

1. *The Lady from the Sea* an Ironic Play

Henrik Johan Ibsen (March 20, 1828 – May 23, 1906) was the most outstanding Norwegian the greatest dramatist of the late 19th century Europe who had gone further than anyone in putting Norway on the map. For half a century he had spent his life and energies to the art of drama. Ibsen strongly contributed to give European drama a vitality and artistic quality what makes him uncommon playwright after Shakespeare. He spent all of 27 years abroad in Italy and Germany in self imposed exile, however, he did not stop writing about Norway's social and national problems to notify reader. He kept on colouring and decorating his works with the scenery and memory of his native soil even while living in foreign land. Although Henrik Ibsen was never fully called great author during his life time, after his death, he has now come to be recognized as one of the greatest dramatists of all time and place.

Ibsen gave a new voice and set of new attitudes to drama and was largely responsible for the rise of the modern realistic prose drama or the problem play. He was the first major dramatist to write about the tragicomic sensibilities of ordinary people in prose which were otherwise ignored or neglected. His plays mainly attacked entailed Victorian beliefs and moral codes. In this context, Abhi Subedi on Ibsen's use of image and style mentions, "he was not an experimentalist and avant-gardist; he was an innovator, a rebel, a reformist and a humanist" (5). Actually Ibsen was an innovator and a reformist as claimed by Abhi Subedi. The quality of his dialogue and his discarding of traditional theoretical effects, demanded and achieved a new style of performance.

Similarly, Michael Joy, the director of "Yatrik" (India) has found Ibsen as, "One of the greatest dramatists, after Shakespeare, who initiated us into the

complexities of the modern world", because through "his wide-ranging choice of themes and various shades of the contemporary life [. . .] we learnt to look at the contemporary society, pre-occupied with problems of personal and social reality. Yes, he is relevant to society of his own time, - common with our own time" (qtd. In Banerjee 179). Because of his new style and technique, universal themes and new outlook on human life and its complexities in his plays, there are numerous admirers of him.

His early period was characterized by an extensive use of symbolism, native myths and religious concerns in the plays that were intended to be read rather than performed. His most famous works are characterized by a realistic depiction of contemporary life related issues, a deep psychological portrait of his characters and their interactions, a perfectly crafted plot of rising dramatic tension, economy of action, penetrating dialogue and rigorous thought. However, the discussions of Ibsen's plays have centered "narrowly upon a few issues life realism and naturalism, and women's emancipation – a sweeping generalization that has put several other aspects, themes and dimensions of the exceptional playwrights under shadow" (Subedi et. al. Foreword).

Once Ibsen found his voice as a realist playwright, he developed plays centering on social problems and problems of the individual struggling against the demand of society. The themes of Ibsen's plays often deal with the issues of financial difficulties as well as moral conflicts stemming from dark private secrets hidden from society. His writing is mainly focused on repression, depression, obsession and mental torture and patriarchal domination and exploitation upon those women struggling and seeking for their right and total freedom. In this regard, Dr. Utpal Benerjee studying and analyzing Ibsen's nine major plays including *The Lady from the Sea* comments

that by "Emphasizing character over theme, he addresses social problems like political corruption and the changing role of women, - alongside psychological conflicts stemming from frustrated love and destructive family relationship" (163).

His concerns towards women deeply offended the conservatives of contemporary late 19th century European society, however, it was rather a daring theme. His problem plays mainly deal with the themes of alienation from society and breaking down of conventions, the relation of the individual to his/her social environment, the shams and conventions that hinder his/her self-expression and especially the imprisonment of women through the institution of marriage. Talking about the themes in Ibsen's plays, Margaret Drabble writes, "Ibsen's earlier plays [. . .] were concerned largely with social and political themes, but the last six plays [. . .] are more deeply concerned with the forces of the unconscious, and were greatly admired by Freud" (490). Each of Ibsen's plays centers upon personal awakening and inner transformation through confrontations with family guilt, social hypocrisy, venereal disease, conventional sexually morality, and the materialistic bourgeois ethics.

Ibsen's play *The Lady from the Sea*, the first of his six final plays in which, having finished his 'plays of protest', he enlarged on themes that he had already dealt with in his controversial works. The play, set in a remote town in Norway amid the wilds of the fjords and the sea, is perhaps more poetic and atmospheric than his two great play *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabbler* those dealing with the constrained social position of women. It was written in 1888, thirteen years after the shocking *A Doll's House*, and less than two years before *Hedda Gabbler*. All these three plays share themes of choice, marriage, responsibility and freedom of women.

In late 19th century Norwegian society, Victorian values of familial life and morality were the most influential and dominant. Any challenge to them was

considered to be immoral and outrageous. Ibsen's works examine the realities that lay beneath many facades, which the society does not want to reveal. The play dramatizes the position of the late 19th century women in the Norwegian society where women became victims of depression, repression, mental obsession and male domination due to the lack of adequate freedom necessary for overall development of their personality. Such conducting in male dominated society makes women's position ambivalent.

Ellida, the second wife of Dr. Wangel finds her marriage unsatisfactory because she is haunted by a love vow she has made to sailor years ago. Fascinated by the sea, she is still waiting for the mysterious sailor who had promised to return someday to claim her. When a stranger suddenly appears, Ellida realizes that the sailor has indeed returned. She is torn between her husband and demonic spell of the man, who both terrifies and fascinates her. She gets easier position in ambivalent. At last, she becomes successful to liberate herself convincing her conventional husband. When Dr. Wangel releases her from her marriage vows, allowing her complete freedom of choice, she realizes the depth of his love for her and rejects the stranger and whole heartedly accepts her marriage and familial responsibilities. Here her decision casts her in ambivalent position and ironical doubt in her selfhood and individual identity.

Many women writers and feminist critics have made consistent efforts to highlight the problems faced by women. Ibsen, like other women writers and feminist critics, has taken the problems faced by women in a male dominated world as one of the universal themes of his plays. Right from the earliest times to the present, women have been struggling to assert a respectable place for themselves. It is often said that a large number of women all over the world are undergoing the same deplorable

situation, only the degree of their suppression varies from place and time. Women have been exploited by men in all ages. Ibsen probes into the inner recesses of his female characters in order to figure out the intensity of male domination. In this context Astrid Saether states that, "his attention of female psychology as well as to women's social situation has assured him [. . .] a position in feminist canon" (30).

What fascinates him more than the glittering surface of society is the inner dynamics of his characters' lives and motives.

Ibsen has a rare sensitivity that enables him to explore the consciousness of his characters. His female characters are in perpetual quest for meaning and value of life. They refuse to surrender their individual selves. They differ from others in that they long for, aspire and strive to be true to their selves. They rebel against gender discrimination, question the double standards and refuse the dual morality. They continue their struggle unmindful of its outcome. Thus, Henrik Ibsen is the vanguard of a new generation of European playwrights who are experimenting with themes of inner consciousness. He gives his readers valuable insights into the feminine consciousness through memorable protagonists like Rebecca, Nora, *Hedda Gabbler* and so on, who are on the verge of emerging as ambivalent woman.

Ibsen's ambivalent woman is contemplative about her predicament and chooses to revolt against the suppressive, oppressive and exploitative norms and currents of patriarchy. What is different about these women is that they are prepared to face the consequences of their choices. The emerging ambivalent woman challenges the traditional roles and refuses to surrender to it. She takes up a new reformed path where nobody can suppress, oppress and treat her as a passive objects without any human sentiments. She refuses to confine her 'self' as a traditional woman, an insignificant victim or passive object for others' use and pleasure.

In *The Lady from the Sea*, Ellida is ambivalent emerging woman who neither discards the familial values nor is ready to succumb herself to the patriarchal domination, suppression, oppression, exploitation and mental torture as a submissive, mute and docile creature. She does not value the formality of both marriage and divorce. She rather gives importance to her autonomous self. But she is not as much radical, rebellious and self destructive like *Hedda Gabbler* in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabbler*. Here the protagonist, Ellida is ready to take the 'wife-mother' role only on the condition that she is independent and totally free mentally as well as physically. She values familial structure. She thinks that there is no meaning of life in the absence of family. She finds her life in contradiction. It makes her ambivalent woman too. Ellida, simultaneously believes that the patriarchy has some evils that should be correct and reformed. She thinks, it is possible only through the path of non-violence, co-operation, mutual understanding and compromise. She does not want to take violent, risky, uncertain and self-destructive route in the name of being radical, progressive and rebelling against patriarchal domination and exploitation. She, being an ambivalent emerging woman, rather tries her best and struggles continuously to assert her total selfhood and correct the evils and weak aspects of patriarchy through the path of non-violence, mutual understanding and dialogic relation with the local patriarchy (her husband).

Ibsen's play *The Lady from the Sea* has derived a lot of reviews since its publication in 1888. Many critics argue that *The Lady from the Sea* deals with the theme of liberation and emancipation from domination and other social barriers. Regarding the context of the play James Leigh says that "there is nonetheless no question that the specificity of middle-class Norwegian domestic life in the 1880s is one of the dominant elements in the play, " and that "it can and probably should be

related to the period's feminist movement, called the Woman Question in Norway" (122). Analyzing the difficulties experienced by the protagonist Ellida, Lorraine Markotic writes:

Ellida [. . .] is not dominated in any obvious way, her circumstances are not manifestly oppressive. Her husband, Wangel, is not a tyrant. He is not even a Helmer or a Rosmer and actually seems genuinely concerned about her. All the same, Ellida feels unhappy, and she longs for something else, something different another life. And the elusiveness of her dissatisfaction seems to be a constitutive aspect of her discontent. (432)

Ellida's case is psychological too. As Frank N. Magill comments, "The Lady from the Sea [is] the first of psychological dramas written by Ibsen, who had formerly devoted himself almost entirely to social criticism. Here the characters are not merely part of a class, for they are strongly and finely drawn in their own right." He further says that "there are two subplots, another departure from the great dramatist's usual style" (545). Ibsen's characters are not only passive creatures of their society but they are also self seeking active participants of it. His characters are universal in nature representing the issues of public concerns. They are conscious of their autonomous existence too.

For Bill Hagarty Ellida is Ibsen's one of the memorable protagonists, a representative woman of the age. He further comments, "Delving deep into the Norwegian psyche, Ibsen used Ellida, the married woman who longs to escape to the open sea and into the arms of the sailor she briefly loved, as a symbol of 19th century social restlessness" (104). 19th century Europe was full of social, political and cultural

disorders and people were suffering from restlessness and anxiety. Ellida is a representative female character who mirrors the restlessness of the age.

In the similar way, exploring the psychology of Ellida, Matt Wolf says that "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).

Different other critics tend to argue that Ellida longs for her father, who is dead, and to get some relief from the intense agony she frequently visits the sea.

By focusing on the psychological aspects of Ellida, along with other major characters like Nora and Hedda, Bal Bahadur Thapa associates her obsession and trauma with patriarchy and claims that:

Of course, they have been as oppressed as any woman living in the male dominated society is. They are supposed to remain as silent as other subaltern women are. Yet they dare to express their desires. And their expression is not fantastic in any sense. They have paid the price for what they speak the way the women do in a patriarchal society when they dare to speak themselves out. Ibsen doesn't turn a subaltern into some kind of supernatural creature in order to enable them to speak out. (69)

Ellida, the female protagonist of the play undergoes a difficult situation throughout the story. She can not be herself anywhere and at anytime. She is torn between her husband and the seaman. Various factors are responsible for her deplorable situation. In the contest, Bal Bahadur Thapa further examining Ellida's precarious situation argues:

As a woman living in a patriarchal society, she, however, can not realize what she wants. Again, her character is heavily influenced by

the socioeconomic and psychological forces, which, are beyond her control. Her precarious existence up to the very end of the play reveals how problematic human experience is. (70)

Ellida is an existentially ambivalent character. She desires for her autonomous existence. As she can not enjoy what she wants, she undergoes psychological frustration.

Sometimes Ellida is portrayed as a neurotic character. Lia Karavia, however, does not agree with this label and says, "But how can any woman not be neurotic if her wedding was the passing from a father's authority, or worse – a negotiation? Wangel himself says as he sets her free: I annul the negotiation right away" (86). Analyzing her behaviour he further comments:

The behaviour of the lady from the sea can be described as "a peculiar neurosis" only by someone who does not understand the female soul. Every woman who lives in the safety of her harbour-home, without ever having ventured in the open seas, yearns for the ocean, though she knows its perils, and in some way is a "lady from the sea." (86)

Ellida's fascination of the sea is not neurosis but her inner desire for selfhood and individual identity. In this regard Eva Le Gallienne in her introduction to *Six Plays by Henrik Ibsen* talks about Ibsen's interest in female identity and selfhood:

The women of sagas with their wild deep nature had always held a great fascination for him; and something of their sharply individual, fearless spirit, warm and strong at the same time undoubtedly crept into many of the women in Ibsen's plays; they are a combination of Ice and flame. (xiv)

Ellida has kept something secret from her husband, Dr. Wangel. Once she tried to share the secret but her husband did not care about it. The secret grows inside her, takes an enormous and destructive form and becomes one of the root causes of her obsession spoiling her familial relation. In this connection Sir Edmund Gosse shares similar ideas while analyzing similarities and differences of the play *The Lady from the Sea* with Ibsen's other plays. He states:

The *Lady from the Sea* is connected with the previous plays by its emphatic defense of individuality and its statement of the imperative necessity of developing it; but the tone is sunny, and without a tinge of pessimism. It is in some respects all reverse of *Rosmersholm*; the bitterness of restrained and balked individuality, which ends in death, being contrasted with the sweetness of emancipated and gratified individuality, which leads to health and peace. (187)

All the critics and scholars have illustrated this play according to their own understanding and perception. The present study aspires to analyze Ellida's rejection as well as assertion of patriarchy as her attempt to get selfhood and individual identity that ultimately makes her ambivalent character and casts an ironic doubt on her assertion of very selfhood and individual identity. Though Elliida is presented as self-conscious, rebellious and sensitive female character in Ibsen's play, *The Lady from the Sea*, who spends her sweat and conscience for the sake of freedom, individuality and selfhood. However, her surrender to patriarchy not only provides an enjoyable shock, but also produces humorous doubt in her individual existence.

This is the ground on which this study stands different from previous criticisms. This study concentrates on the analysis of social problems especially related to married women in a patriarchal society what makes their position

contradictory and identity ambivalent. Though previous criticisms have focused up on the female problems in the play, they are very far from a comprehensive theoretical analysis. This study will fulfill that lack by discussing the problems, suffering and the struggle for selfhood and identity of the women that often locates them in an ambivalent position like Ellida.

II. The Discourse of Irony

The term irony basically refers to the contrast between the statement of what is said and what really it means. The value of irony in literature is beyond question. One need not accept the view that all art, or all literature is essentially ironic – or the view that all good art must be ironic. In short, irony, in drama and literature, is a statement or action whose surface meaning is hidden by a contrary meaning. *The New Encyclopedia Britannica* defines the term irony from the point of view of its literal implication. It defines irony as, "Either speech (verbal irony) in which the real meaning is concealed or contradicted by the literal meanings of the words, or situation (dramatic irony) in which there is an incongruity between what is expected and what occurs" (432). In similar way, *Oxford Advanced Learners Dictionary of Current English* defines the terms irony as, "The amusing or strange aspect of a situation that is very different from what you expect; a situation like this: the use of words that say opposite of what you really mean" (822).

Tracing out the definitions we come to know the very simple meaning of irony as a situation in which 'what is' always differs from 'what actually appears'. We get the point that the creative writers use irony as a literary device to show the gap between what is expressed and what is really intended. The expressed meaning is for the concerned person or whom it is addressed and intended meaning is for the privileged reader. In this way, Irony, in its simple form can be defined as a mode of speech, which celebrates a meaning contrary to the words. This concept of irony would be a fitting one in Greek comedies, however such a simplified definition itself seems ironical since irony in its concept and function is quite varied, dynamic and abroad in its present usage. Now, irony has got permanent seat in literature – in play, story,

novel, poem and so on as a prominent tool for writers even to expose existence, life and death.

As it is already mentioned that all good literature entails irony as a device- every work of art could be valued from ironical perspective though it may have more or less ironic instances. One need only list the major writers in whose work irony is significantly presented: Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Chaucer, Swift, Pope, Austin, Ibsen and many others. Such a list implies the impossibility of separating an interest in irony as an art from an interest in great literature, one leads directly to the other.

As mentioned earlier, 'irony' has been subtle and widely used critical term. Thus, it is noteworthy to have a brief glimpse on the historical development of it. In spite of great complexities, several attempts have already been made to define and classify the concept of irony right from the time of ancient Greek and Roman philosophers like Aristotle and Cicero. In this regard, it is praiseworthy to reference of Homer's *Odyssey*. Even in Homer's mentioned text, situations and utterances which could be termed ironic. But no one seems to have called it ironic until the late eighteen century.

The word irony it taken from the Greek word 'eiron' which means a dissembler in speech. Greek Sembler, who characteristically pretended to be less intelligent than he was, yet triumphed over the alazon the self deceiving and stupid braggart" (Abraham, 135). The word 'eiron' in a sense of irony is first recorded in the text, *Republic* which was written by the greatest philosopher, plato. The term irony, then points out a technique of appearing to be less than one, is which in literature becomes the most common technique of saying a little and meaning as much as possible. Now in most of the modern critical application of the term 'irony' remains the root sense of dissembling or hiding what is actually the case; not, however in order to deceive, but

to achieve special rhetorical and artistic effects. Today 'eironia' is used as a figure of speech in rhetoric. Someone can be blamed by ironical praise and praised by ironical blame. The Roman word *ironia* does not have the unfit meaning of the Greek word. Cicero depicts it simply as 'saying one thing and meaning another'. Though the term of irony is applied early in ancient Greek comedy, it took a long period of time to make a permanent room in literature. J.A.K. Thomson in his book *Irony* views the reason about its gradual entrance:

As we saw, it was long fighting its way into literature and even then got in only by the back door of comedy. It was a 'vulgar' word. So, when the thing it denoted had become anything but vulgar, the name for it appeared no longer suitable and that is one main reason why we have no adequate treatment in antiquity of 'Irony' as such. (4)

If we read the historical uses of irony, in England as in rest of the Europe, the concept of irony developed very slowly. We do not find the use of irony in English literature till 1550s. Spenser had used the term irony for the first time in English literature in *Shepherd's Calendar* and was followed by Dryden. The term 'irony' however, was not employed upto the seventeenth century. It was slowly and gradually introduced in literary texts with the beginning of eighteenth century onwards. Dryden, Pope, Swift became the successful users of irony in literature. Though the concept of irony developed late in Europe, authors and philosophers used it frequently and gradually supported it with various new meanings. The more important of the new meanings that the word 'irony' took, emerged out of the ferment of philosophical and aesthetic speculation what made Germany for many years the intellectual leader of Europe. The outstanding 'ironologist' of this period was Friedrich Schlegel, but we should not

forget the contribution of other thinkers and writers like August Wilhelm, Ludwig Pieck and Karl Solgar.

The next stage appeared for universalization of these local and particular ironies. When the use and purpose of irony became wider and wider. In Nineteenth century many terms were introduced for the generalization of ironies of events, of fate, of circumstances, of time, and of life. Other German thinkers introduced the concept of irony arguing that the true irony begins with the contemplation of the fate of the world, a concept that goes under the title of world irony or physical irony. Likewise, Schlegel and Solgar and also used the term irony in relation to detached and objective point of view of the artist.

After crossing the stream of history, we get that a new one has continuously replaced the earlier definition of irony, though the inner core of irony remained the same. From the perspective of historical development of irony Soren Kierkegaard's essay, *The Concept of Irony*, is significant one. He views it differently. He does not agree that irony tries to establish anything. For him "that which is to be established lies behind it" (178). There is yet another opinion highlighted in New criticism, especially by I.A. Richards, Kenneth Bruke and Clenth Brooks, who view irony as dialectic of Paradoxes. For them a paradoxical irony is the outcome of multiple impulses and experiences that are likely to be subverted by another. So, for them, literature is the representation of this fact of paradox, which shows how human beings maintain poise over such contradiction. I.A. Richards defines irony in similar way. "The bringing in of the opposite, the complementary impulses in order to achieve a balanced poise" (qtd. in Muecke 20). All of these three great scholars, proponents of New Criticism supported the paradoxical nature of irony as it balances the opposite attitude and experience. From the above quote, it becomes clear that:

Every literary context is ironic because it provides a weighing or qualification on every word on it, this requiring the reader infer meanings which are in a sense in this view become a form covert irony, whether intended or not. (Booth-7)

Here, Kenneth Burke's claim that language is essentially ironic gets justified since the words are representations of such paradoxical human impulses; each word is condemned to be rhetorical.

At the end of nineteenth century, almost all the major forms and modes of irony were introduced. Irony is even defined in terms of its aesthetic, linguistic and psychoanalytical implications. Anatole France in his essay on *Rabelais*, says, "the world without irony would be like a forest without birds, but we need not wish every tree more bird than leaf" (qtd. In Nair 27). It is his aesthetic opinion of irony. Likewise S.B. Srivastava observes irony as a characteristics style' of poets. He thinks poets prefer to communicate their vision of life in guesses and conjectures by making optimum use of language resources. Vasanta A. Shahne makes the following comments on the aesthetics of irony as:

The aesthetics of irony implies that it is primarily an art of expression allied with a sense of beauty and generating two levels of meaning. It is also a means of contrasting reality from appearance the truth from falsehood, Subtlety from Shallowness. Aesthetic of irony primarily arises from verbal irony of profoundest kind, since it is through words, the tools for conveying the beauty of paradox that irony operates. (qtd. in Nair 31)

However, the great thinker of our time Noam Chomsky comments on irony differently. He thinks, since the indirect or deep level meaning that lies below the

surface meaning of words and sentences plays a vital part in literatures it creates ground for contradiction and juxtaposition which in its turn generates irony. He opined, "The syntactic component of a grammar must specify, for each sentence, a deep structure that determines its phonetic interpretation. The first of this is interpreted by the semantic component and the second by the phonological component" (qtd. in Nair 31). In similar way, there is another prominent scholar of irony, Allan Rodway, who views irony not only as a technique to expose double meaning. He says that, "irony is not merely a matter of seeing a 'true' meaning beneath a 'false', but seeing a double exposer [. . .] on one plate" (qtd. in Muecke 45).

The history of irony goes far off Aeschylus, Sophocles, Plato etc. to the modern authors. Wayne C. Booth, realizing the complexity of the mobility of irony, namely 'stable' and 'unstable', in his book, *A Rhetoric of Irony* defines it as "The act of reconstruction and all that it entails about the author and his picture of the reader became an inseparable part of what it said, and what act cannot really be said, it must be performed" (39).

For him, stable irony shares the ironic intention of the speaker with the reader, offering some patent clues in the established circumstances by the writer. The ironic writers in such an irony provide 'literary fixity' which automatically promotes unequivocal, absolute and fixed ironic interpretation. Thus, stable irony therefore covers all intentional ironies, which say one thing and give to understand the opposite. On the other hand, the unstable irony does not promote unequivocal interpretation since it is not finite, absolute and fixed as one interpretation essentially undercuts another. Unstable irony, therefore, is a mode of reflecting the paradoxes in the structure of universe and in our existence. In this sense, unstable irony comes along the line of deconstructive irony.

The deconstructive irony, which is based on Paul De Man and Jacques Derrida's theoretical concept of multiple or rather infinite layers of possibilities of meanings, exposes the impossibility of single, absolute, finite and stable meanings, as Linda Hutcheon points:

Over production of meaning through deferral and difference has been seen to point to the problematic nature of all language: from a purely semantic point of view, the ironic situation of plural and separate meanings – the said together with unsaid held in suspension might challenge any notion of language as having a direct one to one referential relation to any single reality outside itself. (57)

The above quote further clarifies that the deconstructive irony arises, as Pam Bahadur Gurung asserts, "in the mix of semantic meanings that constitute irony [thereby allowing] a way to think about ironic meaning as something in flux and not fixed" (16). Deconstructive irony functions where, as de Man claims, "The Sign points to something that differs from its literal meaning and has for its function the thematization of this difference" (qtd. in Gurung16). De Manian concept of irony turns to be deconstructive as it, in the words of Beerendra Pandey, "became the motor of the entire rhetorical system. It signifies a refusal to hypostatize notions of the self, of meaning or interpretative as an end point" to the "otherwise vertiginous process of textual such as Booth's Sharable norms" ("Deconstructing" 55). So, deconstructive irony turns out to be, as in Pandey's words, "radical openness" demanding widely divergent interpretation (*Intellectual* 665).

Irony in the latest sense is a way of writing designed to leave open the question of what the literal meaning signify. The fashion out definition of irony saying one thing and giving to understand the contrary – is superseded. Thus latest

sense of irony claims something in a way that activates not one but an endless series of subversive interpretations.

As the term 'irony' has been defined and redefined from its original meaning till today, irony is classified differently as per its nature. Among the most important classifications of irony the following forms are prominent and easily distinguishable: Dramatic, verbal, situational and structural.

Dramatic irony or sometimes also called tragic irony was successfully practiced in Greek Tragedies. The ironic effect of the dramatic irony depends on the author's intention share with audience or reader. Playwrights of Greek tragedy, who based their plots on legends or fables whose outcome was already notified to their audience or readers made frequent use of this device. The incomparable Sophoclian Greek tragedy, *Oedipus Rex* for example, is a very complex instance of dramatic irony. Some writers defend it in terms of theatrical performance, but it will be biased to confine it only in drama but it also can be found in narrative fiction too, "whenever an author deliberately asks us to compare what two or more characters say of each other or what a character says now with what he says or does later" (Booth 63).

Similarly Abrams defines the term dramatic irony as:

Dramatic irony involves a situation in a play or a narrative in which the audience or reader shares with the author knowledge of present or future circumstances of which a character is ignorant; in that situation, the character unknowingly acts in a way we recognize to be grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or expects the opposite of what we know that fate holds in store, or says sometimes says that anticipates the actual outcome, but not at all in the way that the characters intends. (137)

After reading Abrams definition of dramatic irony we come to know that dramatic irony is a remark whose significance is perceived by the audience but not by the actors on the stage. Dramatic irony appears whenever the audience sees a character confidently unaware of his ignorance. Oedipus Rex by Sophocles, for instance presents a dramatic irony when the protagonist, Oedipus quarrels with his own father, Laius and kills him unknowingly. But he does not know that the man whom he killed is his own father. Oedipus then puts a curse on the slyer of Laius. The biggest shock of irony here is that Oedipus has unknowingly cursed himself, as he says:

As for the criminal, I pray to God whether it be a lurking thief, or one of a number I pray that man's life be consumed in evil and wretchedness. And as for me, this curse applies no less, if it should turn out that the culpritis my guest here sharing my hearth. (812)

Therefore, dramatic irony is a situation in which the reader or audience knows more about the immediate circumstance or future events of which a character is ignorant. We came to know that Oedipus knows that he has married his own mother, but he is ignorant about the fact as he says, “A man should live only for the present day, have no fear of sleeping with your mother” (831).

So, there can be no dramatic irony, by definition, unless the author and audience (reader) can somehow share knowledge which the characters do not hold. Dramatic irony becomes tragic when the demystification of the real situation leads to a “typical case involving a victim with fear, hopes or expectations who, acting on the basis of these, takes steps to avoid a foreseen evil or profit from a foreseen God, but his actions serve only to lock him into a casual chain that leads inevitably to his downfall” (Muecke 69). In other words, a dark and inflexible fate of a man gets a room for the exhibition of tragic irony when he comes in contrast with his hope, fears

and wishes. It will be apt to take the reference of Ibsen's play, *A Doll's House*, the female protagonist, Nora who is living in Victorian society. She is helpful, cooperative and honest wife of moralist husband. Helmer, her husband suffers from illness. To save his life she needs money. She takes money from her neighbour by putting her own signature on the name of her late father. Consequently, her evil action what she does it unknowingly kicks her out from her own family. Though with her serious condition she is hoping her husband will save from fear of punishment, her husband himself punishes her as a legal man. Here Nora becomes the victim of dramatic irony.

The another form of irony is verbal irony. Verbal irony is a statement in which the meaning that a speaker implies differs sharply from the meaning that is ostensibly expressed. The ironic statement usually involves the explicit expression of one attitude or evaluation but with indications in the overall speech – situation that the speaker includes a very different, and often opposite attitude or evaluation.

It is said to be a verbal irony if it is used to strengthen a statement by forcing the listener or reader to seek its true meaning. Abrams defines it as, "a statement in which the implicit meaning intended by the speaker differs from that which he ostensibly asserts" (135). In this way, verbal irony comes out from the ostensible use of language intending a sharp contrast between the expressed meaning and the implied ironic meaning. It is a figure of speech in which the meaning of a statement is different and opposite to the meaning intended. It brings a straight forward case of an ironic reversal. In Ibsen's play, *"A Doll's House"*, The Female Protagonist, Nora with her school friend Christine Linde says that her past life was full of ups and down but now her loving husband, Helmer, who has got the job of bank manager, he earns enough money to run the family smoothly. Nora remarks that their family is an ideal

family and her husband is ideal one. However, at the climax of the play Nora's ideal family comes in true colour. Her heavenly family comes into hell and her ideal husband plays the role of the monster.

Such notion of verbal irony is well supported by D.C. Mueck's view in *Irony and Ironic* as he says "The simplest form of high – relief" verbal irony is the antiphrastic phrase for blame, for example the "Congratulation," we offer to the 'smart Alei' who has let the side down" (56). So, the verbal irony depends on the ironist's pretension for aiming to achieve maximum plausibility of his obtensible meaning. In this sense, verbal irony can be viewed as:

a game for two players, the ironist, in his role of naïf, proffers a text but in such a way or in such a context as will stimulate the reader to reject its expressed literal meaning in favour of an unexpected 'transliteral meaning of constructing ... the basic technique is either that going with the ironic butt and placing him in high relief or that of depreciating oneself, which is the countersinking ontagic method (Muecke 35-36).

Likewise, Irony of situation consists in the discrepancy between appearance and reality, expectation and fulfillment or the outcome of event and its consequences. According to Kierkegaard, "situation irony is not presented in nature for one who is too natural and too naïve, but exhibits itself for one who is himself ironically developed " (27). A sense of irony involves not only the ability to see ironic contrasts but also the power to shape them in ones' mind.

The above statement clarifies that a sense of irony involves not only the ability to see ironic contrasts but also the power to process and shape them using one's mental faculties. The observer's power of imagination, recalls of experience and the ability to

find out something which offers an ironic contrast to the thing concerned. An imaginative reader will not fail to perceive this type of irony in the works of ironical writers. Here, it is noteworthy to talk about Ibsen's play *The Lady from the Sea*. The heroine of the play *The Lady from the Sea*; Ellida is a self-conscious, rebellious and advocator of freedom of choice for female's 'selfhood' and individual 'identity' in the very beginning of the play. She protests patriarchal oppression, suppression, domination and discrimination. Her situation in dominating society is like that of a wageless worker. At the end of the play she tries to make her free from further exploitation by the patriarchy where the agent is her husband, Dr. Wangel. Her husband accepts her will to be free as an individual, whose identity is not tied with other one, she can identify herself as Miss Ellida by breaking the traditional bond of marriage. Her husband gives right to exercise her 'freewill'. But she makes decision not to go with her stranger lover rather live with her own dominating husband, Dr Wangel. It shows the situational irony because the protagonist, Ellida does not find any situational change. But the conscious reader can find change by recalling the sequence of events which occurs in the action of Ellida. The ironical contrast of the situation can be realized by the intellectual reader or audience. Though Ellida finds her selfhood and individual identity yet the reader doubts her situation. Though, the glimpse of situational irony is seen in Ibsen's play *The Lady from the Sea*, it is not realized by the character, Ellida.

The structural irony is also a widely used rhetorical weapon of enforcement, which in a sense looks closer to verbal irony. But, the basic distinction between verbal irony and structural irony is that; verbal irony depends on knowledge of the fictional speaker's ironic intention, which is shared both by the speaker and reader; structural irony depends on knowledge of the author's ironic intention, which is shared by the

reader but is not intended by the fictional speaker. Abrams defines, "same literary works exhibit structural irony; that is, the author instead of using an occasional verbal irony, introduces a structural feature that serves to sustain a duplex meaning and evaluation throughout the work" (135).

Invention of a naïve hero, or else a naïve narrator or spokesman is one of the common literary device of this type. Swift's *Gulliver's Travel* is a typical example of the invention of a naive hero for the purpose of generating structural irony, where the narrator himself is the main participant in the story. When the knowing reader dives deep into the implicit point of view of the author who conceals himself behind the hero; the sustained irony resulting from the exposé of human vanity and frailty comes to light.

Structural irony is a complex rhetorical device. It is used by those prominent scholars who have complete knowledge about their planning. Such scholars make their imaginative or creative characters dance as the music which is generated by their perfect mind. They can make puppet to elephant and elephant to puppet. One such example is Ibsen himself. If we read *The Lady from the Sea*, it is full of ironical reversal. The Protagonist, Ellida is presented as self conscious, rebellion and sensitive woman characters in a patriarchal society. Her action is dynamic but her intention is to release out of cage of Patriarchy. But at the demand of situation she does not get herself strong to make decision. Rather she changes her path, the path which is already experienced. Here her action and decision make her an ambivalent character but also casts an ironic doubt on her assertion to reach her destination. It is clear that her intention is not her own intention. She is made the means of the intention of the playwright. The very intention is implicitly shared by wise audience or reader. She has been made easy dancer to dance by listening the music which is played inside the

curtain. She has been victimized by the playwright's intention. The playwright, Ibsen here has used the arrow of the structural irony:

Irony is the feat of style. To be more specific, the stylistic technique or reversal is taken as one of the aspects of irony. Here, at last the transformation of the literal meaning of a text is primary issue. But sometimes it is possible to employ the techniques without being ironic too and it can be done through the use of satire. Satire is an artistic or literary expression, which generally aims to correct or reform either an individual or a society by means of ridicule, showing the foolishness of an idea, manner, custom or tradition. Abrams defines it as'

...the literary of diminishing or derogating a subject by making it ridiculous and evoking toward its attitudes of amusement, contempt, scorn, or indignation. It differs from the comic in that comedy evokes laughter mainly as an end in itself. While Satire derides; that is, it uses laughter as a weapon, and against a butt that exists outside the work itself. The but may be an individual, a type of person, a class, an institution, nation, even the entire human race. (275)

Thus, Satire can be defined as a sacred weapon of writers, which is intended for amusement and for the defence of truth. A number of writers like Chaucer, Dryden, Pope, Swift, Austen, Hardy and Ibsen successfully used it ridiculing the character, intentions, or a society. For example, swift, in his *Modest proposal* simply buttresses his unambiguous moral indignation by use of it in such a way that the readers are required to reverse its meaning. in this essay he has demonstrated inhuman and animal instinct of British government in Ireland. It is the apex of irony which shows immoral behaviour of advanced nation to its own colonized subjects.

Irony and Satire are rhetorical devices which give not only surface meaning but also a hidden meaning. There is no vast gap between Satire and irony. Yet it can be said that all satires are ironies but all ironies are not satires. Irony may be static or unstatic but satire is static only.

To sum up the brief introduction of irony and its literal implication, it is relevant to discuss the stylistic devices, understatement or antiphrasis. This is one of the major aspects of irony that is almost always used for negation. Though both understatement and antiphrasis are used for negation, one finds acceptable contradictions in meaning, between the two meanings. Use of irony in creative manner which serves as a stylistic technique is called antiphrasis, whereas understatement refers to the direct negation of a statement. Thus, irony as a mode of speech brings a contrary meaning to the words, can also express more in little use of words and expressions. It makes weaker argument stronger and adds up for rhetorical enforcement, as a kaleidoscope which exposes the hidden meaning of a statement. On the basis of the above discussion of irony, in the next chapter in Ibsen's play, *The Lady from the Sea* will be analyzed. In the play, the sensitive, selfconscious and rebellion protagonist, Ellida, is at the receiving end of irony thereby brings an ironic reversal at the end of the play.

III. Ellida as an Ambivalent Woman in *The Lady from the Sea*

Ibsen's play, *The Lady from the Sea* is set in a town of Norway amid the wild fjords and the sea. It deals with the ambivalent position of women in the family of late 19th century Norwegian society. The society is influenced by Victorian norms and values. It makes women as puppet to pacify males' will. The women have been victims of gender discrimination of patriarchy, which causes them suffer from oppression, suppression, repression, obsession and mental torture. To revolt against domination of patriarchy, the protagonist, Ellida plays different sorts of roles in married family life. Though she is self-conscious, rebellion and advocator of complete freedom against male dominated society for women, yet at last she forgets her target and comes to accept very patriarchy. It casts doubt about her selfhood and individual identity, her own action shows of her ambivalent position in the family. It casts an ironic doubt on her assertion for selfhood and individual identity too. Her main aim is to establish her own identity and freedom as choice to exist or not but her final decision makes us question about her revolt. After revolting against patriarchy, what does Ellida get? How does she feel newness in her essence of life? Why does she choose her own selfish husband in place of her stranger lover? If we want to get exact answers of those questions, Ellida's rejection of her stranger lover and acceptance her dominant husband project her an ambivalent character whose will for selfhood and individual identity is tied with ironical doubt and suspense.

Ellida Wangel the second wife of Dr. Wangel, is contemplative about her predicament. She is an ambivalent woman who wants to live a respectful life rather than to exist. She is self seeking woman. In the beginning, there is no real affection between Ellida and her two Step daughters, she thinks self precedes the social relation. She is more concerns about her 'selfhood' rather than to her duties and

responsibilities. She feels trapped, imprisoned and isolated in her husband's home and feels it more difficult to acclimatize with the new environment of Wangel's house. She thinks that she was free and not bound when she was at the coast of the Sea. Such positive and negative impulses which are inside her, to reflect them, she draws a mental picture of 'Mermaid'. The very picture is told painter, Ballested. The painter, Ballested paints the painting of 'Mermaid' which is going to die so soon. Here Ballested, is describing the picture to Lyngstrand who is interested to know more about it. "She is stayed in from the open sea, and now she cannot her way back . and the water's brackish, [...]. So here she lies dying. It was the lady of the house here who gave me the idea of painting of the sort [. . .] I shall entitle it the Mermaid's Death" (236). The painting is the symbolic expression of Ellida's ambivalent position in Dr. Wangel's house. Here the painting reflects that she feels herself in dilemma because once she was a sea creature but now she is not there. To show double image of Ellida, the painter has painted the painting having head of woman with fish tail in place of legs. The painting is itself contradictory. It is neither human being nor sea creature, here lies the biggest irony, Ellida's wish for 'self hood' and individual identity is reflected through the painting but the interpreter of the painting , interprets it as an art of aestheticization of human life.

Ellida feels stifled, dissatisfied and rootless in her husband's family. In a sense Dr. Wangel brings her to his home by the open sea, he makes her the member of his family. He gives everything what Ellida wants. Yet psychologically frustrated, Elida pondners over her marriage with Dr. Wangel and comes to the conclusion that it can not be called true marriage. She thinks it is rather like buying and selling of an object because she claims that she did not come to him of her own free will. She frankly says, "Truth [.....] is that you come out there and-and bought me" (304). It shows the

contradictory position of Ellida in the family. She realizes her matrimonial life is just like market commodity. The commodity is bought by those persons who like and not buy by those persons who don't like. But in deeper level, Ellida herself hates her family. She is herself responsible for her pathetic condition.

Ellida is frequently haunted by the love vow that she had made years ago to a nameless stranger. She gets psychologically sick but her husband can not comprehend her growing desire for selfhood. Ellida's husband is a doctor who can't read the psychology of the patient. Ultimately, she compels to disclose her enforced love vow to the stranger. "He took a key-chain out of his pocket, and he pulled from his finger a ring he always wore, then from me he took a little ring that I had, and he slipped the two rings on the key chain. Then he said that we must be married to the sea [...]" (263). She comes to her senses immediately and she writes letter to cancel that enforced betrothal. But the stranger keeps on writing letter to her that he will come back to her away. Here Ellida's narrative depicts her in an ambivalent position. Now she is another man's family. But the image of past vow of love drags her back to the past. Her action and will is mingled with the confusing situation. Here, Ellida herself presents her character in restless like the sea. Ellida's intention is to be free from the grip of stranger lover yet she can't do so. Here she becomes the victim of situational irony. Ellida's reconciliation of past event to relief herself from psychological pressure of betrothal love vow but much more Ellida tells about past event to her husband, she gets too much grip within that event. Here Ellida's expectation and fulfillment is itself contradictory her position is comical what makes her not only restless but it also makes her victim of psychological torture. Her act reflects her ironical existence.

Lyngstrand's story about the same stranger lover makes Ellida feel fearful.

When Ellida is curious to know about his model of a group, Lyngstrand tells her about it:

[T] here'll be one other figure more of a shape, [...]. It's here husband, she's been unfaithful to him while he was away and now he's been drowned at sea" He further tells the stranger's words. "But she's mine and she always will be and she shall come with me, even if I have to come like a drowned man from the depths of the sea to fetch her !
(254).

Ellida's intention is to listen the story of Lyngstrand about the stranger lover for getting more information about him and making herself peaceful. But after listening the story Ellida comes to realize that her intention is to fly like a Kite in the sky. Later the very story gives her good slap of anxiety about her past event. Again Ellida compares her position in existing world. Her betrothal lover treats her as an object that can be bought, abandoned for sometime and claimed it again according to his will. Ellida feels more frustrated and terrified after hearing the claim of the stranger. She again turns towards present family of Dr. Wangel. She finds her position meaningless. She once again compares her position with the dying mermaid. The dying Mermaid's natural world is related to the world of vast sea. In the vast sea it can have power to exist for its own sake. While it is kept in land by trapping, it can't go its own world. Rather its destiny is to wait for facing merciless death. Ellida finds her life similar to dying Mermaid. Here we find Ellida's stream of desire for selfhood and individual identity constantly in threat. Though she wants to release herself from the constant threat, she can't do it. She thinks once she was a sea animal; but now she is a land animal. She finds herself in dubious situation, neither she is a sea animal nor she

is a land animal. Such position reflects Ellida's ambivalent position on land, Ellida tries to control her flow of imagination towards her betrothal lover; but she can't do that. Her imagination to her stranger lover is full of terror. But it fascinates her, here lies the dramatic irony. Dramatic irony refers to the irony in which author's actual intention is shared by audience or reader. But the character is ignorant about it here Ellida is ignorant about her fascination with the stranger lover. But the audience or reader is conscious about the weakness.

Ellida always prefers to talk about vast sea. The storms and waves of the sea are the pacifying objects to Ellida. Ellida always goes to seashore for bathing in the very morning. After bathing, she gets a bit fresh from her psychological threat. Ellida does not find comfort environment in Wangel's family. So, she wishes to keep herself away from family environment. To fulfill his wife Ellida's will and desire, Dr. Wangel makes a small arbour in the beautiful garden. Where Ellida goes and stays so long time for making herself freshness. Dr. Wangel is a responsible husband and father of the family. He looks after Ellida's health and his own daughters desires too. But Ellida is not happy with her husband's behaviour. Rather she is always irritated with him. She always blames him. It is Ellida who claims Wangel is a selfish person who never looks after her. Once Ellida's old suitor, Mr. Arnholm comes to Dr. Wangel's house. Mr. Arnholm is warmly invited here. While Ellida and Mr. Arnholm are sitting in the arbour of the garden. Mr. Arnholm asks why Ellida prefers to stay in arbour than to in family environment of Dr. Wangel's house. Ellida replies; "It's a pleasant place to sit here, isn't it? They call this my arbour, because it was I planned it- atleast, Wangel did to please me" (246). Ellida's reply to Mr. Arnholm clarifies Ellida's husband is fully responsible to care and love Ellida what she demands Dr. Wangel has completed them. But Ellida does not seem to be happy and fearless on the

lap of Dr. Wangel. Ellida prefers those things which are unattainable by the power of Dr. Wangel. How much Dr. Wangel wants to be too near, Ellida slides too far from his sight. It shows the ironical relationship between husband and wife. But both of them are unknown about their situation.

Dr. Wangel is a great figure in the family. He always wishes to see rosy flower blooming on the cheek of the family members. However, his dream to see happy family members mingles into dust. When Dr. Wangel finds his wife aloof and isolated from family environment, he feels uneasy condition. Ellida's rejection of family environment and bad relationship between his wife and his former wife's young daughters, wangel gets his heart is pricking with poison thorn. To establish good relationship among family members, he starts experimenting his wife, Ellida's problem. After long observation and serious diagnosis, he finds Ellida's problem is not related to physical problem. But it is related to mental problem. To cure his wife psychologically, he invites his old friend Mr. Arnholm he thinks when Ellida was at her father's house, she was fascinated to Mr. Arnholm. If she gets chance to talks about past joyful day, she will get a bit mental relief. By thinking that he heartly welcomes to Mr. Arnholm. But his expectation come to be too opposite. Though Mr. Arnholm loved Ellida, but Ellida did not accept his love. Here Dr. Wangel he himself becomes the victim of irony. He doubts his own friend Mr. Arnholm as his wife's past lover Dr. Wangel frankly tells: "No, of course you are right I was on the wrong tack. I thought that Ellida had once been in love with you, perhaps it might do her good to see you again and talk over the old days when she was at home" (299). This serious talks between Dr. Wangel and his friend- Mr. Arnholm clarifies that Dr. Wangel is ready to spend his every drop of blood to make his wife happy. But he couldn't reach his own destination. Later he finds Ellida dynamic like the movement of the moon.

Dr. Wangel wants to tame and keep his young wife in the land but his wife wants to escape to the vast sea. Ellida frightens with the sea yet she is fascinated with the sea. Such contradictory nature of Ellida makes her questionable woman for the position in her own family.

Dr. Wangel realizes his wife is too young. He can't understand the world of will and desire of his wife Ellida. If he really knows his wife's mad wishes, he can make his wife beautiful and ever happy. Because of the lack of those knowledge, Dr. Wangel accepts his weakness in front of his friend, Mr. Arnholm, Dr. Wangel says Arnholm, "Ah, but you don't know how difficult it is for a doctor to come to a right decision about a patient whom he really loves. Besides this is no ordinary illness...It is not a case for an ordinary doctor-or any ordinary medicine" (297). This dialogue clearly exposes verbal irony. Dr. Wangel's intention is to communicate his weakness to fulfill physical needs of his wife. He is so old. That's why, he can't complete his wife's desires. He accepts his weakness. He says his contradictory wife Ellida "This place is sluggish, dull and not in favour of you, I am planning to migrate in such [...]. My darling Ellida will get everything what you want" (212). Here the intention of Dr. Wangel is to release him as well as his kind hearted wife Ellida. Where Dr. Wangel now staying is such place which can not fulfill his wife Ellida's desire. It shows Dr. Wangel's inclination towards his wife but his wife Ellida does not like to be too near with Dr. Wangel. Later she wants to be too near with the sea. What terrifies her as well as fascinates her.

Dr. Wangel's wife Ellida always stays in arbour in the garden. From where she can see beautiful scenario of the vast sea. The storm and waves of the vast sea are the sources of frightening and fascinating to Ellida. Though Ellida is a wife of Dr. Wangel what is going to be in family, she never knows. For her, family environment

is not in favour of her good health. So, she keeps herself secret from other family members, once Ellida's step daughters are going to celebrate their late mother's anniversary birthday. The young girls, Bolleta and Hilde are so busy for decorating the environment of their house. But on the very day, Dr. Wangel invites his old friend Mr. Arnholm too. He comes here. Before his arrival Dr. Wangel comes back from his job. He cheers happiness to his two daughters. Dr. Wangel does not tell anything to his wife, Ellida about the celebration. There is conversation among father and daughters, Hilde says, "so us". But father, you know we are." Father further says, "oh... look don't you think"- Bolleta again says, "but don't you see? All this is in Mr. Arnholm's honour. I mean when an old friend like that comes to pay you his respects..." (241). This conversation shows ironical contrast between what it is and what actual it is meant. Wangel's family is going to celebrate the birthday of late wife of Dr. Wangel. Yet they claim that they are going to welcome to Mr. Arnholm's arrival. It is the situational irony. Here, Mr. Arnholm becomes the victim of situational irony and in similar way, the contradictory character Ellida is sitting within her own world of amour. Dr. Wangel tries to introduce his old friend Mr. Arnholm to Ellida. After this, Wangel goes out from the scene. There is conversation between Ellida and Mr. Arnholm who is the old suitor of Ellida start talking about decoration of the house.

Ellida says Mr. Arnholm, "Yes, perhaps... I almost think so myself. Oh look, how pretty the girls have made everything for you" (245). Here, Ellida and Mr. Arnholm's conversation about decoration of house shows dramatic irony. Both speaker and listener do not know about the situation. They are become the victim of dramatic irony. Likewise the other character Lyngstrad, who comes to Ellida's house for the expression of best wishes on the occasion of Ellida's birthday. He donates a

bunch of beautiful flower to Ellida. He says Ellida [offering her the bouquet again] May I wish you many happy returns of the day (251). Here Lyngstraid's best wishes to Ellida is itself irony because actually the decoration of house is made on the gratitude of late beloved wife of Dr. Wangel- But here, Lyngstrand expresses his best wishes to Ellida is itself ironical. Ellida says Mr. Langstrand, "The birthday? But there must be some mistake, Mr Langstrand, It's no body's birthday here (250). Mr. Lyngstrand's arrival in Ellida's house to wish best wishes to Ellida is contrary to reality. Ellida's reply to Lyngstrand is itself ironical. Here, Ellida has made puppet by unseen force. Her situation is ridiculed. It is realized by audience or reader but Ellida is ignorant about the reality. She is the victim of dramatic irony.

Dr. Wangel is a real man. He always thinks about the prosperity of his own family. He never does bias to his second wife Ellida. But Ellida sees her husband, Dr. Wangel's activities are against her selfhood and individual identity. She blames him, he has not made real member of his family. Rather he has made her only a part of his life. She is dissatisfied. She thinks herself she is out of mind. Nobody can read her real situation. She is burning herself. She does not have any affection to Dr. Wangel's family. Rather she thinks Dr. Wangel's family is responsible to make her restless. She can't discard to go to the open sea to bathe everyday. She likes to stay on the bank of open sea. There is no any discrimination, oppression, suppression, domination and mental torture. By thinking this she goes to open sea for usual bath. After bathing she comes back to Dr. Wangel's house. Ellida comes to Wangel's house without combing her hair. She wears clothes without any care. Such activities show that Ellida is fascinated with the sea. That's why, she hates Wangel's house. Though she hates Wangel's house, she can't keep her away from Wangel's house. It shows that Ellida is an ambivalent woman. She does protest Wangel's family environment and she inclines

to the environment of open sea. It shows Ellida's dynamic life. She is not constant. Such nature evokes Ellida to think one thing and do another thing. She can't follow actual root to reach her destination. Her action and behaviour is itself dynamic. It pushes her up to reach at the gulf of ambivalent. At the very beginning of the play, Ellida has given idea about a beautiful painting related to "dying mermaid" to Ballested, a fine painter. It is painted by Ballested to please her. Ellida's intention is to reflect her wish for freedom through the image of "dying Mermaid"

Ellida plays several game of 'hide and seek'. She wishes to be victorious. A fine game player never hopes to get defeat in his game. But every player should be careful about the situation. The player who does not know the situation can't get victory in game without knowing situation it is impossible to predict who wins and who defeats. The mystery of game is in the grip of situation. In similar way, Ellida's game with Dr. Wangel is full of suspense. We, reader find confusion, why they are playing such a game, the game is not good for them. To play game, there should be opposite party. But Ellida and Dr. Wangel are not parted poles. Rather they are pieces of same poles to make a single pole. Here in this game Ellida does not see Dr. Wangel as her own side rather she sees Dr. Wangel who is representing from another pole. But we reader both see Ellida and Dr. Wangel are from same pole. To support this, the conversation between Mr. Arnholm and Dr. Wangel about present situation of Dr. Wangel's house is suitable here Dr. Wangel says his friend Mr. Arnholm, "Well it certainly looks like it. I was born and bred here, as they say; and I was very happy have with my wife, till she was taken from us so young... well, you knew her when you were here [...]. And now I'm very happy with my second wife. Yes, on the whole I must say that fate has been very good to me" (243-44). Dr. Wangel is fully satisfied with his second wife. But his second wife is not satisfied with him. So, she plays the

game to relief her from the grip of Dr. Wangel. Dr. Wangel's expectation and fulfillment is just opposite. So, his family has become the victim of situational irony. Ellida's contradictory behaviour not only makes her family frustration but it also casts an ironic doubt on her assertion to her selfhood and individual identity. Here, Dr. Wangel how much he loves his wife, to his wife his affection becomes itself poison to make her ambivalent. Neither Ellida supports Dr. Wangel thoroughly her heart, nor she rejects him at the bottom of her heart. Such contradictory nature of Ellida, is itself unpredictable whether Ellida reaches her destination or not. It is the mystery of structural irony. The intended meaning of the author is implicitly communicated to the audience but the characters who take part in the play do not know it. Here, Ellida wants to make herself free from domination of her husband Dr. Wangel. When Dr. Wangel releases her, he gives her freedom back. Ellida gets herself an ambivalent character who is free to choose whatever she likes. If Ellida were a conscious woman, she would discard her dominating husband as well as her selfish stranger lover. Rather she can stay alone for the sake of her selfhood and individual identity. But Ellida chooses her own dominated husband who exploits, oppresses, dominates and discriminates her. It is the apex of irony what casts an ironic doubt on Ellida's assertion of her husband to safeguard her selfhood and individual identity. It seems a quarrel between husband and wife to fool looker. But the intention of family is to make listener fool is returned back to themselves.

Ellida is against suppression, oppression, dehumanization, marginalization, gender discrimination and other sexual harassments. Though she is married to Dr. Wangel, she seems dissatisfied with the relation. Dr. Wangel's failure to understand her 'selfhood' makes her more conscious, rebellious and firmly determined to achieve her goal in life. Her symbolic rebellion is incomprehensible to her husband. Her

husband notices her abnormal activities, but he cannot understand her motif behind them. Here Dr. Wangel is talking to Mr. Arnholm about Ellida's nervous state, "she is not exactly ill, but her nerves have been very bad on and off, that is these last few years I really don't know what to make of it. But do you know once she gets into the sea she's perfectly well and happy" (244). Here, Ellida is seeking her selfhood but nobody comprehends Dr. Wangel's opinion about his wife is itself ironical.

Ellida has been constantly taking baths whatever the weather is. Even her bath shows her deep longing for freedom for selfhood and individual identity. But her every attempt has become fruitless. Dr. Wangel explains her nervousness as a deep impression of life there in Skjoldvik. Even people in the town can not realize her quest for selfhood and individual identity. They call her "the lady from the sea". Even Dr. Wangel calls her his mermaid while he has been talking to Mr. Arnholm, Ellida comes from the trees by the arbour in the big light wrap and with her wet hair hanging over her shoulders. Dr Wangel says, "Ah, here is our mermaid?" (245). The dress that she is wearing and her hair style also proves that she is psychologically frustrated. It also represents her struggle against biased social norms and values and gender discrimination prevalent in the late nineteenth century Norwegian society. Even Dr. Wangel's daughters prefer to call her "the lady from the sea". While Dr. Wangel, Mr. Arnholm and Ellida were climbing up the hill to go to the "look-out", Lyngstrand, Bolleta and Hilde who had already been a little up the hill, looking down the hill, Hilde says to Bolleta, "I say, just look there. 'The lady from the sea' is walking with him [Mr. Arnholm] now - not with father and chattering away I wonder if those two are a bit gone on each other" (261-62). It shows that there is no good relationship between the girls and step-mother, Ellida. It shows Ellida's weakness to adopt herself in new environment. If she were read the new environment by using her

consciousness, she wouldn't be called "mermaid" and 'the lady from the sea'. If she has given motherly love, she won't be called the lady from the sea by her step daughters.

Ellida thinks 'selfhood' precedes other social relations. As Ellida can not show her love and affection to the girls, naturally they become dissatisfied with her presence at their home. Ellida is mostly drawn her selfhood, because of her selfhood seeking nature, she can not carry out her duties and responsibilities set by family as expected. Ellida gets herself in ambivalent position. Generally, an ambivalent woman can not perform her duties and responsibilities if she is not mentally prepared to take 'mother-wife' role. As Mr. Arnholm and Bolleta were talking about Bolleta's desire to see the world being independent, she discloses why there is no favourable environment to materialize her longings:

Arnholm: but doesn't your mother- your stepmother help you with that [Household work]?

Bolleta: No, that's my job. I had to do it during the two years that father was alone, and I've gone on with it ever since. (276)

Ellida is contemplative about her own ambivalent position she has no time to see what is happening around her and perform her responsibilities. But she has enough time to scorn her family environment what makes her feel trapping, inside the cage of patriarchy. It is the irony what exposes self weakness of Ellida to adopt, herself in family environment.

Ellida's character is heavily influenced by the various factors like socio-economic, cultural, psychological and so on which are beyond her control. Because of the adverse influence of these factors, she can not enjoy freely what she wants. But she is different from other general woman as being an ambivalent woman, she is

disillusioned with the vicious circle of patriarchal society. Simultaneous she is aware of the fact how woman are deprived of selfhood in the patriarchal society. Since Ellida is conscious of her predicament, she continues her struggle to assert her complete freedom and individual identity. She does not want to be passive, submissive, docile, devoted and brainwashed creature for patriarchal use and pleasure as the traditional women had to be. She has chosen the path of non violence for asserting her free identity and autonomous existence. She thinks women need freedom the way the men do in order to carry on their life as human beings. Ellida with her husband Dr. Wangel, in act II, boldly demands her freedom back "[Y]ou must set me free- free me from every tie with you and yours...I am not the woman that you look me for you know that yourself now" (308). Ellida's growing desire for being an ambivalent woman can be noticed vividly. Though she is giving pressure to her husband to change his traditional dominating 'self', yet at last she accepts her own husband, Dr. Wangel's lap that casts an ironic doubt about her will for freedom.

Ellida is an ambivalent woman who is against gender discrimination, inequalities and all sorts of sexual harassments of patriarchy. She is more concerned about the women's predicament around the world. In conscious, she thinks that root cause of all human misery is nothing but the absence of women participation in social interaction due to biased patriarchal ideology. Ellida wants to reform the society but she does not like to reform her behaviour. She is such a woman who does not care her step sister's daughters. She never helps them in housework rather she always sits by thinking ideal world, the world which is away from the grip of her own power. Ellida is confident that the women's leading role can take the society to perfection and happiness. It is a big question for Ellida. Ellida has fired undying flame in Wangel's house. She herself does not understand the pain of step-daughters, is she really got

success in her desire to make perfect and happy society? Talking to Mr. Arnholm, her former suitor, in the arbour where she often stays, Ellida says, "I think that if only men had chosen from the very beginning to live on the sea or even in the sea we should have reached a perfection quite different from our present state-both better and happier" (280). Here, Ellida's intention is to show such a society where there is no any sorts of discriminations, women and men can live together for creating the society the society is perfect and full of happiness. But later Ellida forgets her intention and sits within the society where there is lack of her selfhood and individual identity. It shows Ellida's quest for freedom is itself ironical. In her imagination, Ellida is perfect woman but in true color, she herself does discrimination to her step sister's daughters too.

Ellida's perception of the world is quite different from other general people. The worldly happiness that general people take for real is not real and long lasting for Ellida, "Our joy is something like the joy we get in the long light summer days- it implies the darkness that is to come; and implication casts its shadow over all human joy, just as the drifting clouds cast their shadows over the fjords. It lies there so blue and shining" (281). To lead the human society in permanent joy and happiness, women should give complete freedom to make them responsible. But Ellida is keeping her legs in two boats. That's why her destination has to reach at the top of society where there is equality and freedom to exercise their own free will. Here is a big irony to Ellida, she cuts her journey before reaching at the apex of complete freedom. Rather she herself traps her life at the cage of patriarchy.

Ellida is an ambivalent woman. She sometimes remembers her family. Other times she forgets her family too. So, she is different from other general women. The general women hide their desires, pain and suffering within themselves but Ellida,

being an ambivalent woman wants to present her problems whether the society accepts or rejects them. In act II, Dr. Wangel and Ellida frankly talk about their frozen relation. Dr. Wangel expresses his views, here is in a great shock, why Ellida can't or won't live with him any longer, "There is the fact that you can't bear this place. You feel that the mountains shut you in and that depresses you. There is not enough light for you here, our horizon is too narrow, the air's too weak and relaxing for you" (265). Ellida interrupting her husband, agrees with him and unreservedly tells him the consequences of the constrained milieu of his home, "yes, you're perfectly right... night and day summer and winters, I'm haunted by this irresistible longing for sea" (265). Here, the conversation between Dr. Wangel and his wife, Ellida exposes Dr. Wangel's anxiety about his wife's restlessness, aloofness and isolated life. His intention is to find out the main cause why she is not happy at all. His wife gives him hints the fascinating terror of the vast sea. Here Ellida wants to make her selfhood and individual identity free from other one's name. Ellida is frequently haunted by the image of vast sea. The sea is itself the symbol of her restlessness. Once Ellida had got married with the stranger love in the open sea. Their marriage was just like child game to play for pacifying themselves. On that particular day, the stranger lover took out his ring from his finger and pulled out the little ring from Ellida's finger. He joined them together with a thread and had flown them as far as he could into the vast sea. He declared they were got married. After doing that he told Ellida to wait till his return back. Now, he was in a great hurry. Nearly few years, Ellida and the stranger lover exchanged their letters. But Ellida after realizing her mistake, she broke her relationship with him. After that she never wrote him and he never wrote to her too. After listening old love story to his wife Dr. Wangel realizes his wife is not satisfied with him. She always sees sweet dream of her nostalgic day. That's why Wangel says

to Ellida, "I know that too, Ellida dear [putting his hand on her head]. That's why this poor sick child shall go back to her own home again" (265). Here Dr. Wangel treats Ellida as his own child. It is his duty to protect his wife from the haunting image of the stranger. But on the contrary, Ellida becomes so bold to face bitter reality Ellida's hope for getting psychological treatment from husband is vain. Her husband, Dr. Wangel further says her to go to her own father's house where she can have peace and prosperity. It is a great irony upon a doctor's dealing with his psychological ill patient. What is the use of a doctor if he can't find a proper diagnosis for his patient's illness, whom he himself claims loves very much.

Dr. Wangel is a representative figure of patriarchal society. He realizes it is his duty to make her fit from her illness. He thinks when his wife is out of his hand in old age will be miserable. To save his future as well as to protect his wife from the influence of the stranger lover he decides to go with his wife, Ellida somewhere out by the open sea, where she will get her health and her peace of mind. Ellida is an ambivalent woman who does not want to be a cause of others pain and suffering. Though, her husband can't understand her problem, he cares for others, "oh, don't let's talk about that. Everything that you live for is here all that you long for- your whole life's work is here. I can't have you making yourself miserable on my account especially when it won't do his any good" (266). Here, Ellida's rejection of her husband's proposal to move away from there exposes her double dealing nature. She is in dubious condition. Neither she is ready to move away from wangel's family. Nor she is ready to adopt the environment which is given her by her husband. It shows the contradictory position of Ellida. Such position makes us doubt about her revolt against her will for freedom from husband.

Ellida's psychological fear of the sea comes in her arbour at evening. When she was in her arbour to cherish her nostalgic days. His arrival shocks her. The stranger lover, greets her by telling, 'Good evening Mrs. Ellida. Immediately Ellida does not know him. While they are engaged in talking only then Ellida came to know about him. She realizes, it is the person who terrifies her yet fascinates her too. The stranger lover claims her, has come there to complete his betrothal love vow. He says Ellida that he has come to complete his betrothal love. He further says that he does not have enough time. He is in great hurry So, Ellida should mentally prepare to go with him. She does not need anything for the voyage. Ellida's heart leaps up from reality. She feels herself in dilemma. There is not word game between Ellida and her stranger lover. All of sudden, there appears Ellida's husband, Dr. Wangel. They begin to debate about the claim of Ellida. Both Dr. Wangel and the stranger lover both treat Ellida as an object to buy or sell according to their choice. It is a verbal irony where both Dr. Wangel and the stranger lover both becomes the victim of verbal irony. Both of them claim to Ellida is not come in favour of them. Here Ellida gets herself in ambivalent position. Ellida neither supports Dr. Wangel nor supports the stranger lover. Before settling the debate between the stranger lover and Dr. Wangel, the stranger lover goes away, threatening Ellida to be ready till tomorrow evening. He will come back there tomorrow morning.

The Dubious character Ellida finds her position just like an object to pacify to male. She realizes it would be better to revolt against the domination, discrimination, and exploitation of male to female. She is a self conscious, rebellion, and sensitive female character to protect her selfhood and individual identity. She begins to weave the net to keep her life inside it for saving from male ideology, Ellida recalls debates between her husband and the stranger lover. she is torn between her husband and

demonic spell of the stranger who both terrifies and fascinates her. Both of them, her husband and her lover, are claiming her for each of them. Ellida is facing a problem whom to accept? Her husband puts his claim forward in this way, "And what can you want with my wife? You must surely know that the light house keeper's daughter was married long ago, and you must know whom she married" (285). Here Ellida canceled the enforced betrothal with the stranger about a decade ago, he still claims Ellida for him, "I couldn't believe it. Because we linked our rings, Ellida, that was a marriage too" (285). There both husband and stranger lover take Ellida for an object, rather a creature for marriage. They do not respect Ellida as human being with her mind and right to make decision for herself. But Ellida realizes her ironical position in male oriented society. It is an irony to treat human beings as an commodity as per will of another human beings, Ellida's husband the stranger lover's bargaining about claim of Ellida makes Ellida's emerging self consciousness, more active and powerful. Her husband exercises his power and authority in his words to stranger, "what will you do then? you surely don't imagine that you can take her from me by force, against her will !" (286). But the cunning stranger uses a means of temptation to exercise his power and authority over her, "No, what would be the use of that? If Ellida wants to come with me, she must come of her own free will" (286). Ellida is disillusioned with the vicious trap created by her husband and lover. Their voices represents existential crisis of Ellida. It is a verbal irony. Both the character want to deal with Ellida not as human being but as puppet. According to their will they can love or hate the very puppet. Ellida once again gets position in dubious situation. She has to choose such path what will certainly save her selfhood and individual identity.

Ellida becomes much more contemplative about her predicaments, her goals, and inferior identity created by her husband and stranger lover after the stranger's

departure from the garden. The stranger is coming there again to take Ellida, though she told him not to come ever. Ellida makes her mind to get emancipation from the dominating vicious trap of her husband and her stranger lover. Ellida determines, within herself that she must revolt against those discriminating and dehumanizing forces of patriarchal society. Ellida begins to examine her position. Her traditional husband, Dr. Wangel never accepts her 'selfhood', tries to comfort her saying that he will be there to tackle with the stranger to protect her, "Let us try to get through this day wisely- to act calmly and sensibly. I dare not let you go today. I have no right to for your own sake, Ellida. I claim a duty and a right to protect you" (308). Here, Dr. Wangel seems to be protective husband. Ellida does not expect to get protection from his side. Here Dr. Wangel's intention is to keep his wife own his grip. But his expectation and fulfillment came to be in opposite pole. Now he himself becomes the victim of situational irony.

Ellida's stream of conscious explodes. Ellida gets herself newness in her life. She realizes that nobody can help to fight against terror of anything that lies in the deeper level of human mind. Ellida's bold, confident and self reliant 'selfhood' can be seen in her talk to her husband, Dr. Wangel, "Protect? What is there to protect me? There is no force from outside that is threatening me. The terrible thing lies deeper, Wangle... it is the terrible fascination within my own mind and what can you do against that?" (308). One can easily see herself defence and self reliance which encourages a woman's selfhood, empowerment, reducing dependency on other. This dialogure exposes Ellida's determinism to protect her life not by other's help but by Ellida's own toil. But Ellida can't stop her emotion when the stranger lover who came there in second time to claim to her, she becomes bold towards him. She declares she can't go with him. She has no any terror and fascination of the stranger. How much

Ellida tries to escape from the grip of Dr. Wangel, much more she gets confusion to her essence of life. It makes her contradictory character. Yet she makes her confirm to release from Dr. Wangel's hand.

Ellida came to her critical condition. She thinks first of all, she wants to be an independent person. She blames her husband according to her, she didn't come to him of her own free will because their marriage is not a true marriage, "we won't admit the truth. Because the truth-quite purely and simply- is that you came out there and bought me [...] I agreed to the deal- I sold myself to you [Y] ou couldn't bear your empty house any longer. So, you were looking for a new wife [and] now mother for your children" (304). Ellida Compels to get marriage to him. The vicious circle of poverty compels her to do that. It was not her 'free will' to do that. That's why she wants to be an independent person. Ellida again says, "I ought never to have accepted- not at any price should I have sold myself. The meanest work, the direst poverty would have been better, if it was of my own choice- my own free will" (305).

For Ellida, marriage just for economic safety is not a true marriage. Such a new concept regarding marriage, though it is very hard to accept, broadens the horizon of Dr. Wangel's mind. He agrees with Ellida, "you're right there ! the life we lead now is not a true marriage" (305). Dr. Wangel's opinion reflects that they can't exist within single roof of the house. It is an irony. The couple who have been living together for ten years, until now they don't know each other through their heart. Both of them blame each other to come such situation in their life. Dr. Wangel tries to convince his wife about their future. In such a critical situation, if one deceives another, there is hope for bright future. Ellida replies to Dr. Wangel, "we must not consider that. The future must look after itself, as best as it can. The most important thing, Wangel is that you should do as I beg and implore you simply set me free..."

give me back my complete freedom" (306). This shows that Ellida is going to break her every ties with Dr. Wangel, Dr. Wangel says to Ellida, "I do realize that, Ellida, that's why from tomorrow, you shall have your own life". Ellida further says to Dr. Wangel, "You call it my own life ! No my own life my true life- went astray when I joined it to yours (314). Here, Dr. Wangel and Ellida's relationship is going to break so soon. Ellida does not heartly love to her husband, when Dr. Wangel gives freedom of choice to Ellida, Ellida can choose the stranger lover or Dr. Wangel. It is her right not to choose both of them. But Ellida chooses Dr. Wangel in place of her stranger lover. Ellida says to stranger lover, "I can never go with you now, [...] your will hasn't the slightest power over me any more. To me you are a dead man who has come from the sea, and will return to it. You hold no terror for me anymore nor any fascination" (326). This shows Ellida's ambivalent position, Ellida further says to Dr. Wangel, "Oh, Wangel, I can never leave you after this" (328). These dialogues of Ellida are themselves controversial. Here lies a great irony. At first Ellida tries to release from Dr. Wangel for selfhood and individual identity. She plans to go to with her stranger lover. But again she changes her mind. She makes decision to stay with Dr. Wangel. It shows ambivalent position of Ellida. Ellida is appeared as dynamic character very beginning of the play. She finds herself identitiless in Dr. Wangel's family. So, she revolts againsts the domination of her husband. She tries to get rid of Dr. Wangel's grip. But at last, accepts him to secure her selfhood and individual identity. It shows an ironic doubt about Ellida's decision to stay with Dr. Wangel to save her individual identity. It is an irony for Ellida. Because she does not get anything by doing revolt against Dr. Wangel.

IV. Conclusion

Each of Ibsen's Female Protagonists is in ambivalent position. And this discovery within his characters has created shocking waves on the Female's will for selfhood and individual identity. They are ready to choose alienation and isolation moreover a suicide rather than to succumb themselves to patriarchal slavery, domination, subjugation, dehumanization and exploitation. But they fail to act rightly at right times. The same action not only makes them wageless slaves but it also makes them ambivalent characters whose dream of selfhood and individual identity is stitched with the thread of ironic reversal.

Ellida is an ambivalent woman who is determined to assert her selfhood and individual identity within the institution of family and marriage. Though she accepts marriage and familial role, in the initial state of her life, she rebels against the ill treatment of men to women. Ellida is a sensitive and rebellious protagonist. She knows the biases of patriarchy imposed upon women. Her aim is to release women from the biased trap of patriarchy.

But when the time comes to act accordingly, she rejects her stranger lover, the symbol of freedom, autonomy and selfhood and prefers to stay with her husband, and the patriarchal oppressor. Thus, Ellida's rejection of patriarchy through out the play and its acceptance in the end not only makes her an ambivalent character but also casts an ironic doubt on her assertion of very selfhood, autonomy, and individual identity. Ellida's own action makes her the victim of irony. The very irony scrutinizes the protagonist, Ellida and renders the search for autonomy and freedom ambivalent.

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