Father- he says so many things. But when it comes
right down to it- there's no real willpower in him

Arnholm: Yes. I'm afraid you're right; there isn't. But have you ever
spoken to him about it? I mean quite seriously and
unequivocally?

Bolette: No, I haven't exactly. (270)

The scene above shows Bolette's abnormal behaviour towards her father. Along with Ellida she has been tortured by father's patriarchal rules otherwise she doesn't say to Arnholm, "There's no real willpower in him" (270) makes her domestic animal who always moves around four walls of house. Therefore because of the domination of Wangel both Bolette and Ellida hate him in particular but their hatred seems towards whole social norms and values in general weaved by male dominated society.

Hence, they show different behaviours like 'hatred', 'disbelief', and 'calm' against patriarchy which are some symptoms of neurosis. Bolette's mistrust towards her own father is a sign of patriarchal neurosis found in women. So as to prove this textual reference on behalf of Bolette's neurosis Kari Weil's statement seems relevant: "That all women are, to some extent, hysterics" (163). Weil's definition incorporates all women who directly or indirectly are entrapped in the gender biased society that lead them to feel as if they are neurotic. In the play, Bolette is an indirect victim whereas Ellida is a direct that is why there neurotic behaviours are not equal while analyzing through textual evidences.

The neurosis that is found in Ellida as well as Hedda is actually their strategy to assert feminine elements against masculine biasness. In terms of understanding about 'life', 'nature', 'world' there is no different among any sex either male or female. If woman knows more rather than man who is considered as abnormal person in the male dominated society. The majority of people either males or females are male centric that is why women are regarded as neurosis if they understand better than men. Such example can be seen in Ellida's interaction with Arnholm:

Arnholm: But we belong to the land, no?

Ellida: No, don't believe it. I believe that, if only mankind had adapted itself from start to a life on the – or perhaps in the sea – then

we would have become something much different and more advanced than we are now. Both better and happier. (273)

The dramatic extract above introduces two different views of two genders: feminine or masculine. Ellida's feminine understanding focuses on the sea that is origin of all living beings.

Ellida philosophizes about human beings from the core reality whereas Arnholt's thoughts seem moving at surface level. This dramatic scene obviously narrates the views of both sexes, male and female where female's logic is deeper than male opinion. In this way, Ellida's meaningful words, logic, and her philosophy towards mankind cannot categorize as a neurotic person; in this sense to behave neurotically is her methodology to assert her feminine roles. So, the philosophical lines of Ellida between land and sea are very meaningful and informative. In the deeper level, she satirizes the patriarchal world, where women are characterized as sea and men by land.

Since 19th century a kinds of revolution appeared all over the world in different sectors. Not only women in Europe and America but also in the Africa, , Native America, and other minority places have raised their strong voices for the equality, justice, freedom, human rights and so on. Thus, in these plays too, both women Hedda and Ellida represent the modern women of late nineteenth century nevertheless whose psyche have been dominated by patriarchal values, norms, laws, rules and regulation as a result they are behaving as if they are neurosis and hysteric.

As mentioned earlier their neurosis is their continuous resistance against androcentric society. Just like the ebb and flow in the sea her mind now is rising against freedom to her husband which she is going to claim. Now, she is not a 'poor,' 'sick,' loyal' little Ellida of the past; she is more than her husband ever imagined.

Wangel strives hard to console her, to make her calm and cool but like tide in sea but she is rising up and up, her feminine qualities have heavily arisen inside her psyche that no representative of patriarchy can resist her even her own husband. Now she has become a modern conscious woman to fight against the male culture.

Because of the fear of Ellida, Wangel to save his prestige tries to express his loving nature about Ellida: “Well, my lord-I do have to think about it! But then, on the other hand again, there’s my poor, sick Ellida! Ah my dear Arnholm- in many ways, I really feel caught between fire and water” (275). This dramatic extract dramatizes Wangel’s rational male psychology when he experiences real feminine force of Ellida while she demands for freedom.

Moreover, the given scene from the play, *The Lady from the Sea* reflects Ellida’s strong symptoms towards Wangel. Wangel while talking ‘I really feel caught between fire and water’ with Arnholm exposes his frightful psychology. Wangel is entangled between dilemma of ‘fire and water’ means either let her freedom or dominate her like before. He has now frightened with sick Ellida that’s why he is sharing his psychological fear to Arnholm. Though Wangel is afraid of Ellida’s concern of freedom he still states her as ‘my poor, sick Ellida’ which reveals his dominating psyche is still on. Hence, Ellida’s psyche has been dramatized time and again by her husband. The forceful actions of neurosis created by patriarchy, is slowly appearing and emerging like the tide in the sea inside Ellida’s heart. As a lady from the sea of the patriarchal community, is moving ahead to assert for the freedom.

The calm and cool Ellida is showing her strong feelings of neurosis. The changing psychology can be clearly seen through the scene below with her husband, Wangel:

Ellida: Yes, or anyway, concealing the truth. Because the truth-the

plain truth, simple truth is that you come out there and bought
me

Wangel: Bought. You say bought

Ellida: Oh, I wasn't one particle better than you. I met your offer – and
sold myself to you

Wangel: (gives her a pained look). Ellida – how can you be so
heartless? (296)

The dramatic reference above manifests Ellida's forceful speech towards Wangel. In this dialogue with her husband she does not show her calm and fragile nature as she did before; her mind has become like wave who argues to him, "Because the truth-the plain truth, simple truth is that you come out there and bought me" (296). This dramatic reference exposes her drastic change in comparison with her past actions. This dialogue also reveals Wangel's losing hope to control Ellida in the domestic circle.

In this scene above, her assertive role being neurotic woman against masculine thoughts has brought change in her psychology that is her real feminine strategy. Wangel cannot able to control her feminine force as her words 'simple, plain truth' but which is not simple but her language is poetic attached with maternal bond which has feminine quality to disrupt the male grammar and syntax. This dramatic reference in which Wangel attempts to console her but Ellida remarks: "No, I didn't go with you freely" (297). This textual quotation of Ellida against her husband vividly elucidates the real reason of her neurosis that is 'freedom' captured by Wangel. As per Ellida Wangel just bought her who had no desire to come at his house. That is to say, when her freedom is snatched by Wangel, she becomes neurotic.

Here for the justification of this dramatic reference Mary E. Hawkesworth's essay "Discourse on the Male Monopoly of Thought" seems appropriate: "Patriarchy produces the decapitated women: without mind to think, without eyes to speak, without ears to hear, without voice to speak she exist as mutilated body" (446). So, the theorization of Hawkesworth's like 'without mind to think,' 'without eyes to speak,' 'without ears to hear' are some symptoms of patriarchal neurotic women but in one sense that are their strategy to resist the masculine trends. Similarly, Ellida is also made such decapitated and mutilated person whose logic seems meaningless up to now but she is rising like wave of the sea to overcome the hierarchy constructed by male monopoly thought.

On the other hand, Hedda, the central character of Hedda Gabler whose neurosis is not submissive like Ellida. Hedda never begs help with any male counterparts in this play rather she likes to share her feelings but each time she finds male's dominating nature towards women that really compels her to think about the death of her life. The same feeling can be found in the dialogue below:

Judge Brack: (Moving closer): And what, may I ask, is that?

Hedda: (Stands looking at): Boring myself to death. And that's the truth (Turns, looks toward the inner room, and laughs.) See what I mean! Here comes the professor

Brack: (in a low tone of warning): Ah-ah-ah, Mrs. Hedda! (612)

The textual reference above exposes the protagonist, Hedda's melancholic and stressful conditions towards her life. Neurotic Hedda created by patriarchal ideology expresses 'bearing myself to death' in front of Brack, a family friend of Tesman's family who since the beginning looking for the chance to seduce Hedda. And the fact is Hedda's libido is not filled with sensual gratification rather she longs for complete

free world of her own; hence, each time Judge fails to trap Hedda. The symbol of 'death' for her is a complete emancipation from each and every binaries and biasness of society. She further 'looks toward the inner room and laugh' which are also symptoms of neurosis satirize the conventional values and norms of male dominated society. She is psychologically reaching on the verge of last stage that is 'death'.

Besides, the male character Brack is still looking a good chance to take some advantage from her but Hedda's purpose is not for getting gratification with third person. She goes beyond this thought which is the world of equality, peace, harmony, liberation and so on. This dramatic scene where laugh is the one form of neurosis identical with the "Laugh of Medusa", an essay by Cixous that invokes women's desire and quality through her viewpoint: "You only have to look at the Medusa straight on to see her. And she's not deadly. She's beautiful and she's laughing" (216). Cixous, by bringing the mythical allusion of Medusa makes conscious women to open their secret, to laugh as they can. She suggests women to display their quality rather than confining in the dark room of patriarchy. In the scene above reveals Hedda's laugh is also her feminine quality to create her own identity. So, laughing of female is a challenge to the males to assert their feminine quality.

Ibsen, by presenting two major male characters, George and Wangel expose the realities of patriarchal domination. Even in the play, *Hedda Gabler* makes clear to this concept while talking to Brack: "I don't expect to be unfaithful either. I'm not having any of that" (615). This textual reference exposes obsessive Hedda's fight is not with single male representative that is her husband, George rather her enemy is a whole system of patriarchy. She has desire to live totally free from any rules, regulations, values, language, norms of male dominated society. George here is a representative of phallocracy thus it is her feminine war with whole masculine

biasness, injustice, prejudices, differences and so on. So, she not only wants to get overcome with George but with whole conventional hierarchic culture of so called men.

In order to justify this dramatic piece of dialogue Kari Weil's idea incorporates that she borrows from French feminism: "For French feminists, women's desire is what is most oppressed and repressed by patriarchy, and according to them, language is itself patriarchal" (153). Thus, Weil focuses on the very language that is purely male centric because it is created by men so as to dominate women.

That is to say, French feminists insist on to compose own separate language of women to reveal their feelings, intellectualities, passions and the like. In this way, the above references vividly exemplifies that it is the male dominated society that portrays women as neurotic, hysteric, abnormal, mad and so on so forth; and sometimes the brave woman like Hedda goes on moving ahead to fight the whole system which can be seen through her voice: "Yes, there's. For once in my life I want to have power over a human being" (619). This scene demonstrates Hedda's extreme hatred towards whole human being which is centered on patriarchal culture and that is her severe sign of neurosis.

Likewise, Hedda's strong fury to the 'human being' stands for whole gender biased system of society that she boldly claims to overcome it. Like Ellida valorizes the sea world instead of land so Hedda presents excessive hatred toward human being. Hence, for years they have been dominated by patriarchal rules and regulations so that they are expressing their abnormal behavior which is their feminine resistance to dismantle the traditional society. In this very context, Irigaray in her essay, "This Sex Which Is Not One" demonstrates women's desire: "Their desire is often interpreted, and feared, as a sort of insatiable hunger, a voracity that will swallow you whole"

(280). Therefore, Irigaray defines women's unquenchable desire through their multiple gestures that no any phallic being can control and satisfy; they have power to overcome everything and everyone.

Thus, in this play too, Hedda's desire 'to have power over human being' is seemed extreme irrational neurotic desire but that is really her rage towards this phallocentric society. Similarly, Hedda's neurotic hunger can be found when she burns the manuscript of Eilert Lovborg which is written for the civilization of the human being. The book which is composed by man just to valorize patriarchy challenged her dignity, freedom that's why she burned it. After burning Lovborg's manuscript excites him to commit suicide.

Ibsen ends this play, *Hedda Gabler* in tragic situation through which he has presented society's extremity towards women who seeks freedom to live. At the final act the climax is so fatal which can be unimagined by audiences, too. Hedda sees no option except committing suicide rather than surrendering towards the patriarchy. Even her own husband behaves as if she is an object for one mistake when she burned Lovborg's manuscript that she had done to save her husband's position as well as her strong hatred towards males. On the other hand, Judge Brack, a selfish man again strives to trap Hedda in triangular relationship though she defies his proposal. She sees no option except death otherwise she has to follow what Judge Brack told to her to be his slave for sexual exploitation.

Therefore, in the final scene she at last shows her severe neurotic character or her strong feminine resistance toward patriarchy means she fully applies her neurotic strategy to save from suppression and oppression from patriarchy. Her suicide is seen through this scene below:

Tesman: Oh, now she's fooling with those pistols again (He throws the

curtains back and runs in. Mrs. Elvsted follows. Hedda lies lifeless, stretched out on the sofa. Confession and cries. Berta comes bewildered, from the right)

Tesman (Shrieking to Brack): Shot herself! Shot her in the temple! Can you Imagine?

Brack (in the armchair, prostrated): But good God! People don't do such things. (634)

The final dramatic scene leaves various messages for the society, people, and audiences and so on. In one sense, it is Hedda's lasting freedom from the whole discriminating system of patriarchy. The 'suicide' is her last option to save her from the scandal of men as a result she takes such bold decision. This final dramatic scene picturizes male characters' horrible and trembling moods after her suicide.

On the basis of suicide by women in 19th century Europe, Margaret Higonnet's theorization is applicable: "Women typically is just a fragmented self, perceived in mirrors and through others. Because of their identification with mirrors, women's individualism further threatens to take the form of narcissism" (111). According to Higonnet when women are categorized as object to be looked at mirrors from the society they can do anything; she strongly focuses on their autonomous selves. Here, narcissism reflects women's excessive interest and love towards selves that later results in suicide.

Similarly, in this scene too, Hedda is just made 'a play object' by male characters thus she kills herself to get complete release from exploitation. She killed herself beautifully by challenging the patriarchal values and norms. Just like Nora, another bold heroine of Ibsen's previous play *A Doll's House* who slammed the door before leaving her husband, Torvald.

Thus, Ibsen concludes this play *Hedda Gabler* with the death of Hedda, central character being a victim of patriarchy. Hedda eventually gets freedom from the phallogocentric world after death but in case of Ellida she is able to achieve her freedom from her husband and better to settle down with her family. Ellida's persistent demand for freedom from Wangel finally affirms her victory. The crucial point of the play that Ellida is totally free from Wangel's domestic arena but her aim is not to destroy the natural bond between man and woman so she happily decides to stay with Wangel by caring her two young step daughters and denies the proposal of stranger lover. Ellida in the final act 'v' talking to Wangel:

Wangel (Looks at her a moment). Ellida, your mind is like the sea-it
ebbs and flows what brought the change?

Ellida! Oh, don't you understand that change came- that it had to
come-when I could choose in freedom?

Wangel: And the unknown – it doesn't attract you anymore? (320)

The textual reference above displays Wangel's acknowledgement of being boastful husband, who confesses his mistakes means he is begging forgiveness with Ellida for his mistake. In this regards, Cixous writes in "The Laugh of Medusa": "But look, our seas are what we make of them, full of fish or not, opaque or transparent, red or black, high or smooth, narrow or blackness; and we are ourselves sea, sand, coral, seaweed, beaches, tides, swimmers, children, waves" (217). Her definition visualizes everything of women's desires, feelings, and emotions and so on.

Hence, like Cixous expressed, Ellida's mind too, sometimes ebbs and sometimes flows. Her freedom after all to dwell with her own husband but Wangel never attempted to understand this core fact. After she acquires her emancipation, she remains calm like the placid sea. Hence, her freedom is the release from the bondage

of phallogocentric world in which Wangel is the typical representative who has been suppressing her wife under the patriarchal values and norms.

To conclude, both neurotic heroines of Ibsen, Hedda and Ellida from his two major works- *Hedda Gabler* and *The Lady from the Sea* secure their full-fledged emancipation from their domestic bond of patriarchy but their ways seemed different. Hedda grabs this liberation after her suicide which is considered as one form of feminine trait to receive freedom from patriarchy rather than kneeling down under the representatives of conventional patriarchal society. Similarly, Ellida achieves her equal right from her husband, a representative of local patriarchy in one sense without killing herself and anyone else and proceeds for mutual relationship with patriarchy. In this way, whatever they have done being neurosis and abnormal are just their feminine resistance and tool to overcome and fight against patriarchal norms and values.

III. Strategic Use of Female Neurosis in Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea* and *Hedda Gabler*

The research, after the complete study and analysis of Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* and *The Lady from the Sea* from the perspective of the French feminism, contends that the writer in both plays exploit the women's neurotic problem as the consequence of the patriarchy which in turn is used to dismantle the same patriarchal values and norms. Through this double sides of the female neurosis, Ibsen on the one hand reflects the cruelty of the repressive patriarchy and shows the possibility of the resistance and emancipation on the other hand.

In these two dramas, *The Lady from the Sea* and *Hedda Gabler*, in which two female protagonists, Ellida and Hedda are presented neurotic figures by Ibsen in the male centered society. They are the modern of women of late 19th century so they do not behave as submissive women of classical time rather they find new way to challenge the customs of biased society. They utilize neurotic in such a manner that they defeat their male counterparts at the end and affirm their feminine supremacy and position in the society.

Though neurosis is a mild mental sickness appeared in both male and female because of various socio-politico-cultural and familial troubles in which patients act sometimes violent and agitating whereas sometimes cool, submissive and silent. Even in the plays, *Hedda Gabler* and *The Lady from the Sea*, Hedda and Ellida expose their different mental characteristics which contain the symptoms of neurosis as mentioned above. This project studies the neurosis produced by gender biased society where women's voices and rights are subjugated. The neurosis which are programmed by patriarchal biasness to exploit women but its opposite in these two plays, the courageous women, Hedda and Ellida of late 19th century, Europe use neurosis as

their weapon to hit on the head against the gender discrimination than following and supporting towards what males imposed on them like classical women did for long time.

This study has demonstrated some evidences that elucidates the women's libido is less libidinal but more oriented towards the freedom and equality snatched thoroughly by the representatives of male dominated society. By nature human seeks freedom but men thinks themselves as superior beings and try to rule over same human being that is women. In these two plays, the playwright, Ibsen presents such women characters like Berta, Aunt Juliana, and Mrs. Elvsted who still are ignorant for their feminine rights and are ready to worship and to follow the same trend built by patriarchy for long time. Apart from them, Hedda and Ellida who strive hard to establish their identity by challenging so called males and by defying each and every norms of androcentrism.

This research has clearly reflected the neurosis came under control when they tactfully mobilize against phallogocentric society. Ellida from the play *The Lady from the Sea* compels her husband Wangel by demanding freedom to live her life freely. Her philosophical feminine arguments with her friend and husband presented at the later scenes of the play clarifies the true vision and mission of French psychoanalytic feminists to secure women's position and identity by challenging men's constructed language, phallogocentrism. Likewise, Hedda from the Play, Hedda Gabler has to kill her to secure her real freedom. It is extremity of neurosis that sometimes patients can kill themselves but in case of Hedda she takes this bold decision to defend her life in particular and women's identity in general which proves that she never inclines against the male dominated society.

This research also focuses on the familial relationship where freedom is most necessary to progress in society. Without freedom family can not run smoothly and no members of the family can progress in their lives. Ellida epitomizes it by acclimatizing in her familial bond rather than living separately in her life after getting full-fledged freedom from her husband. Her decision for reconciliation in a family is a really adequate example and lesson to be learned by so called superior men.

Hence, this project has clearly manifested the abnormality of women and its consequences in various features as well as it has justified women's way of taking freedom by the same tool that is 'neurosis' granted by men. Therefore, both heroines' objective of acting as neurotic woman is to get freedom from main stream society that is based on male custom which they succeed to make their own property at the end. It doesn't matter how they got it and what's their result is, but they ultimately give a hard shock to the so called wise members of patriarchal society who had thought they are the rulers of human beings who merely used to think women are passive, submissive, object, other, and so on and endeavored to impose their masculine authorities.

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