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Ellida as a New Woman: A Study of Ibsen's *The Lady from the Sea*

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Abstract

Ellida is a 'self' seeking new woman in Ibsen's *Lady from the Sea*. She thinks 'self' precedes the other social relations. Ellida is a rebellious self-conscious woman who struggles to break away from dominating and discriminating general currents of patriarchy, however, she is not against the institution of marriage. Her rebellion is an instrument in asserting her true identity as a human being. She is determined to end the dominating and discriminating patriarchal norms and currents through compromise, self-understanding, cooperation and dialogic relationship with the local patriarchy (her husband). But her compromise is not a complete surrender to patriarchy. It is the compromise which strengthens social harmony and coexistence. Ellida compromises to create a conducive environment to enjoy freedom, self-esteem and self-respect. Finally, Ellida becomes successful to emancipate herself through an untiring struggle within the society. Her emancipation gives a message to the world that freedom and self respect can be experienced within the society and that true freedom comes with the realization of familial and social responsibilities.

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I. Introduction

Henrik Johan Ibsen (March 20, 1828 – May 23, 1906) was the most influential Norwegian master playwright of the late 19th century Europe who had gone further than anyone in putting Norway on the map. For half a century he had devoted his life and energies to the art of drama. Ibsen strongly contributed to give European drama a vitality and artistic quality. 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. He kept on colouring and decorating his works with the scenery and memory of his motherland even while living in exile. Although Henrik Ibsen was never fully appreciated during his life time, he has now come to be recognized as one of the great 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 entrenched Victorian beliefs and moral codes. In this context, Abhi Subedi on Ibsen's use of image and style remarks, "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 theatrical 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 Benerjee 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 like 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 analysing 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 sexual 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 plays *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler* 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 Gabler*. 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 then 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.

Ellida, the second wife of Dr. Wangel finds her marriage unsatisfactory because she is haunted by a love vow she has made to a 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. 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.

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 to 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 Gabler and so on, who are on the verge of emerging as new woman.

Ibsen's new 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 new 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 object 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 a new 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 Gabler in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler*. 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.

Ellida, simultaneously believes that the patriarchy has some evils that should be corrected 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 a new emerging woman, rather tries her best and struggles continuously to assert her total freedom 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 or 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 that 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 this context, 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 *socioeconomicpsychological* forces, which, are beyond her control.

Her precarious existence upto the very end of the play reveals how problematic human experience is. (70)

Ellida is an existentially troubled 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 annual 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 freedom and emancipation. In this regard Eva Le Gallienne in her introduction to *Six Plays by Henrik Ibsen* talks about Ibsen's interest in female identity and emancipation:

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 fascination with the sea as her attempt to achieve freedom as well as her desperate desire to emerge as a new woman.

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. Though previous criticisms have pointed out 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 freedom of the women like Ellida. The next section will be the textual analysis from the feminist perspective.

II. Deconstructing Gender: Rise of Feminine Consciousness

Feminism generally is a theoretical discourse advocating women's rights based on the belief in the equality of the sexes. It is a doctrine redefining women's activities and goal from a women centered point of view and refusing to accept the cult of masculine chauvinism and superiority that reduces women to a sex object, as second sex, a submissive other. It seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities and injustices women suffer because of their sex, and defend equal rights for women in a political, economic, social, psychological, personal and aesthetic ground. So, feminism is a struggle of women for the womanhood.

The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology defines feminism as "a doctrine suggesting that women are systematically disadvantaged in modern society and advocating equal opportunities for men and women" (132). Feminism has been defined not simply as a particular framework, set of ideas, a form of social analysis or a critical questioning around the issues on women and power but also as representing a specific way of experience. Adrienne Rich defines feminism as, "the place where in the most natural, organic way subjectivity and politics have to come together" (315). Feminism is a political movement that seeks equal rights for women, giving them equal status with men and freedom to decide their own career and life partners. Feminism voices the new woman's objections to be treated as a doormat or a piece of furniture meant for the convenience of men. The new woman refuses to be stifled under oppressive restrictions. Feminism intends to rebel against the hostile environment in which a woman is forced to live. It is a struggle against the hardships, neglect and dual moral standards to which women are subjected.

Unlike in the past, women have realized their undervalued position imprisoned within the narrow domestic world of mothering and house managing, and the biasness

in the field of education and employment. As a result, they are demanding for proper place of women in the society. Nancy F. Cott examines the origin of women's movement: "Such consciousness of [. . .] inferiority was the first group - consciousness likely to produce a feminist movement, because it acknowledged cultural and social determinants of women's capabilities as well as divine and natural ones, and thus allowed for the possibility of change" (202). The revolutionary origin has given an impetus to the development of historical feminist figures.

Much of the feminist critics have raised a strong voice for women's liberation from the biased male-tyranny on women for a long time. Mary Wollstonecraft in the eighteenth century attempted to liberate women from male-dominating motives hidden in the emphasis of feminine features like meekness, humility, and childishness. Unraveling the bases of socialization of women whereby they are taught to be feminine, Wollstonecraft indicates the fault in the process of the socialization. She detests the then false education system that inspired women to love at the expense of reason, and encouraged women to study medicine, business, and mathematics. Rosemarie Tong examines Wollstonecraft's views about women's education and further claims that they should "be provided with real education, one that sharpens and focuses her mind and gives her a chance to develop her national and moral capacities, her full human potential" (15).

Similarly, Virginia Woolf advocates for the radical change in the conception of family and social life. She refutes the traditional views about women that they are submissive, and rather focuses for a separate space for women in literature and society. Woolf believes that:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally, but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their

efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from the rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation [. . .], it is narrow minded in their more privileged fellow creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting, stocking, to playing on piano and embroidering bags. (822)

From these lines, she points to the fact that women are closed within domestic sphere, but just contrary to this men are free and public life is reserved for them.

Likewise, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, directs women towards useful works created by modern industry and profession. Highlighting women's capability to work in the public world, she focuses on economically beneficial occupation for women. She refutes the childcare and housework, which deprive them of opportunity and the development of their genuine potentiality. Nancy Cott speaks of Gilman: "She proposed [. . .] the socialization of remaining home employments such as cooking and laundry and argued that house cleaning and child care would be better performed by specialized paid employees than by housewives and mothers not necessarily suited and not paid for the tasks" (41).

On the other hand, Simone de Beauvoir has brought a widespread consciousness on the part of women, pointing to the socio-historical construction of women. She condemns the socialization that persuades women to be sexy and to be flesh for more entertainment of male ego. Rather, she professes for a mentality for women to be self assertive and determined; able to tackle with impediments, and to liberate them from the social construction of femininity. Jane Freedman says that her "distinction between biological sex and the social creation of the 'eternal feminine' is a precursor of the distinction between sex and gender that is common in much feminist theory" (14).

Similarly, Kate Millett has further led the women's revolution making a connection between the personal and the public world. As Maggie Humm claims, "The personal is political" (195), it is by scrutinizing the personal level internally at home that women can comprehend suppression at broad level, and it is by addressing the collective issues related with men's power and upper position that they can reconstruct and reform the structure, which ultimately influences women's life in personal level. She doesn't find any difference between the personal and the public level. The decisions made by the public sector on the field of women, child care, and family planning ultimately affect the private life of women.

Everywhere women are neglected. Many woman writers have a very tender feeling towards women's pitiable identity. They really appreciate the feminist politics for social change. Sasha Walby in 1990 has also pressed one of the realities of the end of the twentieth century. In "Practicing Feminism: Identity, Difference and Power," she appreciates the feminists for their effective transformations through direct challenge to patriarchal dominant modes of thinking and hegemonic gender identities. Sasha Walby says, "Women are formally equal citizens and most women are paid workers, women are still expected to be domestic creatures first and foremost, as wives, and to put the needs and interests of other before their own" (100).

In 1974, Nancy Chodorow talked about the challenging social reality for women. According to her, "sex-role development of girls in modern society is very complex. They go to school to prepare for life in a technologically and socially complex society" (54). Caroline O.N. Moser, a recent feminist, also agrees to this point and says that "the modern responsibility of women is challenging to them because they have to play a triple role in the third world: the roles of reproductive work, productive work and community managing work" (27). Women's knowledge

and experience are crucial to understand the socially constructed world and only one woman can truly and fully understand others. To develop women, women themselves have to face with difficulties and dilemmas of patriarchal setting.

Feminists in general emphasize social equality and opportunity for the development of women. But they also give importance to femaleness and celebrate the feminine values and traits – the concept of new woman, who struggles for individual freedom but also celebrates the femininity. In *Women and Human Rights* (1995) Katering Tomasevski has demanded human rights for women. She writes, "Women indeed do not enjoy the rights and freedoms to which they are entitled by the mere fact that they are human" (ix). She disagrees with the existing social notion of motherhood and says, "Not all women are mothers. More important those who are not mothers only they are also worker, electors, medical doctors, political prisoners, trade union leaders, immigrants, soldiers, or refugees" (ix). The writer here demands equal human rights which should be protected for possible women's advancement.

The modern feminists are more alert of their existence. The women writers express their desire that women should also be a part of history, and emphasize upon equality or legal reform for women's rights. In this concern, Tomasevski says, "The present day feminism is a struggle for achievement of women's equality, dignity and freedom of choice to control our lives and bodies within outside the home" (34). However, in the context of growing women's personality, the new age has added more responsibilities upon them. The world is not completely modern because half of its population lacks humanity. So, most of the feminists, who are concerned with the world's biases, demand equal rights for all human beings.

Feminism in general focuses on the feminist revolt against patriarchy for the equality, freedom and autonomy of women and the end of gendered discrimination.

However, along with the changing socio-political scenario across the national boundaries, within the feminist theoretical discourses, feminist rebellion and the assertion of individuality have taken a new meaning and signification. It has been realized by the recent feminist critics that the rebellion for separate female space and individuality is not the permanent solution of women's problems. Rather these critics have shifted their focus from the revolt against domestication, gendered discrimination and the feminization of women to the creation of a more conducive atmosphere for cooperation, mutuality and coexistence with the male partner in the society. Such a novel concept, that individuality could be or should be asserted, within the socio-political structure, and that individual freedom or personal identity could be substantially enjoyed and experienced if it comes from within the patriarchal codes, have produced a new brand of woman (New Women) who accepts and enjoys the femininity while refusing to be identified as an appendage and a second class citizen, 'the other' in the society.

New Woman: A Social Rebellion

The new woman is different from other general women in the sense that she struggles to affirm her autonomous self. Self refers to the inner being of a person, which directs and controls his/her social interaction. A person has to acclimatize with the milieu where one lives, and the acclimatization develops into different human personality that varies according to socio-cultural values. New women are inclined towards an autonomous individual self. They tend to seek for their own dreams and desires for the future. Their self precedes the social relation. Observing new woman self, Alison Prentice and Ruth Pierson say, "Women have a human need equal to men's for affection and emotional support but that for satisfaction of this need women should not have to make a greater sacrifice of autonomy than men" (164). The

autonomous personality motivates them towards the self assertion. That self assertion leads and encourages them to search for individual respect even in married life.

Many women regard marriage as a relation between two individuals. They accentuate on their own beliefs, existence and identity, who are free from husband's imposition of his beliefs. Living with their husbands, they are very aware of their self-respect and individuality, and the serious consciousness of self-existence makes them rebel against any condescending behaviour from their husband. Quasim Amin elucidates the relation between a man and a woman, "A [. . .] man realizes that his wife has the right to like what meets her taste, her ideas, and her feelings, and she lives in a manner that she considers compatible with her own point of view" (30). They follow their thoughts and ideas. The sense of the individuality makes them aware of the loss of happiness in marriage.

Some women regard marriage as a loss of autonomy, freedom and happiness. They think that marriage is a boredom and imprisonment within the routine household activities. They have to abandon their will and dreams to fulfill these needs of others. For them, marriage is a continuum of sacrifice, which creates a pseudo-existence under the name of their husbands. Simone de Beauvoir says: "The tragedy of marriage is not that it fails to assure women the promised happiness-there is no such thing such as assurance in regard to happiness-but that it mutilates her, it dooms her repetition and routine" (534).

In short, though some women feel controlled within the marriage bond, new women regard marriage as an important bond between two individuals to give continuity to human existence in the world. They are not against marriage, but they are against hypocritical, selfish, short-sighted norms and values of patriarchy. They want freedom of choice, to select an appropriate life partner. They think women

should not be confined to domestic life, rather they should get free access even in public life.

Society needs an organization and management for the long-lasting and peaceful world; the division of labour betters social development. New women have been very conscious of their unpaid and undervalued position of household works and demand the share of males in it. They question and renounce the social construction of labour division based on biology. They are suspicious of the biased patriarchal society and its persuasion that women are weaker than men and hence suitable for household activities. They comment on the persuasion by saying that it is a way to reduce women into mere objects – moving but lifeless. They object the unpaid domestic labour of women that goes unnoticed and undervalued. In the labour market of household activities, women are "neglected producers, but benefit goes to men, women become dependent beings on men" (qtd. in Freedman 52). In new women's opinion, the weak and helpless condition of women should be put forward, and their household activities should be valued.

The awareness of the neglected condition of household works also demands the support and the participation of men in household activities. New women take women primarily as human beings having intellectual psyche and strong physique just as men have. Women are capable of earning their living and conducting politics and business but they need spare time. It is with the help of men that women get leisure time to exercise their psychic capacity, to gain their autonomy and the wholeness of mind and body. And the psychic exercise helps them to remove the social assumption that women are unfitted to intellectual world. Maria Mies suggests for the men's participation at home, "Men have to share the responsibility for the immediate production of life, for child care, housework, the care of the sick and the old, the

relationship work, all work so far subsumed under the term 'housework'" (222). Here Maria Mies is in favour of mutual cooperation, love, caring and sharing, mutual understanding and reconciliation between men and women in a family, only then the familial life becomes long-lasting and prosperous.

In short, new women emphasize on the redemption of women from the routinized household activities, and urge to have the sharing of males in the household works. The strong urge for sharing paves a way to refute the social comparison of female with nature.

The new women deny the male-beliefs that women are near nature-women have productivity and yielding nature, they are meek and weak; their social role to rear children is uncivilized. These women vehemently oppose the underestimation of women in terms of physique and social roles. Sherry B. Ortner refutes the limited explanation of women's value: "He creates relatively lasting, eternal, transcendental objects, while the woman creates only perishables – human beings" (29). Ortner further emphasizes the civilized nature of women by saying that mothering teaches children civilization, and gives an orientation towards social interaction. In this way, the prejudiced opinions of males in patriarchal society have spooked new women to rebel against the social teaching to assert their capacity for intellectual work. And the self-assertion against the inferior social mentality towards women also creates a new world towards motherhood.

Some feminists regard motherhood as a heavy burden along with the annihilation of their autonomy and career. It adds unnecessary tasks, keeping child in the womb for nine months becomes a miserable experience. Jane Scoular expresses the pain: "Pregnancy is a hedonic experience felt . . . [not] by all women" (65). The maternity, for them, deprives them of their individuality and privacy. Rosemarie Tong

writes about Wollstonecraft: "A woman must, Wollstonecraft believed, obey the commands of reason and discharge her wifely and motherly duties faithfully" (16). Since the motherhood reduces them to routined duties and responsibilities, the notion towards motherhood as a load generates an indifference between mother and child. New women also give more attention to their individuality and self-respect, and accordingly are careful not to violate their children's individuality and self-respect. The individualistic attitude in new women has created a different perspective towards sexuality.

Sexuality reminds people of the erotic pleasure, which is completely a private matter. It is considered to be natural and essential for the continuation of human existence in the world. The new women tend to be more liberal in the matter and more conscious to have rights over their bodies and sexual relation.

New women also consume sexual freedom, which has become part of their lives, conducive to the mental and physical health. Talking and having free sex is a liberating and reinvigoration source for them. It is the kind of entertainment, which is beyond marriage, love, and maternity. They enjoy sexuality as just as men do. Maim Attallah quotes Averil Borugess: "We have a far more promiscuous generation, and it may be that today's young women are interpreting a sexual relationship as a simple on its own, not as a long-term relationship, which could have been our social conditions" (Attallah 570). They like to have a control over their body and sexuality. Jane Freedman clarifies Crystal Eastman's notion about new women sexuality: "The desire echoes feminists' continuing concern with giving women control over their own bodies, providing them with the power and the knowledge to enjoy their sexuality and to have children if and when they wish" (Freedman 59).

The new women are very conscious of their body and sexuality. They no longer want to be passive givers of their bodies to males. They demand freedom and self-authority in sexuality. The firm belief in the sexual freedom for women also leads to the economic independence.

Economic independence means the right to earn independently and freedom to spend the income independently. So far as the new women are concerned, they feel the materialization of their existence in independent income and expenditure. The economic self-dependence becomes an assuring factor for their self-respect in marital life. It gives support to self-duty and self-responsibility. Attallah quotes the remarks of Frances here: "If a woman has no means to earn a living, she is dependent upon a man. When she is dependent upon a man, she is not free and she also doesn't trust him, because if you're dependent, you can't trust. There cannot be a healthy relationship if you're dependent upon somebody else for survival" (500).

In conclusion, a new woman wants to be economically independent or realize her existence and happiness, and the self-dependent life is more successful and happier, which ultimately strengthens the choice of a woman in divorce.

Divorce refers to the end of marital relationships legally. With the increase in human rights and freedom, the divorce has been increased in the modern society. The divorce has also become a part of new women's life where they can have free play of their wishes. Attallah quotes Baria Allamuddin's view on liberated new woman: "A liberated [new] woman is a woman who can easily shed all the social factors and just walk away from them and go towards whatever she wants as a completely liberated individual, regardless of tradition" (450).

In a nutshell, new women happily accept the natural role provided by the nature and strongly support the concept of coexistence. But they are not ready to be

submissive, docile and passive creatures to be tamed by patriarchy. They value the familial and societal norms and prefer to come to terms with the males for the social harmony.

Henrik Ibsen, though a male writer, focuses on women's issues and concerns in his dramas. He undermines the patriarchal domination and gender discrimination in most of his plays where female characters often are the protagonists.

Ibsen's Portrayal of Women

Focusing on Ibsen's artistic uncommon quality of selecting characters the young Irish writer James Joyce paid a tribute to Ibsen's supreme insight into the psychology and ways of thinking of modern women. In his review of *When We Dead Awaken* he comments, "Ibsen's knowledge of humanity is nowhere more obvious than in his portrayal of women. He amazes one by his painful introspection; he seems to know them better than they know themselves" (qtd. in Aarseth 13). This positive evaluation of Ibsen's character portrayal was shared by many critics as well.

Ibsen's characters are related mostly to social, political, economic, spiritual and cultural problems. His characters are firmly determined to achieve their aim in life. They are ready to undergo severe pain and suffering but they don't surrender before any forces that challenge their identity. His women characters like Nora, Hedda, and Ellida are universal characters; they are brave and strong and most important they are of to-day. That is why the effect of an Ibsen play is unending: "Ibsen comes home to us. His problems are real problems and are ours" (qtd. in Aarseth 15).

In *Rosmersholm* (1886), the female protagonist Rebecca West is one of the new types of women in Ibsen's plays. She has been portrayed as a modern new woman who desires to be free, financially independent, with her own life-project.

Astrid Saether claims that, "She does not want the typical woman's life, with a protective husband and her own children. She stands forth as a new breed of woman, a woman who has acquired a sense of independence" (33). Ibsen has presented Rebecca West as a new woman who values her independence more than her husband, his property and children. In the similar way, Lorriaine Markotic says, "With Rebecca, however, the contrast between past events which formed her and her newly acquired ideals weakens and divides her. Unable to . . . [attain] her "new" self, or to recover her "old" self, she is devitalized and ultimately destroyed" (1-8). Rebecca as a new woman is ready to destroy herself rather than to accept the dual identity designed by patriarchy.

In another sensational play *Hedda Gabler*, the female protagonist Hedda, wants her total freedom as a man does have, in her society. She is a rebellious new woman, because she wants to assert her independent existence. She does not care her traditional patriarchal norms and values. She wants to lead a respectable life, with every sort of freedom, such as freedom of movement, freedom of making friends and involving in extra-marital affairs. In this regard Astrid Saether comments, "She longs for a life of freedom" (33). She does not feel any hesitation to commit suicide in order to check further exploitation upon her and affirm her existence. Hedda is not herself anywhere. Sometimes husband comes to exercise his authority upon her, at other times social values do the same upon her. She feels that she is being abused in the hands of the husband, family and after all society. So, at last she commits suicide.

Similarly, in *A Doll's House*, Nora's husband Torvald treats her as an adorable but scatter-brained child. At the beginning of the play, she has been represented as a traditionally ideal type of woman, who seems loving, beautiful, caring, and devoted wife. But at the last part of the play, she leaves her unthoughtful, selfish and

opportunistic husband and even the children slamming door behind of his house. She leaves the house in search of true identity. In this context McGraw Hill opines "She walks out [. . .] to seek a life in which her value as a human being can be realized" (393). Nora challenges the hypocritical society and its norms and values. She wants to assert her position as a human being not as a silent, passive, obedient and docile creature for patriarchal use and pleasure. She is in search of meaning and position of woman in human society being a new woman.

Contemporary audience was so much dissatisfied with the unexpected decision that Nora makes for herself giving the play unhappy end that as Abhi Subedi opines, "Ibsen had to put happy ending with Nora in the end going to the door of her children and cry bitterly" (4). The play extremely shocked the people all over the world presenting a housewife as a new rebellious woman who discards the mother-woman role. Women in Ibsen's dramas in different ways have an important message. In this regard, Beret Wicklund says, "That what must come, in a society which is based on female values, acting according to natural feelings and openly accepting aspects of natural life, including death and pain - that would be the wonderful." Wicklund further says, in *A Doll's House* Nora gives the message to the world that we need, "cultural changes on a much more profound level than equality for women in a political level" (54).

In Ibsen's character portrayal in his popular plays *A Doll's House*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Lady from the Sea*, *The Master Builder* and so on, one can easily see the leading and firmly determined role of emerging new women who are struggling to assert their self, for self-reliance, self-decision and autonomous existence. Some of his women characters are extra rebellious like Nora and Hedda. But Ellida, the female protagonist in Ibsen's play *The Lady from the Sea*, is different from them because she

is not over rebellious and self destructive like Hedda. Ellida, though she is also a new type of woman, thinks patriarchy has got some evils but they can be and should be corrected living within the same structure. She doesn't want to be an escapist and separatist from the male society. She values familial structure but she is against patriarchal domination and exploitation upon women. Ellida's principle is that life has no meaning out of family and society. She also thinks solution of any problem can be achieved through compromise and mutual understanding. She is in favour of emancipation through compromise. Her compromise is not one sided, temporary and further encouraging the patriarchal domination but one firm step ahead to institutionalize herself and to realize the freedom and autonomy within the institutions through self-assertion and self-reliance. She believes that true freedom and emancipation comes through compromise-mutual coexistence with the men in the society.

Compromise is the harmonious social-familial situation where both man and woman have reciprocity of respect and comprehension of each other's feelings and ideas. They have strong faith on coexistence. So far as new women are concerned, they accept the feminine responsibilities given by nature and prescribed by the patriarchal society on the condition that they recognize their 'self' as an individual with their own ideas and emotions. In this context Jasbir Jain comments on the nature of new women: "She is simultaneously able to achieve two things – one, recognize the value of feminine virtues for society and human survival and second in the process also free them from the category of gender" (121).

Realization of the self as an individual personality is to be herself and to transcend the narrow demarcation of the dependence on man, which contributes to the widespread development of new women's personality. Consciousness of the self

produces the duty and responsibilities towards themselves, reminding who they are and what they are. The same awareness of the self leads them to independence and freedom from the submissive mentality. Self confidence is a way to make a separate identity where they identify themselves different from others; they become strong enough to decide their behaviour and action. Accentuation of their individuality simultaneously knows the value of the individuality in feminine roles rooted in socio-psychological structure. Elizabeth J. Porter affirms that individuality has the sense of "The autonomy of others as self-respecting individuals, who are also capable of freely determining their own actions and behaviours" (55). The individuality of the new woman is related with the community.

Feminine responsibilities are associated with the understanding of other's feelings, and developing the ability for self-sacrifice. Running on household activities and sustaining familial relations need a respect for other's ideas and a concern for others problem. It needs an internal power to endure on the part of women. The tolerance paves a way to maternal endurance. Motherhood, a unique feeling, automatically relates women to kitchen activities needed to nurture children. Geraldine Forbes observes the nineteenth century male reformers: "They envisioned households run by modernized women who had embedded scientific ideas about hygiene and child rearing. These men wanted their wives to take part in activities outside home" (68). Feminine roles make them realize that the real redemption lies in the acceptance of their femininity for the breakthrough of society.

In conclusion, compromise is the reconciliatory situation where women have refined selfhood and self-respect along with the comprehension of the patriarchal custom that ultimately empowers women's survival in society. Forbes clearly shows new women demanding their rights in the nineteenth century: "The delegates favoured

[. . .] and educational system that would allow for the fullest development of the individual's latent capacities. But at the same time they wanted to teach all girls the ideas of motherhood, how to make the home attractive, and how to help others" (79). For the new women, liberation means the free and secured socio-familial environment that invites a reliable mobility and visibility on the part of women, and emancipation brings a more genuine environment that permits women to actualize their aspiration by serving society and fulfilling the duty towards themselves.

The ability of self-awareness adds the power of self-expression and advancement in new women's personality. Human ideas and feelings possess an invisible truth and force. By knowing their inner feelings and ideas, and expressing them to others, they place them as important parts of society, which can mould the world in a new way. As Meena Kelkar and Deepti Gangavane define, "Freedom is a state of mind where in one can doubt and question everything and therefore it is so intense, active and vigorous that it throws away every form of dependence [and] slavery" (25). They succeed in constructing a newer psychological framework that is aware of their position in the society.

The newer psychological world welcomes their advent in public fields. They have a social support to take self decision in the matter of social problems. They have ingenuity to analyze subterfuges and tactics of world procedures. They become a part of academic intelligentsia ready to struggle to make a separate recognition. The society accepts their role as sagacious judges who take an initiative to settle a dispute, and the role asks a serious study and a devotion to work. Going out of house, and completing responsibilities need familial love.

Familial as well as social inspiration and help acts as a liberating force, which motivates women to work enthusiastically and successfully coming out of domestic

circle. Because of the collective feelings they achieve a determinate and unshakable foundation in life to move ahead. In fact, their real liberation lies in familial affection and encouragement. As M. K. Roy comments, new women "want both career success and family intimacy" (35). Familial closeness empowers them with proper guidance and security.

Emancipation is a fearless situation where new women have love, social inspiration, self-awareness, and freedom to work in the public field, within the limit of social ethos. Liberation brings happiness and realization of her self. As Quasim Amin defines, liberty is "a person's independence of thought, will and, action, as long as this does not exceed legal limits and maintains the moral standards of society" (16). Liberation for a new woman is consisted of the unflinching confidence in their selves and actions along with the acceptance of socio-cultural values of the society where they live in.

III. Ellida as a New Woman in *The Lady from the Sea*

Ibsen's play, *The Lady from the Sea*, set in a remote town of Norway amid the wilds of fjords and the sea, deals with the constrained position of women in the family of late 19th century Norwegian society. The women have been victims of gender discrimination of patriarchy which causes them to suffer from repression, suppression, obsession and mental torture. Simultaneously, self-conscious women, like Ellida, are in an untiring struggle for asserting complete freedom and rights for their meaningful and happy conjugal life.

Ellida Wangel, the second wife of Dr. Wangel, is contemplative about her predicament. She is a new woman who wants to live a respectful life rather than to exist. She is a self seeking woman. In the beginning, there is no real affection between Ellida and her two step-daughters for she thinks self precedes the social relation. She is more concerned about her 'self' rather than to her duties and responsibilities. She feels trapped, imprisoned and isolated in her husband's home and finds it more difficult to acclimatize with the new environment. To express her dissatisfaction and longings for freedom Ellida uses symbols and images. She asks Ballested, an artist, to paint a picture of a dying mermaid. Here Ballested is describing the picture to Lyngstrand who is interested to know more about it, "She is strayed in from the open sea, and now she can't find 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 symbol of Ellida herself, which represents her rebellion against stifling milieu of Dr. Wangel's home and her growing urge for freedom and conducive atmosphere to enjoy it.

Ellida feels stifled, dissatisfied and rootless in her new home. Though Dr. Wangel brings her to his home by the open sea, but he does not make her a part of his

world, of his home. He doesn't give her any responsible tasks. Psychologically frustrated, Ellida ponders over her marriage with Dr. Wangel and comes to the conclusion that it cannot be called a true marriage. She thinks it is rather like buying and selling of an object because she did not come to him of her own free will. She frankly says, "The truth [. . .] is that you came out there and-and bought me" (304). Ellida regards marriage as an important bond between two individuals to give continuity to human existence in the world but she wants freedom of choice, to select a proper life partner.

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 freedom. Ultimately, she discloses 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 [. . .]" (269). She comes to her senses immediately and she writes letters to cancel that enforced betrothal. But the stranger keeps on writing letters to her that he will come back to take her away. The mysterious stranger just thinks only about him but he does not care of her responses. The stranger also takes Ellida for nothing more than a passive, docile, devoted and submissive creature, just an object of marriage for patriarchal use. Ellida feels that she is drawn towards the stranger, rather than to her husband. She sees the glimpse of the stranger though her husband Dr. Wangel can't. Her mind is occupied with the fear of the stranger that could come from the sea. She thinks that her child, though it lived only for a few months, had eyes of the stranger.

Lyngstrand's story about the same stranger moves as well as frightens Ellida. As 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 her husband, she's been unfaithful to him while he was away and now he's been drowned at sea [. . .]. Well, now comes the extraordinary part. It seems, he is claiming '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)

The stranger takes Ellida as an object that can be bought, abandoned for some time and claimed it again according to his will. Ellida feels more frustrated and terrified after hearing the claim of the stranger.

Unexpected appearance of the stranger surprises and adds more terror in her mind. There is a long bargaining for possessing Ellida. Ellida has been treated as an object. Both, her husband and lover are claiming her for each of them. The stranger leaves the garden promising to come next night to take Ellida. After his departure from the garden, she repeats the stranger's tempting phrase "Of her own free will" and gains power from it. She develops an urge for complete freedom and autonomous self identity within herself. She tries her best to persuade her husband for her release from the marriage vow verbally. She does not mind the legal formalities of both marriage and divorce. At first Dr. Wangel is not ready to give her freedom back. Ellida as a new woman boldly says, "You must set me free-free me from every tie with you and yours. I am not the woman that you took me for" (308). Finally, she has been successful to convince her husband who grants her the freedom and declares her release from his ties in front of the stranger. It is a great sacrifice of Dr. Wangel. Now Ellida becomes free and with freedom comes the sudden realization of her responsibility. As she has got her freedom of choice, she rejects the stranger, "I can

never go with you not", she further tells him, "Your will hasn't slightest power over me any more nor any fascination" (328).

Ellida realizes that her husband has changed himself allowing her the complete freedom and putting her happiness above his own. He values her peace of mind rather than his own need to have her around. Actually Dr. Wangel's exemplary sacrifice wins her heart. Ellida no longer feels estranged from and trapped by him. She decides to stay with Wangel because she thinks human life has no meaning out of human society. Dr. Wangel represents landlocked values like solidity and reliability whereas the stranger represents sea and its mystery, uncertainty, dangers and fluidity.

Ellida is a new emerging woman who struggles for a long time to release her 'self' from her traditional husband Dr. Wangel who used to take her as a passive, docile, submissive and ideal wife, without respecting her 'self'. Similarly, she rejects the stranger, her traditional lover, who does not respect her individual 'self' but wants to possess her as his devoted, passive and ideal lover.

Ellida has a novel concept about the solution of any social problems. She believes that familial and other social problems faced by women could be solved through co-operation, understanding and dialogic relationship with the local patriarchy (the husband). She is always against patriarchal domination and discriminations but she happily accepts marriage, maternity and co-existence with male partner for prosperity and happiness in a family as well as in a society. She binds herself to the solid and reliable values of land rather than to lawlessness, uncertainty and dangers of sea water and proves her as a new brand of woman.

Ibsen's women characters are always aware of their personal dignity and self respect in the family where they live. They carry on their struggle for their freedom

and conducive atmosphere to enjoy it. Ellida, the second wife of Dr. Wangel, becomes distressed, isolated and terrified even in her own family because of her husband's failure to comprehend her problem that lies in the deeper level of her mind and her enforced betrothal with a nameless stranger that happened about a decade ago.

Ellida is a new woman. Though she is a self seeking woman, she does not discard the value of marriage for continuation and prosperity of human society. Ellida thinks marriage is an important union between two individual selves. She seeks for her self identity, rights and autonomous existence. She wants to keep her self unhindered and free from her husband's imposition of his beliefs. She is aware of her self-respect and individuality within the institution of marriage, and her consciousness of 'self' makes her rebel against any condescending behaviour from her husband.

Ellida accepted to get married with Dr. Wangel but due to her 'self' consciousness, she feels trapped, isolated, stifled and rootless in her new home. She finds it very difficult to acclimatize with the new milieu of Dr. Wangel's home. To express her dissatisfaction and her longing for freedom Ellida asks Ballested, an artist to paint a picture. Here, in the very beginning of the first act, Ballested is describing the picture to Lyngstrand, a traveling sculpture who is interested to know more about it.

Ballested:

It's the fjord I'm doing there, between the islands . . . [O]n this rock in the foreground I'm going to put a dying mermaid. She's strayed in from the open sea, and now she can't find 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 something of the sort. (236)

Here, mermaid is a symbol, and it is attached to Mrs. Wangel and her reaction to the stifling milieu of her new home. Ellida is an emerging new woman. She is seeking an

autonomous self identity within marital life. She wants to assert her autonomous existence. As she can't experience what she wants, she undergoes psychological frustration and nervous state. To show her hate for stifling and suffocating milieu of her new home she chooses the shelter of an arbour in the garden. Talking to Mr. Arnholm, her former suitor, Ellida says, "It's a pleasant place to sit here . . . [T]hey call this my arbour, because it was I who planned it or at least, Wangel did, to please me" (246). Ellida finds the arbour more pleasant than the Dr. Wangel's comfortable home. But Dr. Wangel cannot understand her growing desires. Though he wants sunshine and happiness around his home, his wife always seems upset. Dr. Wangle removed Ellida from the home by the open sea, but he has not really made her a part of his world, of his home yet. He does not give her any responsibility. Her marriage makes her feel as hemmed in as did mountains and sluggish fjord waters of her new environment. Here, Ellida is talking to Arnholm about her feelings of the fjords waters, "Fresh ? Good heavens, the water's never fresh here – it's dull and tepid. Ugh, here in the fjords the water's sluggish" (245). It is Ellida's symbolic expression of her quest for conducive atmosphere.

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 'self', makes her more conscious, rebellious and firmly determined to achieve her goal of 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's 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 freedom but nobody comprehends it.

Ellida has constantly been taking bathes whatever the weather is. Even her bathes show her deep longing for freedom. 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 understand her quest for freedom. 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 among the trees by the harbour in a big light wrap and with her wet hair hanging over her shoulders. Dr. Wangel says, "Ah, here's 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. Wangle, Mr. Arnholm and Ellida were climbing up the hill to go to the 'Look-Out', Lyngstrand, Boletta and Hilde who had already been a little up the hill, looking down to the right, Hilde says to Boletta, "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 their step-mother, Ellida.

Ellida thinks 'self' 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 drawn mostly towards her own self, because of her self seeking nature, she cannot carry out her duties and responsibilities set by patriarchy as expected. Generally, a woman cannot perform her duties and responsibilities if she is

not mentally prepared to take 'mother-wife' role. As Mr. Arnholm and Boletta were talking about Boletta'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 step mother-help you with that [household work]?

Boletta: 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 predicament. She has no time to see what is happening around her and to perform her responsibilities.

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 cannot enjoy freely what she wants. But she is different from other general women as she is disillusioned with the vicious circle created by patriarchal society. Simultaneously she is aware of the fact that how women are deprived of freedom in the patriarchal society. Since Ellida is conscious of her predicament, she continues her struggle to assert her complete freedom. She does not want to be a 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 true identity and autonomous existence. She thinks women need freedom the way 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 took me for –you know that yourself now" (308). Ellida's growing desire for being a new woman can be noticed vividly here in her words. She is giving pressure to her husband to change his traditionally dominating 'self'.

Ellida is against gender discrimination, inequalities and all sorts of sexual harassments of patriarchy. She is more concerned about the women-predicament around the world. She thinks that root cause of all human misery is nothing but the absence of women participation in the mainstream of developing human society due to biased patriarchal ideology. Ellida wants to reform the human society by including women in the mainstream of development. Ellida is confident that the women's leading role can take the society to perfection and happiness. 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, the sea symbolizes the kind of society where women can enjoy complete freedom and materialize their longings and desires. Only then human society can achieve perfection. Ellida is in favour of establishing an inclusive and harmonious society correcting patriarchal weak aspects.

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 fjord. It lies there so blue and shining" (281). To lead the human society in permanent joy and happiness, women should be given complete freedom to make them responsible.

Ellida is different from other general women. They hide their desires, pain and sufferings within themselves but Ellida, being a new woman, wants to settle her problems through cooperation, understanding and dialogic relationship with the local patriarchy (her husband). In Act II, Dr. Wangel and Ellida frankly talk about their

frozen relation. Dr. Wangel expresses his views, though he is in a wrong track, why Ellida can't-or won't live with him any longer, "There's the fact that you can't bear this place. You feel that the mountains shut you in, and that depresses you. There's 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 winter, I'm haunted by this irresistible longing for the sea" (265). Ellida is giving him the hints of the fear that may come from the sea, that is the return of the stranger to claim her. It haunts her time and again. That's why she wants to solve her psychological problem through understanding and dialogic relationship but her husband, instead of helping her to remove the terror of the stranger from her mind, becomes rather protective and says, "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). Dr. Wangel treats her as an innocent child but not as a matured person.

Ellida is seeking her emancipation through the stranger. Though she has not seen him for about ten years, he has left a destructive power over her mind. She is not in favour of going out of her home to solve her psychological problem. Just contrary to her expectation, her husband becomes ready to let her go her own home to Skjoldvik. It's a great irony upon a doctor's dealing with his patients. What's 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. Here one can easily notice Ellida in a miserable situation. The doctor, and husband who has been trained to treat patients, seems ready to let his sick wife go back to her own home without providing her with proper diagnosis. Dr. Wangel, representative figure of patriarchal society, projects his patriarchal

perspectives on women through the attitudes towards his own sick wife. But he can not discard the universal truth of coexistence, so he suddenly changes his mind and 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 not a selfish person, she does not want to be a cause of others pain and suffering. Though her husband can't understand her problem, she 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 us any good" (266).

Ellida's problem is psychological but her husband finds her illness incomprehensible. Ellida is frequently haunted by the enforced betrothal that she made about a decade ago to a mysterious lawless sailor who had killed the captain of his ship. He was flying from justice. Ellida is a frank woman, so she unreservedly discloses the whole thing how they come into contact, what they mostly talked about and what happened to her at last before he left. Recollecting the event so vividly, she tells her husband what the subjects of their chats were and how she felt while being with him:

[W]e talked about the sea, about its storms and its calms . . . dark nights and sea . . .and the sea sparkling in the sunshine. But we talked mostly about the whales and dolphins – and the seals that lie out on the rocks basking in the noon day warmth. And we talked about the gulls and the skuas and all the other seabirds [. . .]. And, so you know, it's an extraordinary thing, but as we talked like this he seemed to me to have something in common with the birds and beasts of the sea. (268)

Ellida wants freedom of action. She desires to swim freely like the whales and dolphins in the open sea water. The whole description of the sea and its creatures gives a sense of relief, but her husband can not understand her growing urge for freedom.

Ellida wants cooperation, understanding and dialogic relationship with her husband besides love and affection. But just contrary to her expectations, there is communication gap between the couple. She has been suffering like this in secret for three whole years. In Act IV, while Dr. Wangel is pleading Ellida not to go with the stranger, a man she knows almost nothing about, Ellida frankly says, "Perhaps I know even less about you but I went with you all the same" (307). Good understanding between a husband and a wife strengthens marital bond. It helps to make the bond strong and long lasting but here Ellida and her husband seem like poles apart.

Ellida is contemplative about her enforced betrothal with the stranger. She unreservedly tells her husband about it, thinking that her husband also can understand his marriage with her to be very similar to her relationship with the stranger. Here she describes how far freedom of choice was snatched away and how easily the stranger trapped her with his spell, "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. Then, with all his strength, he flung the chain with the two rings as far as he could out to the sea" (260). Ellida, though she agreed at the time, found the whole thing utterly ridiculous as soon as she came to her senses. In that enforced betrothal, she was under the spell of the stranger. He did not give any importance to her feelings and desires. It was not of her own free will either. So, she wrote many letters to end that enforced love vow. But he wrote quite coolly and calmly as if she had never

broken with him. But he kept on asking her to wait for him in his every letters and he would let her know when he was ready for her, and then she had to go to him at once. He would not release her, though she again wrote rather more strongly. At last, as he did not give in, then she saw it was useless and she never wrote him again.

Ellida longs to be bold and independent person. She ends the betrothal with the stranger but the stranger's extraordinary power over her mind never ends. It becomes something terrible, that always haunts her spoiling her marital world with Dr. Wangel. The power of the stranger over her mind gets, as Ellida feels, more closer and disastrous as she was carrying Dr. Wangels' child. She feels herself so closer to the stranger that even her child's eyes appear to be very similar to the stranger's eyes. Wangel tries to comfort her saying that it is only her imagination, the child's eyes were perfectly normal-just like any other child's. But Ellida disagrees with her husband, "No, they weren't. You must have seen it ! The child's eyes changed colour with the sea – when the fjord was calm and sunny, so were his eyes, but when it was stormy – oh, I saw it even if you couldn't ! [. . .]The child had the stranger's eyes" (273-74). On the one hand, she is suffering from mental torture due to the fear of the stranger, on the other hand, she has been undergoing through the same biased and discriminating behaviour from her husband and her two stepdaughters. After returning from the island seeing some patients Dr. Wangel inquires his daughters about Ellida, "Is – is anybody in ?" (241). Ellida has been treated as 'other' even in her family by her husband and his two daughters. Dr. Wangel takes Ellida for something like 'necessary other'. Similarly, the two daughters also have no good feelings for her. It can be felt during the conversation between Boletta and Hilde in Act II. As Hilde says, "You're imagining things, my girl, Oh no, we'll never get on with her; she isn't our sort, and we aren't hers. Goodness knows what made Father bring her into the

family. I shouldn't be a bit surprised if, one of these fine days, she went raving mad!" (262). In such stifling family environment, she tries to reconcile with the family and not to violate the familial unity.

Ellida is in favour of reconciliation and social harmony. She doesn't mind it though the birthday anniversary of Dr. Wangel's former wife has been kept secret from her. It can be taken as an injustice and discrimination done upon her. But she doesn't take it so seriously. She respects the rights and freedom of other individuals too. Mr. Arnholm makes a guess that she seems upset because the anniversary was kept in secret that her husband and his children were cherishing memories that she had no part in. Ellida is not so narrow minded, she frankly says, "No, no-that doesn't matter [me]. I've no right to monopolize my husband, [. . .] I have a life myself, in which they have no part" (256). Such a novel and open hearted concept cannot be expected from other general women. Ellida is a new woman, so she is always conscious of others' autonomous self as well as hers. Ellida seems sociable, frank, sensitive, easy going and wishing for unity and harmony in the family as revealed in this short family conversation in act I:

Ellida: Come along girls, let's put these [flowers] in water, with the others.

Hilde [looking furious and whispering to Boletta]: Fiddlesticks ! She's only putting it on to please father.

Wangel [pressing Ellida's hand]: Thank you – thank you for that from the bottom of my heart Ellida.

Ellida [arranging the flowers]: Oh well-why shouldn't I join in and keep – mother's birthday? (257)

Though Ellida is trying her best to acclimatize with the new but stifling environment, suddenly the stranger, who had been lost for about a decade, comes back to claim her. Now Ellida's life of economic convenience falls in danger. 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 lighthouse – keeper's daughter was married long ago, and you must know whom she married" (285). Though Ellida ended the enforced betrothal with the stranger about a decade ago, he still claims Ellida for him, "I couldn't believe it. Because when we linked our rings, Ellida, that was a marriage too" (285). Both of them 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 actual identity and position in a patriarchal society. Their bargaining for possessing 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 patriarchy.

Ellida becomes much more contemplative about her predicaments, her goals, and inferior identity created by patriarchy 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 up her mind to get emancipation from the dominating

vicious trap of patriarchy. 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 who is never ready to accept her autonomous 'self', 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 to 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 a protective husband but Ellida is against such protection which encourages her to be more submissive, coward and dependent on her husband.

Ellida is a new breed of woman who chooses to fight against any forces that comes on her path of liberation from dominating norms and currents of patriarchy. She is a bold and confident lady. She has a firm belief that nobody can help to fight against the terror of anything that lies in the deeper level of human mind. Ellida's bold, confident and self-reliant 'self' can be seen in her talk to her husband, Dr. Wangel, "Protect ? What is there to protect me from? There's no force from outside that's 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 her self-defence and self-reliance which encourages a woman's self empowerment, reducing dependency on others.

Ellida recollects the stranger's tempting phrase "of her own free will." She comes to the conclusion that the whole thing was mad impulse and utterly ridiculous. Then she turns to the marriage with Dr. Wangel. But even this marriage with Dr. Wangel has not been of her own free will. She decides to get emancipation from both enforced betrothal with her traditional lover and marriage with Dr. Wangel. Ellida is a

new woman, so she is confident and determined to settle whole problem through the path of non-violence, co-operation, understanding and compromise with the family.

Emancipation Through Compromise

Ellida thinks that the solution of any problem faced by women in general can be offered through compromise, understanding and dialogic relationship. She thinks she must release herself from Dr. Wangel's every tie. To be a responsible person to fight against the dominating lover, the stranger, she tries to convince her husband, Dr. Wangel to release her 'self', but he is not easily convinced. So, she becomes bold and reveals the truth that their marriage can not be a true marriage. According to her, she didn't come to him of her own free will, "We won't admit the truth. Because the truth- quite purely and simply – is that you came out there and – and bought me" (304).

Women were supposed to be silent, passive, docile, devoted and submissive in the late nineteenth century Norwegian society. There were hardly any women who could raise a question upon their marriage. Women were just taken for an object of marriage.

Ellida, evaluates her marriage with Dr. Wangel and frankly discloses Dr. Wangel's possible motives behind it, "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] a new mother for your children" (304). Ellida agreed to marry with Dr. Wangel only for the life of economic convenience. But now she feels repentance for her wrong step, "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). Ellida is a self seeking new brand of woman who accepts marriage but she opposes its denial of her own free will.

Marriage just for economic safety, is not a true marriage for Ellida. 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). Ellida has been successful to make her husband realize the fact that their marriage has not been a true marriage from the very beginning.

Ellida does not value the biased patriarchal formalities of legal marriage and divorce, rather she values her own free will and autonomous existence. When her husband asks her if it is a formal legal divorce that what she wants, she unreservedly responds him, "My dear, you don't understand me at all. It isn't the formalities that I mind about – that sort of thing doesn't seem to me to matter. What I want is that you and I should release each other of our own free will" (306). Ellida wants to break their agreement just now. But her husband is concerned about their lives there after. Ellida is determined and optimistic to achieve her goal. She gives priority to the present and its challenges, "We mustn't 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). Women were not expected to be such bold, frank and seeking freedom. It utterly surprises Dr. Wangel. It becomes a terrible thing for him. He has been using every possible means not to release her from his ties but nothing works. Now he himself is in favour of compromise through understanding and dialogic relationship. But Ellida's only one and never changing demand is "Complete freedom" before the stranger arrives there again in the garden. Ellida thinks that human mind can not make proper decision if it is not free, "I don't want to have the excuse that I'm another man's wife – that I have no choice. Because there'd be no decision in that" (307). She is seeking her freedom of choice. She is confident of her strength and she believes that she can face any

challenges only if she has freedom of choice, "I must have choice whichever I do, I must choose, I must be able to let him go away alone . . . or – to go with him" (307).

Wangel is still making fruitless attempt not to release her from his ties. He tells Ellida that tomorrow he will be gone and the danger also will be gone. Only then he will consent to let her go – to break their agreement. Ellida is determined to get her freedom before the stranger comes there, "Oh, Wangel . . . tomorrow will be too late" (309).

Patriarchy takes women to be inferior, weak and brainwashed creatures. They are also expected to be dependent on males. But, Ellida is a new woman who wants to break the general currents of patriarchy. She wants to make her decisions by herself. But her husband Dr. Wangel thinks that he should make Ellida's every decisions. In the presence of the stranger Ellida expresses her logical thoughts, "No one can stop me from choosing-not you nor anyone else. You can forbid me to go with him, or follow him, if that is what I choose. You can keep me here by force against my will. Yes, you can do that. But you can not stop me choosing – in my innermost heart . . . choosing him instead of you – if that has to be my choice" (313). Ellida is pointing to the fact that no external force can prevent a woman from making her decisions, no patriarchy can trap a woman with its biased norms and values.

Ellida frankly talks about her predicament with her husband. She feels herself frustrated, isolated and rootless because her family environment is not conducive to enjoy her freedom and rights. Dr. Wangel had promised her to share what he had, but after the marriage he does not give her any responsibility. Ellida feels rootless within the family and expresses her dissatisfaction unreservedly before her husband:

I have nothing whatever to hinder me, here at home there's nothing in the world to hold me. Oh, Wangel, I have no roots whatever in your

house. The children don't belong to me – not in their hearts. I mean – they never have done. When I go away – if I do go whether it's with him tonight, or out to Skjoldvik tomorrow – I'll not have a single key to hand over, no orders to give about anything at all. I'm so utterly without roots in your house. Even from the very beginning I've been like a complete outsider here. (313-14)

Ellida wants to establish her real identity through understanding and compromise with the patriarchy but not thorough complete surrender. Ellida tells her husband that since she did not come to him of her own free will, there lies an unbridgeable gulf between them, "It was really a great misfortune – for both of us – that you and I should have come together. It couldn't have led to anything but unhappiness – not after the way we come together . . . [I]t's no good our going on lying ourselves- and to each other" (304). Ellida doesn't see any bright future of their marriage, so she is determined to end the relation with Dr. Wangel.

Ellida is a brave woman, she is prepared to face the circumstances of her choice. She is in search of her true identity and autonomous 'self' with the power of decision making. She wants to correct and reform the set of stereotypes about women. Patriarchy takes women for passive, emotional, irrational, submissive, weak and inferior creatures. Ellida courageously says to her husband, "Wangel now we have to pay for it – it's taking its revenge. Because now there's nothing here to hold me, nothing to help me, nothing to give me strength. I have no ties with what should have been our most precious possession" (314).

Ellida is determined to get her freedom back. She suffers alone for a long time. An appropriate treatment that Ellida has expected is love, care and sharing of pain and pleasure together with good understanding between husband and wife. She feels her

stay in Dr. Wangel's home stifling and suffocating. That's why, she chooses shelter of an arbour in the garden. It is her different sort of rebellion for establishing conducive environment in the family, but Dr. Wangel can not understand her demands.

Sometimes he calls Mr. Arnholm thinking that his wife will feel some relief meeting her former suitor, but it has nothing to do with her growing urge for freedom. He gives her much more medicine to help her to get her health back. He even does not hesitate to propose her to go somewhere, so that she can feel happy. Her problem lies in deeper level of her mind but Dr. Wangel's treatment is limited to bodily comfort.

On the one hand, she is frequently haunted by the fear of the stranger's return from the sea who hasn't released her from the enforced betrothal, while on the other, the family, where she thinks she belongs to, behaves her like an outsider. As a result of this, she is frustrated, isolated, depressed and heart broken. She gradually develops an urge for freedom and identity within herself. She thinks she has been abused in the hands of her lover and her husband. She is determined to achieve her goal of emancipation, for this she proceeds her dialogic relationship with her husband. To be able to fight against those dominating and torturing forces of patriarchy first she has to release her 'self' from Dr. Wangel's grip. She has ultimately been successful to make him realize that Ellida needs freedom of choice:

Wangel: I do realize that, Ellida, that's why, from tomorrow, you shall have your own life.

Ellida: You call it my own life ! No my own life – my true life – went astray when I joined it to yours. (314)

Ellida's self realization helps her to get emancipation from patriarchal domination. Though she renounce the patriarchal domination, she believes in coexistence that gives continuity to human existence in the world. Ellida has a different perspective

about marriage. She thinks marriage becomes fruitful only if it comes of one's own free will. The stranger's arrival and his last and desperate attempt to possess Ellida awakens her 'self'. The stranger tempts her with the preparations he has made for her, "I'm not talking about traveling clothes or packed trunks, or anything of that sort. I have everything that she needs for the voyage on board, and I've taken a cabin for her [to Ellida]. So I ask you, are you ready to come with me – to come with me of your own free will?" Ellida immediately rejecting his offer says, "Oh, don't ask me ! Don't tempt me so!" (325).

Now Ellida has become conscious of her self and aware of the patriarchal temptation. The lover, who forcefully taking her ring and linking his own to it had declared that they must be married, is still trying to cheat her. It was not an agreement of her own free will. It was a forceful betrothal. Ellida realizes it immediately after she came back to her senses. She struggles to end the whole thing with him. Even after getting letters to break that agreement, the stranger has come to claim her again. Ellida analyzes it and comes to the decision that he cannot be an honest life partner. Now Ellida is enlightened. She seeks her emancipation from both of them; her traditional lover and her traditional husband. She wants to settle it through dialogic relationship with both of them. Ellida with rising agitation says:

Wangel, there's something that I must say – and I want him to hear. I know that you can keep me here you have the power and the right, and no doubt you will use them. But there's my mind – all my thoughts and my longings and desires – you have no hold over them. They will reach out and yearn for the unknown that was created for, and that you have kept me from ! (327)

After hearing Ellida's impressive opinions, Dr. Wangel loses his dominating patriarchal ground and undergoes a transformation. He changes himself.

Dr. Wangel feels that Ellida is slipping away from him step by step. He becomes far-sighted and tells her that longing for the boundless and the infinite – for the unattainable – will, in the end, carry her soul out into the darkness. Dr. Wangel seems so much concerned about Ellida, though she goes away from him. Ellida feels like Dr. Wangel, so, she agrees with him, "Yes, yes. I can feel it – like black soundless wings hovering over me" (327). Dr. Wangel is no more going to see her suffering all the time, so he declares from the bottom of his sorrowful heart, "It shall not come to that. There's no other possible salvation for you-at least, none that I can see [. . .]. So-so I cancel our bargain here and now. You are free to choose your own path, completely free" (327). Ellida feels it dubious, so asks Dr. Wangel to confirm it. Dr. Wangel displays his power of tolerance and sacrifice for Ellida's sake. He does so, only because he loves her so much. But Ellida has never imagined so great selfless sacrifice and profound love from him. To make her realize why she couldn't notice his love for her, Dr. Wangel adds, "Your thoughts were elsewhere [. . .]. But now-now you are completely free from me. Now your own innermost life can take its true path again, because now your choice is free- and the responsibility is your, Ellida" (327). Ellida, finally gets emancipation from Dr. Wangel's ties. At this moment she feels to be a free and a responsible person. She can lead her life according to her free will. She realizes that freedom comes along with responsibility that can change everything.

Ellida feels herself independent, powerful, self-reliant and with the power of decision making. Turning to the stranger, she looks full in his face and says resolutely, "I can never go with you now, [. . .], your will hasn't the slightest power over me anymore. 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" (328). Ellida's fear of the stranger is over. She feels herself complete now. She has got both freedom and health. Clinging to Dr. Wangel, she says, "Oh, Wangle, I can never leave you after this" (328). This acceptance of worldly reality and moreover, her coming back to Dr. Wangel clearly symbolizes that she believes in co-existence for the prosperity of the human society. She becomes a realist. Though it took him a long time, Dr. Wangel understands Ellida's untiring quest for freedom, "I'm slowly beginning to understand you. You think and reason in pictures – in visual images. This longing of yours – this yearning for the sea, and the fascination that *he*-this stranger- had for you, were really only the expression of new growing urge in you for freedom" (328-29).

Ellida appears as a rebel from the very beginning of the play and now in the end she becomes successful to change the biased norms and values of patriarchal society. She struggles to establish a conducive and favourable environment for co-existence. She has been really grateful to her husband's courage to use the right remedy for her illness. He has sacrificed so much for her. Ellida finds bad aspects of patriarchy, carries on her struggle to defy them. She happily praises her husband, Dr. Wangel for his transformation, "[Y]ou have been a good doctor to me. You found – and you had the courage to use - the right remedy [. . .] the only one that could have helped me" (329).

Ellida is an emerging new woman who struggles to achieve true freedom but also learns to be responsible. She becomes successful to fulfill her desires through cooperation and compromise and dialogue with her husband. She neither chooses the dangerous and self-destructive path of suicide nor goes into the arms of the stranger who belongs to the sea. The stranger symbolizes mystery, uncertainty, lawlessness and danger. So, Ellida gives up the idea of going with the mysterious lawless stranger

who had been lost for about a decade killing his own ship's captain. Finally, Ellida decides to stay with Dr. Wangel who represents limited values of land to which she can easily be acclimatized. Ellida being a new woman accepts the role provided by nature and universal truth of coexistence for prosperity and happiness of human society; "Oh, my dear, faithful husband. Now I will come back to you. Now I can, because I come to you freely of my own free will, of my own responsibility" (329). Wangel hopes that now they can live entirely for each other sharing pain and pleasure together. Ellida adds her own overwhelming feelings, interrupting Dr. Wangel, that she wants to live "with all our aims in common yours as well as mine-and for our two daughters" (329).

Ellida accepts motherhood and does not want to spoil her children's future on her account. Though the two girls are not her own daughters she is optimistic and confident that she can win them and behave like her own, "They are not mine yet, but I shall win them" (329). Ellida is not an escapist but a new woman who struggles to reform society breaking the dominating tradition and culture of patriarchy. She thinks human existence is not possible out of society. So, Dr. Wangel says about Ellida, "No, she's not going now. We changed our minds this evening, she and I" (330). Ellida gives up her thought of going back to her parental home to Skjoldvik, too. She does not want to create a gulf between the male and female, as it does not do anything good for the family. She is not in favour of creating a separate space to fulfill her longings and desires. Reminding Mr. Arnholm about their talk of the previous day Ellida says, "[D]o you remember what we were saying yesterday: once you have become a land animal, there's no going back to the sea again-nor to the life of the sea" (330). Ballested, an artist, finds similarity between the predicament of the dying mermaid in his picture and the human beings. But the difference is that human being can

acclimatize themselves but the mermaid-dies. Ellida makes it more clear by adding, "Yes, they can if they're free, Mr. Ballested." Dr. Wangel further adds, "And have full responsibility, Ellida dear." To which Ellida says, "Yes, that's the secret [Freedom with responsibility]" (330). Ellida's message for the world is that human life becomes successful if every member of the society can freely enjoy freedom and perform duties and responsibilities. Another part of her message is that every social problem can be solved through co-operation, understanding and compromise with each other. The tendency to find solution of familial problems outside the family and society may invite further sufferings, dangers and uncertainties putting human existence at stake.

IV. Conclusion

Each of Ibsen's female protagonists is conscious of her 'self'. And this discovery within his characters has created shocking waves on the psychological and social plane. They are ready to choose alienation and isolation. Moreover, they prefer suicide rather than to succumb themselves to patriarchal slavery, domination, subjugation, dehumanization and exploitation.

Ellida is a new brand of woman who is determined to assert her autonomous 'self-identity' within the institutions of family and marriage. She accepts marriage but always resists the dominating and discriminating patriarchal norms and values. She continues her struggle for complete freedom and autonomous self-identity. She wants to live a true life of a human being. Ellida is confident of her strength and is determined to break the dominating tradition in order to establish a new society with conducive atmosphere where both men and women can live as 'human beings'. Ellida strives to be free and self-reliant. It is her confidence that leads her to struggle for freedom and equality. As she does not see any consistent and reliable path of women's emancipation, she chooses the path of compromise, self-understanding, cooperation and dialogic relation with her husband. But the compromise is not a complete surrender of her 'self'. It is of the sort which strengthens her process of emancipation. It produces such a conducive environment where she can feel her true identity even while living within her society. Because of the compromise that she has made with Dr. Wangel, Ellida becomes a responsible person to tackle the other dominating force, the stranger. Once she assumes power and freedom Ellida immediately rejects the proposal of the stranger and decides to live with her husband.

Ellida would have gone either with the stranger or even to her birth place to Skjoldvik after Dr. Wangel released her from his every tie. Ellida is not ready to take

uncertain and dangerous step of going with her dominating and mysterious lover, the stranger. The stranger keeps on enforcing his claim upon her. He does not respect her as an independent 'self', rather treats her as a creature to be married and enjoyed.

Once her husband Dr. Wangel asks for forgiveness for his misdeeds and sets her absolutely free to choose even the stranger, Ellida undertakes the familial responsibilities to be primary concern than the gratification of her fanciful desires. Being a new woman she gives up the idea of eloping with the lover for she realizes that human life has meaning in coexistence. She happily accepts the role provided by the nature. Dr. Wangel makes her realize complete freedom and responsibility, that Ellida has been fighting for so long. Ellida through her compromise communicates the message that the solution of every social/familial problem faced by women could be found within the society through compromise, cooperation, and dialogic relationship with the traditional values and patriarchal norms.

Ellida, the new woman, is a rebel but her revolt is directed towards the assertion of individuality and personal freedom, not necessarily to the disruption of familial relations and an escape from the responsibilities.

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