

Water; Life which moves on Earth

Water as the mode of self-reflection in *The Lady from the Sea*



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Master thesis in Ibsen Studies

Center for Ibsen Studies; University of Oslo

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CONTENTS

1. Introduction	06
1.1. The symbol of water	07
1.2. Questions, hypothesis and aim	09
1.3. Literary Review	10
1.4. Approach, method and sources	18
2. Not necessary to life, but rather life itself	21
2.1. The Untamed	25
2.2. Expiring in the Tide Pools	41
2.3. Searched Sanctuary but feel <i>Sick</i>	46
2.4. Contaminated and Stagnant as the deeper layers of the fjord	50
3. On the Verge of Modernity	55
3.1. The two steps of modern development in Norway	58
3.2. Modernity and self-reflection	67
3.3. The <i>Unknown</i>	71
3.4. Emerging Madness	72
4. All that is Solid melts into Air	75
Works Cited	82

1. Introduction.

In a letter to Frederik Hegel, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson called Ibsen, “a good, well-meaning old gentleman, with whom I (Bjørnson) did not agree on many things, particularly on outlooks and methods, but with whom it is extremely interesting to exchange opinions.” Further he wrote that Ibsen has “[T]he capacity of his mind for calculation, consideration, cleverness is extraordinarily great [...] that yields a greater percentage in the long run.” (Koht 1971, 357). Ibsen’s reunification with Bjørnson, after more than twenty years, declared that they stood for Norwegian people and Ibsen proved himself not a conservative poet. His fathomless longing for the deep craving for a true origin of the man and for a vast physical space to breathe was his distinctive sympathetic. This clamor was continued with immense concentration in 1885, in accordance with reuniting with his motherland against the doubts justified by following measures, which he expressed about his planned visit to Norway. However, the controversy and fall of Ibsen in 1885 was crucial and he would never have given himself to such a situation in his life later.

Yet, not to forget the shock he received in 1888, the year he published *The Lady from the Sea*. *The Lady from the Sea* was not blessed at all. When it was published on 28th of November in 1888, in an edition of 10,000 copies; 2000 copies more than *The Wild Duck* and *Rosmersholm*, Ibsen believed at least his play would be “completely understand outside Norway”, was unfortunately been refused. It was not accepted within Norway and poured with criticisms. His opponents were as bewildered by it as they had been by *Rosmersholm*. Despite of the ‘seemingly happy ending’ conclusion, the tributes he received were bitter. “‘The play is not free from riddles and problems,’ wrote an anonymous critic in *Morgenbladet*. Further he complained, “ Ellida’s story ‘ is from first to last a story of sickness, a bizarre psychological case- history, [...] ‘There is no real drama in this.’” Knut Hamsun dismissed it as an ‘insanity’, and the historian J.E. Sars doubtless expressed, “ It seems to me a proof of how modern aesthetics have strayed that Henrik Ibsen has almost [...] overtaken Bjørnson in public estimation. He is purely negative spirit [...]. Surly this pessimistic problem writing must by now have reached its limit.” C.D. Wirsén expressed his bitterness in *Post- och Inrikes-Tidning*, “doubtful whether this curious play will survive long on stage. Come back, old Shakespeare,

with your wholesome humanity, and dispel these eccentricities.” (Meyer 1985, 624). The play failed on stage as well. With all these criticisms, Ibsen felt isolated and distant from Norway. He did not feel, however much more at home in rest of Scandinavia.

1.1. The symbol of water.

Thus, the question arises: Why did the play become unsuccessful? This obvious question seems to indicate either that Ibsen does not provide enough material for a satisfactory judgment in the play or some of his indications have been missed. To make it more clear: If *The Lady from The Sea* is a jigsaw puzzle, does Ibsen really fail to give clues to comprehend the true nature of his composition? or, Is the reader unable to perceive the real structure? These are, without a doubt significant questions, where Ibsen scholars debated for decades. As a result, a group of critics, particularly of psychological background drawn to Ibsen’s work by its psycho- analytical content. And, a second group has developed their theory, whom found the complexity in *The Lady from the Sea* resolving and challenging in the perception of symbol of water.

Therefore, it has been my passion in the past few months to find a justification to Ibsen’s interest and employment of water in *The Lady from the Sea*. Meanwhile, I happened to read some of the books of the Japanese scientist and philosopher, Masaru Emoto. Masaru Emoto undertook extensive research of water around the planet, not so much as a scientific researcher but more from the perspective of an original thinker. At length he realized that it was in the frozen crystal form that water showed us its true nature. He continues with this experimentation and has written a variety of well-known books in Japanese, as well as the seminal *The Message from Water* (2004), published bilingually. Here, introduces the revolutionary work of Emoto, who has discovered that molecules of water affected by our thoughts, words and feelings. Since humans and the earth are composed mostly of water, his message is one of individual understanding, self-reflection, and a practical plan for compromise that starts with each one of us. Emoto writes,

Understanding the fact that we are essentially water is the key to uncovering the mysteries of the universe. If you reexamine the world around you from this new perspective, you will start to see the things as you have never seen them before. The various events that unfold throughout a person’s life are events reflected in water. The individual and society make up one enormous ocean; by adding our individual drops to this ocean [...] (Emoto 2004 , 01).

Without a doubt, Ibsen too had this spiritual attachment toward water in general. He mentioned to his publisher, Hegel several times, how much he missed the sight of the sea. Thus, in the summer of 1887 Ibsen travelled to northern Denmark with Suzanna. To feel the taste of the fresh sea air in the lungs they had chosen a summer resort in Skagen near the sea. In a letter to Jonas Lie, he wrote that the place is “much favoured by Scandinavian painters. ‘The great open sea attracts us powerfully’”(Ferguson 1996, 313). Unfortunately, the Skagen plans were abandoned and instead they began the vacation in Frederikshavn. Although he enjoyed the maritime atmosphere, walking among the ships and talking with sailors, Suzanna was not content. She complained the lack of decency in the area. As a result, they moved further along the coast to Sæby. There they spent two whole months. This summer at Sæby may have taken him back to his youthful memories at Grimstad; especially to his intimate compassion with the sea. He was often seen there, staring at water. Same as the hero of his epic poem Terje Vigen does.

Da stured Terje en dag eller to,
så rysted han sorgen af;
han mindtes en kending, gammel og tro:
det store bølgende hav (Ibsen 1934, 20).

When we consider Ibsen’s biography, Ibsen himself belonged to a long line of seafarers and lived his childhood in the coastal city of Skien. “Apart from his father, his paternal ancestors had for over two hundred years been sea- captains; and towards the end of his life Henrik Ibsen is said to have looked, and walked, more like a sea- captain him- self.” (Meyer 1985, 21). His biographer Henrik Jæger noted Ibsen’s enthusiasm with the sea as well, when he spent three days with him in Fredrikshavn. He saw that Ibsen had always opened two windows in the room, though it was September and extremely windy by the sea. Ibsen “was in pantheistic, mystical mood, rhapsodising about the sea [...] ‘When one stands and stares down into the water it is as though one sees the same life as that on the surface, only in another form. There are connections and similarities everywhere. The sea will come into my next play.’” (Ferguson 1996, 327), he said to Jæger. “I remember that he (Ibsen) enlarged to me at great length on the fascination which the sea exercised over him. He was then, [...] ‘preparing some tomfoolery for next year.’ ” (Archer 1984, 250) writes Archer in “William Archer on Ibsen”. On his return

to Munich, Ibsen put his ideas into shape, and *The Lady from the Sea* was published in November, 1888.

Thus, one could not isolate the fact that *The Lady from the Sea* inextricably linked with the sea in the past, yet fjord, pond, moisture, mist, fog, dampness, and ice in the present. This existence, made me think, whether water distinguishes not only as an element of nature but also as a significant layer of meaning which upraises the understanding of Ibsen's protagonists. The effort to agree or disagree the symbolic structure, particularly on the water as an approach to understand the play has obviously not come to its conclusion. As acknowledged, this juxtaposing theme has exceptionally employed my interest and it has posed my questions related to my title, therefore came into view.

1.2. Questions, hypothesis and aim.

In my thesis, I will argue whether the diverse layers of water in the play function as “the life” of Ibsen's characters, mainly of his protagonists, and whether the element of water reflects the inner nature of the characters. Thus, this thesis will be based on answering the questions: How do the symbol of water and its associations stand as an approach to self-reflection? How does it open out the real nature of characters? And, how does water thus, become reliable as an overall substance to understand the Norwegian society in the late 19th century, where Ibsen's characters live in?

Eventually, I realized that my hypothesis is that the fact, the role of water is the key to understand *The Lady from the Sea*. If we reexamine the text in this new perspective and try to look into the inner nature of characters, as reflect in the element of water, I believe that we will start to see the things as we have never seen them before. Hence, we will be able to understand the play and the real nature of Ibsen's characters, particularly the hidden message in the structure more precisely. Thus, I chose the title “Water; Life which moves on Earth” borrowed from Ibsen's own thought¹ as the starting point of my hypothesis.

¹ Ferguson, Robert. *Henrik Ibsen. A New Biography*. Richard Cohen Books. London. 1996. Page 327.

The aim of this project will not be to re-examine the ideas that already been claimed, but to re-approach the initiative, and give new reasons for my readings of element of water. I will restrict my analysis to *The Lady from the Sea* believing that this play plagued with water than any of Ibsen's other plays. In my perspective, the abundance of study of water among Ibsen scholars is noteworthy although for scarcely a page of the text found without at least one such analogy of water. Thus, I believed that the diverse layers of water in the play positively merit exploration. My interest in this study falls mostly on to understand the references of water and its associations, through dialogues, through monologues and through visual stage instructions in relation to the characters.

Therefore, what follows in this thesis, I will develop a fresh approach from the theories, which have been already established, yet juxtaposing theoretical foundations based on symbolism of water in *The Lady from the Sea*. Thereafter, I will argumentatively draw the facts that will be relevant to my theme, which will establish my own hypothesis throughout my analysis. As an outcome of my muse, I believe this significant endeavor will add a new dimension to Ibsen scholarly milieu in an aesthetic perspective. As the starting point, from what follows, I will look briefly at the significant literature based on the empowering water in *The Lady from the Sea*.

1.3. Literary review.

John Northam's "Ibsen's Dramatic Method" (1971) discusses that "Ibsen presents his characters not only through dialogue but also through the suggestiveness of visual details contained in his visually important stage- directions" (Northam 1971, 11). He claims that, Ibsen's own life memory has been the subject for many anecdotes. For Northam, dialogue only presents "the conflicting interpretations between characters" (Northam 1971, 12). Yet, "Visual suggestion, however, can be very explicit; every suggestive detail is like a word in poetry whose aura of meaning, [...] what may at times appear a highly individual interpretation of character." (Northam 1971, 13). Hence, Northam writes that the realism of *The Lady from the Sea* is symbolic.

In chapter seven, "The Lady from the Sea", Northam gives a descriptive analysis of the play in a chronological order. Here, he pays more attention to the symbol of sea and analyses the symbol of nature in general. During his account of the water, he pays his awareness to major as

well as minor waters within the relevant interpretations between the element and the characters. Yet, he insists that, in *Lady from the Sea*, “the visual counterpart to [...] verbal symbolism” becomes momentary. However, Ibsen’s “insistent appeal through the single medium of words to our imaginations becomes wearisome. [...] The earlier balance between reality and symbol has toppled over into allegory” (Northam 1971, 145).

On the other hand, Alan Swanson in his article “Ibsen Inside and Out: The Natural World in the Twelve Major Prose Plays” gives a different understanding of his readings of Ibsen’s natural world. Swanson pays more attention on Ibsen’s stage directions both inside and outside (Nature and Landscape). Thus, he interprets an elemental significance of stage instructions of major prose plays. Swanson confirms the surprising amount of nature to an elemental landscape, which can be categorized as earth, water, fire and air. Further, he assumes, “Nonetheless, importantly, Ibsen does not often assign the elements themselves to his characters: Ellida Wangel, the ‘lady from the sea’, is the principal, and obvious, exception” (Swanson 2000, 199). Yet, he shows the danger of adopting meanings to Ibsen metaphors, which Ibsen never may have thought of. Hence, Swanson says set directions were meant not only for the spectator but also for the reader as well: “Ibsen uses these open doors and their views” from we can see the outer landscape and scenery “to tease our imaginations “(Swanson 2000, 201). Therefore, Swanson understands that “the opening up of the visual space of the set is constantly played off against the closed, even closeted, world immediately in front of us. Yet, moving from the one into the other is filled with uncertainty, even danger.” (Swanson 200, 203).

Vigdis Ystad in “Ibsen, Drachmann and *The Lady from the Sea*” (1998), gives a biographical and an aesthetical account of Holger Drachmann’s relation over this play. Drachmann, a Danish poet and a philosopher who has been characterized as “the poet of the sea” (Ystad 1998, 188) was well known to Ibsen. Ystad writes that “Valdemar Vedel elaborates on this characterization: To him the sea is the eternal fount of nature, the untamed natural force-the very archetype of life [...] in formless abundance and power, inexhaustible, untamable, endless, [...] wild nature, which never learns civilization, never yields to bourgeois laws” (Ystad 1998, 188). Thus, Ystad hints us that *The Lady from the Sea* might be at the surface level a hidden comment on Drachmann after his depart from Ibsen’s relationship. Ystad states, Drachmann “the marine painter and ‘jack of all trades’ is one thing – another is the role played by the sea in Ibsen’s drama. And the way sea is presented may also be a response to impression obtained from Drachmann’s works-and from the great European tradition to which his verses about the

sea belong” (Ystad 1998, 189). She further turns to the mythological female water sprite with reference to Friedrich de la Motte-Fouque’s *Undine* (1811). Ystad reveals that as Ibsen was well aware of these European mythical and literary tradition, Drachmann too was well known of this *Undine* and used it in his several works. Ystad proceeds explaining that although Ibsen may not have read Drachmann’s *Vandenes Datter* (Daughter of the Waters) (1881), he may have known to Drachmann’s other works, *Sange ved Havet* (Songs by the Sea), *Ungdom i Digt og Sang* (Youth in verse and Song) and *Ranker og Roser* (Weeds and Roses), all from the period 1877-79. (Ystad 1998, 190).

Ystad identifies the similarity between Drachmann’s works and Ibsen’s *Lady from the Sea* in the next part of her argument by giving evidence from the poet’s works. It is clear from Drachmann’s *Havet Sang* and *Jeg drømte* “imagery on the clear contrast between the sea (untamed nature) and the restricted everyday existence of the human being (civilization)” (Ystad 1998, 191).” As she further explains, “The split between man (the human being) and nature, or woman, Sakuntala, is presented through the image of the ring, which is lost forever because ‘Dusjhantas’ himself has thrown it into the stream” (Ystad 1998, 193). This image is drawn into facade through *Sakuntala*, the most famous poem of Drachmann’s collection.

To summarize her article Ystad writes: “Both in the Danish poet’s personality and his works, Ibsen met the conflict between a formless natural state and a molded – or formed – human existence, an insoluble conflict with clearly tragic undertones. Drachmann seems to abandon himself to the ‘floating’ – the formless – both in his life and in his poetry”. Ibsen lets one of his plays end with the protagonist happily adjusted to the society, “as a protest against, the ‘floating’, the ‘fluctuating’ and the ‘limitless’ in Holger Drachmann’s poetry” (Ystad 1998, 194-195).

On the contrary, Christophe Den Tandt observes this challenge in a diverse viewpoint. In his discussion of “Oceanic Discourse, Empowerment and social Accommodation in Kate Chopin’s *The Awakening* and Henrik Ibsen’s *The Lady from the Sea*” (1997) he says both the plays exemplify the “social maladjustment” of women what he understands as the “oceanic discourse”. “Ibsen turn(s) the sea into a polysemic metaphor embodying realms of experience tantalizingly broader than the confines of middle- class conformity” writes Tandt (Tandt 1997, 71). He adds that the protagonists’ dissatisfied empowerment and utopian longing extends between “the open ended oceanic horizon” and “domestic realism”. In accordance with Freud’s

Interpretation of Dreams, Tandt writes, “Ellida’s habit of ‘bathing in the sea’ is pictured as a symptom of maladjustment. The heroine herself, alluding to this immersion ritual, complains that the water is ‘sick here in the fjord’” (Tandt 1997, 73). Likewise, her passion to the stranger is something distant filled with horror, “something that terrifies and attracts”. Therefore, in the latter part of his writing Tandt admits that “the playwright discerns negative and positive dimensions in life on land in exactly the same way as he depicts the oceanic realm in the contrasted terms of terror and fascination” (Tandt 1997, 78).

M.S. Barranger, in “*The Lady from the Sea: Ibsen in Transition*” (1978) deals with the symbol of the sea in the space, in the first part of his article. Due to new directions of Ibsen, the play can be studied as a “transitional work” writes Barranger. First, he states that Ibsen uses an “anecdotal device” in this play. Secondly, the structural pattern comes with extensive action within a limited context, yet to lessen the isolation of characters, Ibsen uses “symbolic environs as the carp pond, the fjord, the open sea” (Barranger 1978, 394). Thirdly, there are more ambiguous nature of human relationships, psychological states and memory patterns. Barranger claims that Ellida is neither a physical nor an emotional wife to both Wangle and the Stranger. Thus, the action of the play deals with her “emotional dilemma, her obsession with freedom, and with her choice” (Barranger 1978, 395):

The sea (the familiar archetypal symbol for eternity, romantic longing, rejuvenation, and death) serves as the controlling metaphor for the scope, mystery, and complexity of Ellida’s dilemma. In archetypal terms, the sea washes up the outcast; it mirrors destructive emotion; it symbolizes death by drowning as well as the amniotic fluids of birth; and it eternalizes those unconscious rhythms of birth-death – rebirth which are being worked out in the Wangles’ lives as the marriage and the individuals undergo a test and a sea change (Barranger 1978, 395).

Barranger says that the play takes place in three levels spatially. First, the geographical area; the land, the sea, the fjord, the carp pond. Secondly, the verandah and the arbor. Thirdly, the village and the verandah. “To force the crises of the play, Ibsen combines the verbal metaphor with the visible meta- image; that is in addition to references to the sea’s creatures, the stranger, who haunts Ellida’s memories, materializes in the flesh.” (Barranger 1978, 397). As to Barranger’s illustration, he points out how Ellida’s choice becomes a pendulum between her soul and the conventional world.

David Rosengarten approaches in a new perception toward Ibsen's use of water symbolism in "*The Lady from the Sea: Ibsen's Submerged Allegory*" (Rosengarten 1977, 463). He believes that "the allegory in *The Lady from the Sea* is informed by the teachings of Charles Darwin and Herbert Spencer." (Rosengarten 1977, 464). He argues that the imagery of the sea represents the "notion that life originated in the sea". Here, Rosengarten applies this theory to Ellida and the stranger whom attached and obsessed by the sea as an allegory of the humankind, "in its earliest stage of development", yet Dr. Wangel as the "highest stage of man's evolution [...] a decidedly modern man, a man of science." (Rosengarten 1977, 464). In advance Rosengarten discusses in detail his argument and comes to his destination in conclusion with the statement, "Ibsen has repeated the symbolic circumstance. Now, of course, with the Stranger and the steamer headed out to the open sea (headed backwards in an evolutionary sense), [...] man's last chance for real happiness, symbolized by the last steamer of the season" and Rosengarten's idea of "that powerful forces closer to the play's surface contend mightily with the allegorical conclusions." (Rosengarten 1977, 476).

In his analysis of the *Lady from the Sea*, Lionel Goitein convinces a fresh approach to Ibsen's water symbolism, in the chapters, "The Problem of Symbolism and Its Part in the Play" (Goitein 1927, 404) and "The Symbol of the Sea and Its Analytical Horizon" (Goitein 1927, 406). He reads "the Lady" as an indispensably a "sea play and it is from the ocean depths its polychrome symbols are gathered" (Goitein 1927, 404). Nevertheless, he claims that, his endeavor is to provide a comprehensive answer to Ellida's association of the symbol of the sea.

The Sea – the all-powerful. Sea is at once the darkness, night, death, and the beyond; it is the great luring unknown, the terror and temptation, the wished –for and the dreaded, the repulsive and attractive, the free untrammelled life, ever ebbing, ever flowing, all that creates and destroys, pausing for no man, rebuked by no man, a law unto itself; the dark depths of phantasy, the unfathomed womb of imagination; the home, the heart, the bed-rock of the soul (herself the mermaid Lady from the Sea) – in fine, the dream-ocean of the Unconscious life of Man (Goitein 1927, 405).

Goitein's intent hence is to give an explanation to the psychological and literal interpretation of the symbolism of the sea. Which he believes, is the key to unfold the story of Ellida, the key; the restless sea, "the image of the Mother of mankind" (Goitein 1927, 405). "Furtive at first, but which gradually dives more deep; reaching its profoundest depths in the unexpressed and all-inclusive symbol of the Ocean as the dark Unconscious mind" (Goitein 1927, 405). Here,

Goitein argues that only this way that we can understand Ellida's "other self" and all her sea folk. Consequently, Goitein draws two points out of the sea symbol. First, he sees the sea as a "wishful", "wistful phantasy" and a "dream world" where one's dreams ultimately come true. Secondly, he sees Ellida, stranger and the child as "fancy figures" in this dream world with their "peculiar relation to the (unconscious) sea" (Goitein 1927, 406). Hence, Goitein argues that nonetheless these characters are "manifestation" of Ibsen's mind.

In his next phase, "The Symbol of the Sea and Its Analytical Horizon", Goitein claims that Ibsen without fully understanding the psychological value "stresses the fact that the open Sea signifies the free – life with its uninhibited or repressed wild desires" (Goitein 1927, 406). According to Goitein, these suppressed desires are unachievable for most men and women due to social, physical and psychological reasons. Therefore, these repressed motives appear as "hallucinations". So, "The – dream sea thus becomes not an ocean of potentialities and hopes, but the figure of submission, reflection, reversion and incubation, of failure to find the real in life and a voluntary shutting oneself up in a phantasy world," (Goitein 1927, 407).

Jørgen Haugan, in his article, "The rise and fall of the European male in Ibsen's authorship" (1985) reconsiders, though from a different perspective the symbolic dramas as a whole. He writes that the idealistic choice of Ibsen's dramas between 1850 and 1873 is "The man can live in the 'lowland' like an ordinary man, or he can feel the need for a higher, more spiritual life. In Ibsen's world you cannot have both" (Haugan 1985, 33). Haugan sees this ideological structure as a "metaphysical, a Christian dualism" (Haugan 1985, 34). Yet he states Ibsen breaks this idealistic structure with the influence of George Brandes and begins to focus on earth departing from heaven, in his realistic plays. Hence, Ibsen becomes a self-reflector and this self reflection becomes the basis for his symbolic dramas. In his symbolic dramas, he creates a symbolic language to describe his experience and develops his ideological structure (Haugan 1985, 35). Further Haugan moves to give a general view on Ibsen's ideological structure in his symbolic dramas. He depicts how the element of universe has been used in *Little Eyolf*. When Rita says: "My God, we are, after all earthly beings", Allmers replies, "We are related to the Sea and the Heaven, as well, Rita". Thus, Haugan interprets "The three elements, which constitute Ibsen's symbolic world: earth, water and air are all mentioned here. In this manner Ibsen creates a new language and a new world: an elemental universe" (Haugan 1985, 35). Herewith, Haugan further identifies a new structure of meaning in cooperation with these three elements: water, earth, air. He states that these three elements are present in all Ibsen's late dramas. "Water is

the dominating element in Rosmersholm, The Lady from the Sea and Little Eyolf [...] Water, the soft, penetrating element, is related to love [...] Water is the stage of youth” (Haugan 1985, 36).

Accordingly, he describes how the conflict of the dramas, which water dominates, rooted in the age of puberty, the initial love between man and woman. He gives evidence from the pre sexual stage of Ellida’s individualization when she falls in love with the sailor. As to Haugan the water element is used by Ibsen to depict the very early stages in the lives of a man and a woman. “The initial love between man and woman is the most sacred moment in their lives [...] Love is the sole cosmic value in Ibsen’s elemental universe. Love is the subject for Ibsen’s self reflection” (Haugan 1985, 38). He argues that men sublimates love of women in these symbolic dramas as a result of their higher spirituality and absence of low erotic nature, yet the hidden sexuality connected with these male protagonists is evident. “Love does not have an identical function in the individualization process of man and woman. In the case of the women love is the central event in the development towards becoming an individual self. They never succeed in Ibsen’s dramas and end up in demonic positions [...] Man’s individualization on the other hand subordinate love, by which he can realize himself as a social being” (Haugan 1985, 39).

Angela B. Edwards in her study of “Water in the landscape symbolism of Ibsen’s late outdoor plays” (1982) investigates the symbol of “water” in *The Lady from the Sea*. Edwards discusses the imagery of water in connection to the imagery of nature as a whole. She writes, “the plays of Ibsen offered a variation in setting ranging from ancient Rome or Sahara Dessert to the open sea or a stormy fjord. [...] The declining romantic world view, with its frequent evocation of mountain and sea motifs as sublime, is seen to be still capable of vital reinterpretation in Ibsen’s time” (Edwards 1982, 23-25). In her analysis Edwards acknowledges that, “Ibsen departs from the realistic approach of the 1880s to experiment with a more symbolic, mythic approach involving greater economy of means whilst the dialogue becomes more evocative and mysterious. At the same time the range of stage scenery widens enormously, a fact which would suggest that landscape plays a role in the more symbolic dramatic technique” (Edwards 1982, 25).

In her next chapter, “Visual Landscape and the Critics”, (Edwards 1982, 26), she examines previous research on symbolism of water within three categories. First, she identifies “the role

of landscape as visual imagery, and by comparing the general symbolism of water as formulated by several dictionaries of symbols” (Edwards 1982, 27). She recognizes this as, “the correspondence between landscape features [...] the central problems of main characters” (Edwards 1982, 27). Subsequently, the scholar examines the previous research on religious and mythological resemblances between the landscape sceneries and the characters. Finally, she develops a psycho-analytical research interpretation of the water imagery.

In the third phase of Edward’s article, “Integrated Nature Symbolism”, (Edwards 1982, 32), she gives a detailed account on different layers of water imagery. “Water may occur as open sea, outer and inner fjord, lake, pond, stream, waterfall, fountain, rain, mists or snowy glacier. Within this individual types of water, though similar, are never identical.” (Edwards 1982, 33). By doing so, she moves from a unique explanation for water imagery to an integrated justification for the nature and landscape symbolism as a whole. She adds “Water is subordinated to a larger framework, to the central and underlying themes of the play as a whole and to its place in a wider landscape symbolism where it often works together with mountain. A striking feature in the nature symbolism of *Fruen fra havet* [...] presents itself here“ (Edwards 1982, 34). Edwards explains, “the mountains or hills form a distance backcloth [...] but it is the presence of water which is the most consistence recurrent feature; water seen from above, from the same level, through trees or through glass doors.” (Edwards 1982, 35). At this stage, Edwards focuses her attention on the continent in order to evaluate her theory, gives an act by act description of the correspondence between the scenery of mountain and water. She analyses thematically, yet not chronologically *Lady from the Sea*, *Little Eyolf* and *When we dead awaken* for same. According to Edwards, the elevations give a sense of freedom while “an antithesis to the scenes of elevation are the scenes at fjord level, with a corresponding absence of clarity and sense of potential freedom.” (Edwards 1982, 37).

Further, she convinces her theory within a descriptive analysis on elevations and anti-elevations; mountains and different layers of water, in these three plays. Afterwards she adds some notes from Ibsen’s biography, of his mystic unity with the sea. Subsequently, as an overall perspective she categorizes the water symbols as representatives “of either living water, of dead water or of an ambivalent deep; expansive water” (Edwards 1982, 39). Under the heading of “Living water” she explains the streams, the fountain and all types of flowing water in *Little Eyolf* and *When we dead awaken*. While she attributes “fertility, life and rejuvenation” qualities to the category of “Living water”, “Dead water” represents the stagnant pond and the

half-hidden fjord in the *Lady from the Sea*. However, she says “ the snow and glacier of the final act of *When We Dead Awaken* clearly mean death, nevertheless the pure whiteness of the glacier high on the mountains is not without aesthetic appeal” (Edwards 1982, 40). Finally, under the category of “expansive and deep water” she integrates “the associations with the depths of the psyche and profound mysticism” (Edwards 1982, 40). The overall issue that she seeks to explain here is “features of water symbolism belonging to “ the contrasts of life and death, fertility and sterility, youth and old age, arising from the dialogue are thus imprinted on the mind visually “(Edwards 1982, 41).

In conclusion, Edwards adopts the theory of James Hurt, “The world of an Ibsen play is never a neutral, photographically reproduced world, but is rather an affective, emotional projection of the protagonist’s inner world (similar to the lines being explored by Edward Munch at the same time)” (Edwards 1982, 44). Subsequently, Edwards gives her final verdict: “It is furthermore not surprising that water symbolism, and particularly that of the sea, has a dominant role in the landscape symbolism when one is aware of Ibsen’s own relationship to the sea, and she uses Ibsen’s own words to emphasize her understanding. Ibsen once said to his biographer Henrik Jæger, Water, is “as though one sees that life which moves on earth, but in another form. Everything is connected; there are resemblances everywhere.” (Edwards 1982, 44).

1.4. Approach, method and sources.

There is an inseparable promise in Ibsen’s own life to endorse an approach aimed at the function of water in *The Lady from the Sea*. Thus, as mentioned above, the power of his visual view and dialogues have been the focus to numerous narratives. In chapter two; *Not necessary to life , but rather life itself*, a detailed close reading of the text will be performed to demonstrate how the element of *Water* helps the reader to appreciate the characters and the play in unique. A reader may omit the important stage directions and may lure into an inventive attempt to image the prospect underlined. Thus, he may fall into a trap of not receiving what structured in the body of the play. Hence, I will make the fact obvious that visual proposition is an important accessory to the dialogue as a means of displaying multifaceted personality traits. As a result, this understanding will unveil most of the obscured demeanor of the characters. In addition, the approach to the core elements of the dialogues will construe the silent enlightenments of pragmatism, sensations and motives. Full fathom of emotive reactions to

narratives and dialogues, thus will direct toward the genuine interpretations of the characters. Ibsen often created his beings loaded with complex persona. Therefore, it was not an easy task to interpret them relying on out spoken dialogues. Hence, it is crucial to gaze into the unspoken words and physical reactions as well. Aligned with, the other feature of Ibsen's method to appraise in this study is the obvious symbolism. The spectacular affection to the element of Water is exclusively established in visual, mental and verbal references, whose dissolution will help the major breakthrough, once the analogue is inaugurated, though, and then the approach will originate with great effort.

However, I must underline the fact that, my method is not only to let the play speak, but to contextualize the play and "read" it into a larger historical context to explain the function of the element of water as a mode of self-reflection in a period of modern transformation. This omnipresent thought will be broadly discussed within the third chapter of my thesis, *On the Verge of Modernity*. The allegorical suggestions of water nevertheless may never be unambiguous. Each evocative facet to the element is similar to a word in poetry whose sensation of understanding though moderately interpreted in the context residues semblance. Thus, the aura of ambiguity must be dissolved to the reader. In order to offer weight to what seems to be extreme individual interpretation of the characters, I will occasionally refer to Ibsen's own biographical information, to refer to the fragments which I assume to be a valid asset to my understanding. In accordance, *The Lady from the Sea* will be examined in a broad social context as an individual entity.

Finally, by combining both the close readings and the historical contexts regarding both the past and the present, a synthesis of *The Lady from the Sea* is presented in the conclusion; *All that is Solid melts into Air*, which puts emphasis on water as a perspective that opens up new fields of inquiry and dissolves the complexity in the play. Such an emphasis exemplifies the meaning of water has influenced Ibsen and how its concepts and particular structure of nature has had impact to reflect the late 19th century Norwegian society. Water as an element in nature has rarely been in complied and examined as an agent to mirror the individual and the society, and the transformations of body of waters are entry points into the continuous structure and mechanism parallel to the transformation into the modern society, which is depicted in the play.

After Ibsen left the theater for good in 1864, his main concern was his readers and readership. However, of course the theaters staged his plays and most of the theater critics framed the play

as a poor treatise of bizarre overwhelmed with clichéd images of water. But the theaters were not his aim or target when he wrote. Thus, my main focus will be the reader and I believe the text of *The Lady from the Sea* demands individual attention. In accordance I will employ the English translation of Rolf Fjelde's "Ibsen, The complete major prose plays" (1978) as my primary source. To present my understanding of water as the mode of self reflection, I will add references with mythological, sociological and geographical value. Further, and importantly I will include a series of secondary sources to explain the element of water within the historical development of Norway and the modern condition to contextualize Ibsen's text.

The allusion and the obvious authenticity in the play are figurative, though the expression has frequently affirmed deceptive; mainly since it convinces the palpable symbols. Therefore, what follows in this thesis I will show how this credible symbolism of *Water* and its associations in fact help to reflect the characters, whose genuine creation place *The Lady from the Sea* among Ibsen's greatest works.

2. Not necessary to life, but rather life itself.

Ibsen's symbolism of *Water* is a fluctuating device omnipresent in *The Lady from the Sea* from his own times to the modern era. No comprehensive aesthetical treatment of it exists or would be possible in a single thesis. Hoping instead to get at the core of the approach, I have outlined a non- theoretical, mainly an outcome of my own muse, analysis of the 'Function of *Water*' in the *Lady from the Sea*. It may seem appealing that a phenomenon, which is a prime sensory knowledge for most of us, and has engrossed many critics from countless points of view, is far from being understood as a whole. 'Water', runs a useful standard definition,

The liquid which forms the seas, lakes, rivers, and rain and is the basis of the fluids of living organisms. [...] (A)n area of sea regarded as under the jurisdiction of a particular country. [...] (T)he water of a mineral spring as used medicinally. [...] (A)mniotic fluid, especially as discharged shortly before birth. [...] (O)ne of the four elements (air, earth, fire, and water) in ancient and medieval philosophy and in astrology. [...] (T)he quality of transparency and brilliance shown by a diamond or other gem.²

This introduces both the biased element in visual experience, and the metaphoric, experimental saturation. One has only to speak of an image to think that he/she is being imaginative. But, because he/she chooses it in the first place, the image reveals more about him/her than he/she does about it. The fundamental ideas concerning the world are often indications of the maturity of human minds. Sometimes humanity stands before a chosen image; build hypothesis and reveries. In this approach, I figure convictions, which have all the facade of true knowledge of *The Lady from the Sea*.

The ancient Greeks dealt with the nature of the first matter from a philosophical standpoint and as a result, the notion of the doctrine of the four elements emerged. Thus, the primary matter, *Water* became one of the four classical elements in ancient Greek philosophy and science. It was commonly associated with the qualities of emotion and intuition and one of the many *archai* proposed by the pre-Socrates, most of whom tried to reduce all things to a single

² Oxford online Dctionary. http://www.askoxford.com/concise_oed/water?view=uk. Revised date: 03.04.2010

substance. Thales of Miletos (640- 548 BC) was considered as the founder of Greek philosophy as he discarded mythical explanation of things and asserted the physical element “water” was the first principle of all things. He took water to be the fundamental element and everything else was derived from it. Thales stated that origin of all matters is water:

As to the quantity and form of this first principle, there is a difference of opinion; but Thales, the founder of this sort of philosophy, says that it is water (accordingly he declares that the earth rests on water [...], because he saw that the nourishment of all beings is moist, and that warmth itself is generated from moisture and persists in it) for that from which all things spring is the first principle of them [...] (Fairbanks, 2009: 2-3)

Water in general is linked with the feminine and in psychoanalysis represents the feminine aspect of one's personality. Water often thus, symbolizes the unconscious or the soul. The image of water is the best visionary and symbolic reflection or the description of the humanist and evocative. Such, illustrated in *The Lady from the Sea*, each characteristics and general qualities that Ibsen's beings bring to life. Their ascendant psychology is the more obvious endowment, which is depicted by the eternally changing element of water. Rather, it can be interpreted as the direction the characters should be moving in, to make the contribution to humanity they were born to make, and thus achieve a degree of personal fulfilment.

The symbol of water in the play, thus witnesses the difficult task of straddling the divide between the human and the wild – and between the human and the divine. More than any other symbol, perhaps, the symbol of the sea experiences normal human life as limited, for it embraces so much that can make life more complete. Yet, even it reflects human beings in a world full of limitations inland. Coming to terms with the necessity to live in a world separate from the wild can be an immense problem. It may be a struggle to live as if exclusion from wild had never happened, and live life in a constant daydream, very abortive in the world as it is. Other types, fjord, pond, water in containers, however, may explain how to live life in the human arena in such a way as to infuse it with earthly meaning. Water is often presented as associations of art, sculptor, dance and music, as these can give intelligence that there is fulfilment beyond life lived at the simply human level, and can open up mortal awareness to a richer reality than that lived in day-to-day living.

Therefore, Water has become much more than an ornament or natural part of expression in the play. Often such subtle and common aspects of the language in the play correspond more

direct analogies involving water. The omnipresence of water is the dominant theme in the play. On one hand, the whole play can be seen as the conflict between the two elements, water and earth, with water dominating. Since, Ibsen describes integrated spiritual values with the inner self of the characters in many ways; one cannot deny the overwhelming presence of the water imagery in general. Water, therefore both the most obvious and the most versatile of all the elements. Descriptive dialogues of almost continual sea dominant past reveal its presence, and, in a most obvious way, so do the frequent dissatisfaction towards the fjord and the stagnant pond in the hearts of Ibsen's characters. Here, Ibsen draws upon the universal nature of water to transcribe the entire spectrum of spirituality, from the depths of sin, despair, purity and innocence.

The Lady from the Sea, is perhaps the most poetic and symbolic among Ibsen's art works. It follows *Rosmersholm* and precedes *Hedda Gabler*, and shares the similar themes of labor in human psyche. The play sets in an isolated town in north Norway amid the wilds of the stagnant pond, the fjord and the distant sea. When the play starts, the memory of the strange seafarer haunts and invades Ellida, a country doctor's second wife, an isolated member of a household with two-step daughters. An old admirer, Arnholm, who was a tutor to stepdaughter Bolette, enters the scene and the flashbacks of Ellida's past come into light. Ailing Lyngstrand, a would-be sculptor, offers the view that a woman can achieve satisfaction by deriving pleasure in the honor and respect of her man's work. And, while a light humor redolent, the unconscious draws persistently beneath like undertow. Seemingly possessed by the sea with all its accompanying symbolism, and obsessed with the idea of freedom, Ellida ultimately puts her husband and his solid land-locked values to jeopardy against her longings and her dreams of being free. This symbolic play, which still has its delights, is presented within the carp pond as the immediate access to the medium of water. The background is set as the mountains descending to the fjord nearby yet could be seen through trees, half shielded. The sea although not visible, fluctuates as the seaward pull of water throughout the play. In this attractive and figurative play assimilates the human psyche to none other than to the ambivalent water.

It is amazing how Ibsen has created this watery play with a numerous references to the images, which links to the water. Each character is bound to water in a way, and evinced through visual stage directions, dialogues and physical movements. Within the five acts, there are about 250 references (when count the repeated references as well), either direct or

indirect, to the element of water. In Act 1, there are 33 references. They are fjord, water, sea, tide pools, ocean bathing, steam, swimming, bath house, boat, cool look, soda, lemonade, cognac, drink, lady from the sea, wet hair, dripping wet, cool, ship, lighthouse, English channel, ship wreck, sailor's wife, voyage, sail, boatswain, captain, gale, crew, deck, drowned, humid and mermaid. Out of these, 5 references are visual stage directions. Ellida is linked with 15 references, Wangel with 8, Bolette with 2 (only visual), Hilda with 3, Arnholm with 0, Lyngstrand with 23, and Ballested with 9 and the Stranger with 7. The play is constantly discussed within the prime sea and Ellida's obsession to it, however when read it close, it is noteworthy that in Act 1, Lyngstrand is more affixed with the sea than the others are. Even in his past memories, his experience with the sea is unique. On the other hand, Ellida has to satisfy with the fjord and fjord water in reality. Though she is symbolically linked with references of the sea, such as mermaid and the lady from the sea she is far beyond from the experience of the sea. On the other hand, it is genuinely interesting that Bolette is the only person who is linked with *some* type of pure water, as she carries a vase of flowers. It is however, we have to assume the vase is filled with pure water, as normally does. Otherwise, there is not a single reference to the 'pure water' in the play. Yet, can be identified salty water, brackish water and stagnant water. Wangel embodies his genuine character as he is involved with none other than the alcohol and drinks. As a practical person, his use of fjord is for mere practical purpose, to visit his patients. Ballested, the aesthetical and practical human who does not let him driven away with the psychological current may more or less gives his perspectives in Ibsenian view. His mentions of water and its associates bequeath anomalous understandings of Ellida's situation in an aesthetical artwork. However, he is not attached to water. The Stranger's appearance in the narrative of Lyngstrand and his fluid powerful nature is observed in the first act.

In Act 2, there are 24 references to water. They are fjord, sea, ocean, lady from the sea, horizon, lighthouse, ship, captain, ship's cabin, ship's mate, drown, voyage, storms and calms, whales, dolphins, gulls, eagles, seals, sea birds, cool and calm, gales, pearl, eye of a dead fish and on board. 3 references are linked with visual stage directions. Ellida is related to 21, Wangel to 2, Bolette, Hilda, Arnholm and Ballested to 0, Lyngstrand to 4, the Stranger to 15 and the dead baby to 3. In this Act, Ellida and the Stranger have a dominating number of references to water than in Act 1. In this act, the sea comes forth, yet as a distant memory

which “attracts and terrifies” Ellida at the same time. Her connection with the sea and the Stranger, the conquering power of the sea is a specific element in this second act.

In Act 3, there are 23 references. They are fjord, damp, marshy, stagnant pond, fishing rods, horizon, fish, carp, bathhouse, water, the shore, swim, sail, steam, sea, on board, sea voyage, clouds, ship, undertow, lighthouse, captain, drowned. 15 references are described visually. This is the chapter, which contains of highest number of visual interpretations of the element of water. Ellida is related to 14 references, Wangel to 1, Bolette to 11, Hilda to 3, Arnholm to 8, Lyngstrand to 0, Ballested to 0 and the Stranger to 13. The reality and the truth of the human melancholia in the present time are discussed here with reference to the carp pond. Except for Ballested and Stranger, others are much attached to their stagnant waters.

In Act 4, there are 13 references to the symbol of water and its related images. They are cool, swim, the sea people, the sea, surge of the waves, the ebb and flow, voyage, water, the pond, steam, dissolve, fjord, drink, lady from the sea. There are no visual references to water in this act. Ellida is linked with 11, Wangel with 6, Bolette with 1, Hilda with 0, Arnholm with 1, Lyngstrand with 0, Ballested with 0 and the Stranger with 1.

In Act 5, the last act, 21 references to the element of water and its associations can be seen. They are carp pond, boat, ashore, bathhouse, steamer, ship, sailing, voyage, mermaid, sea, ice, ebbs and flow, fjord, deep plunged, pond, gliding, ship’s bell, tears, board ship, dissolved, and ship wreck. There are 13 visual symbols. Ellida is referred to 9, Wangel with 14, Bolette with 1, Hilda with 2, Arnholm with 0, Lyngstrand with 4, Ballested with 7, and the Stranger with 2. The climax thus adhered here with a tone of irony. The sea paths will be frozen with ice. Will it be forever?

2.1 The Untamed.

Ibsen’s birthplace, Skien was not situated on the sea, yet it was along a long and narrow fjord. At Grimstad and Bergen he lived near the coast for years. After he left Bergen, he seldom had a chance to linger the fresh breeze of the salty sea. The upper part of Christiania is made out of a mere “salty lake” and in Germany he never encountered the sea. He had to satisfy with his short visits to Ischia, Sorrento and Amalfi when he was in Italy. In 1880, he wrote to Hegel from Munich, “Of all that I miss down here, I miss the sea most. That is deprivation to

which I can least reconcile myself.” (Archer 1984, 249). In 1885, he wrote to Hegel again and told that he wishes to buy a small country house by the sea in Christiania. “The sight of the sea,” he says, “is what I most miss in these regions; and this feeling grows year by year.” (Archer 1984, 249). In the same year, during his summer holidays at Molde, he was inspired by the impressions of “the ocean and fjord, and of the tide of European life flowing past, but not mingling with, the “carp-pond” existence of a small Norwegian town, which he was afterwards to embody in *The Lady from the Sea*.” (Archer 1984, 249).

Thus, in advance, the most vigorous nature of water; the sea adds energetic, dynamic, forceful, carefree, mystic and enigmatic nature to *The Lady from the Sea*. The sea itself is a godly source of ideas; the intuitive freedom of man himself. The sea is a wonderful and powerful image that often appears in one’s imagination and thoughts. The sea figures predominantly in many creation stories as the bearer of all life. It is stormy, chaotic, and life giving. Although, it seems it is calm, what might be lurking under the surface? It may contain what one perceives as danger, such as unsuspected evils, sharks or whales, storms, and tidal waves. These dangers may represent powerful and unpredictable feelings, a repressed aspect of one’s personality, or an issue dwelling under the surface. Ibsen used the sea to represent the supreme existence that each person strives to rejoin.

The sea’s magnetic power. The longing for the sea. Human beings akin to the sea. Bound by the sea. Dependant on the sea. Must return to it. One species of fish is a vital link in the chain of evolution. Do rudiments of it still reside in the human mind? In the minds of certain people?

Images of the teeming life of the sea and of ‘what is lost forever’.

The sea operates a power over one’s moods, it works like a will. The sea can hypnotize. Nature in general can... She has come from the sea [...] Because secretly engaged to the young, carefree ship’s mate [...] At heart, in her instincts- he is the one with whom she is living in marriage [...] (Meyer 1985, 620).

From a spiritual perspective, the sea represents the totality of continuation. It is the ultimate reality, the one of which we are all a part. Enlightenment is gained when the individual self merges with the infinite. This glorious state of awareness is similar to a raindrop merging with the sea. In symbols and archetypal images, the sea represents the unconscious and the illusion identifies with the unquenchable thirst to explore the intuitive and instinctive aspects of oneself. It represents the journey into the unknown. It also becomes a symbol of the search for

the feminine side of human nature. The condition of the sea depicts the approach to human feelings. Whilst a stormy sea indicates threatened energy and forces outside of control, a calm sea demonstrates inner contentment and peace of mind. In primal myths, the sea existed before the creation of humankind and is therefore like a womb from which the rest of creation emerges. The legends tell how the creator god wrestles with the sea-goddess who is impregnated to give birth to the world. The sea is therefore a symbol of the raw materials of survival and is associated the creative possibility of true self of a human being.

Mother Sea was a universal emblem of birth and rebirth, with many imitations of her waters. [...]The Babylonian idea of a creative sexual union between a heaven god [...] and the female sea [...] also appeared in the biblical creation story. The original text makes it clear that the creative act is a sexual union [...] God impregnates the waters with [...] wind, [...] it also means sexual intercourse, in the sense of moving back and forth [...] A good many pagan heroes were born from the maternal sea, which was symbolized by the Cauldron of Regeneration and was referred to in Scandinavia as “the mother womb” [...] Icelanders said that even the Christ ruled their island, still the old god Thor ruled the sea (Walker 1998, 351).

In psychological point of view, Freud considered the sea and the incoming tide to be symbols of sexual union. As to the understanding of Carl Jung, the sea interprets the human depression, craziness, neurosis, hysteria, psychosis, and schizophrenia and suicidal thoughts with safety and precision. This is exactly the miracle required by humanity. Everyone's intelligence requires development because the largest part of the human psychic sphere is absurd, violent and evil, like the sea. Sea is the primitive, wild conscience that is still alive inside everyone and keeps trying to control his or her behavior. Only by developing intelligence, the wild nature can be transformed into a human part of our conscience.

In dreams and hallucination, the sea represents the unknown region of human psychic sphere, where many dangers stay hidden. Foremost, the sea is an environment hazardous for the human being because one cannot breathe under water. It represents the psychic sphere, where the wild conscience prominent, which is worse than sharks and can easily destroy the human sense through madness. Madness is in fact the human being's worst enemy. Madness, which follows melancholy, starts appearing in someone's behavior to alarm the person and reveal that he/she must act; otherwise, will be conquered by senselessness. Continuing Jung's understanding, the wild non-conscience that tries to constantly destroy the human conscience,

can be balanced when wisdom exists, so that one could safely travel within oneself and discover how to transform the neglected and dangerous sea one has within, into a safe place.

There is awareness with this sympathetic that makes the sea dangerous and frightening, just as the divine truth is frightening. It will come as no surprise to hear that the sea has always been a major part of *The Lady from the Sea*. The sea, lashes by furious storms and shrouded by frequent mists, form the origin of many old and curious legends. It provided Ibsen the notion of an ever-present, but unknown, realm. With its storms, whirlpools, rip tides, skerries, stacks and caves, the magical realm of the ocean has been a constant source of fascination to at least for some in the play. The onshore landscape of fjord and pond cannot even imagine competing with the dramatic and forbidding seascapes across the horizon. To an inland dweller, the absolute power of the wild sea cannot be fully understood or appreciated. The sea's ability to execute life, as well as sustain it, is a force that has to be respected – the reality that is as true today as it was centuries ago. To the lives belong to past, the sea was first and foremost as a benefactor - a provider of nothing but life.

Relatively the opposite of the pond, the sea often protrudes into the narration of the story. There are sub stories which describe the voyages on the ocean and the characters often placed at the seaside. Yet, when mentioned in descriptive narrations, the sea is always a far off, remote entity, inaccessible for the characters themselves within their present narrow lifestyles. Within Ellida's relationship with the Stranger, everything what meant for her, for both of them were nothing but the sea. The vast but visible sea back then, to which all paths lead, is a symbol of eternal charisma. During Ellida's confession,

Wangel. What did you talk of?

Ellida. Mainly about the sea.

Wangel. Ah! About the sea.

Ellida. About the storms and the calms. The dark nights at the sea. And the sea in the sparkling sunlight, that too. But mostly we talked of whales and dolphins, and of the seals that would lie out on the skerries in the warm noon sun. And then we spoke of the gulls and the eagles and every kind of seabird you can imagine. You know- it's strange, but when we talked in such a way, then it seemed to me that all these creatures belonged to him.

Wangel. And you yourself?

Ellida. Yes. I almost felt that I belonged among them, too (Ibsen 1978, 626).

After years of deserted and a kind of a wild life, in the lighthouse with her father, it becomes thus a drop of rain to a barren land when a ship's mate falls in love with her. Hence, it is natural to a girl like her to become passionate to her companion when both share the same memorable personal experience; the sea and its life. Ibsen's ravenous yearning to acquire the soul of the humankind and the hidden depths within the conscience occur in the reflection of the sea. The motif of the Stranger, conquering the unknown upon the ocean renders a more reliable thread, frequently arise in various forms throughout , thereby bestowing to the overall cohesion of the story. Ibsen seeks at the solid proof of life in order to keep wandering into unconsciousness and his ability to do so is reflected in the numerous analogues, which persist the same parallel in the following confession. Life for the Stranger is the sea itself, which flows increasingly in one route, carried along by its own power. Such a powerful energy and force which only the sea could bear. In an attempt to give it the meaning,

Wangel. That man has had an unearthly power over you, Ellida.

Ellida. Yes. Yes, he's horrible! [...] I mean the horror. The fantastic hold on my mind- [...] No, Wangel- it's not over. And I'm afraid it never will be. [...] I *had* forgotten him. But suddenly one day it was as if he returned. [...] This thing that's happened to me – oh, I don't think it can ever be understood. [...] the terror I feel of him, of the Stranger. [...] Yes, terror. A terror so huge that only the sea could hold it (Ibsen 1978, 628-629).

Ellida's unspeakable terror digging forth in a sole direction prompts the real nature of the Stranger who has left the vortex in her "heart of hearts" .His obscure control over her deepest divine penetrates the unseen, surreptitious depths of his own soul, to which only the sea could determine.

Therefore, we cannot isolate the eternal power of the sea. The sea is not the constituent that has to be controlled, but the body out of which all things were created. The archaic waters therefore the element of life. It is the place where that gift and highly esteemed humanity originated: the gift of eternal existence. In other words: the sea is the fountain of life. This perception is not surprising when consider the lavishness of the depths of the sea. The ocean water is thus becomes identical with fertility. The water of upper depths represents masculinity. And the lower depths represent the femininity. As a result, life originates from the summit of the two. This double nature of the sea is indubitable, when understanding the

power of the Stranger over the sea. Before he leaves Ellida, he marries her at Bratthammer. She never thinks to doubt about him, even though he appears in front of her as a cold blooded murderer, after stabbing his captain.

Ellida. He took a key-ring out of his pocket, and then pulled a ring that he'd always worn from his finger. I also had a little ring, and he took that too. He slipped both of them together onto the key- ring- and then he said that we two would marry ourselves to the sea [...] Yes, that's what he said. And then he threw the rings together, with all his strength, as far as he could out in the ocean [...] Yes, can you imagine- I felt then as if it were fated to be (Ibsen 1978, 627).

This bizarre marriage gives a hint to the dual nature of the sea. While the Stranger marries to the deeper depths of the femininity in the sea, Ellida marries the upper masculinity nature of the sea. This idea, however, Ibsen may have encountered when he was in Italy. The parallel between the legend "Bride of the Sea" and the power of the Stranger, can be understood when, comprehend the history of the legend.

"Bride of the Sea", the City of Venice, is an allusion to the ceremony established in 1777, when the Doge³ married the city to the Adriatic Sea by throwing a ring into the water. This is symbolized as a sign of the power of Venice over that sea. This ceremony does not go into remote antiquity, yet the origin of it is of considerable date. In the year 1177, when the Emperor Barbarossa went to humble himself before the Pope, who had taken refuge in Venice, the Pope, in testimony of the compassion he had acknowledged, gave to the Doge a ring, and with it a right for the Venetians to call the Adriatic sea their own. He bade the Doge cast it into the sea, to wed it, as a man marries his wife; and he enjoined the citizens, by renewing this ceremony every year, to claim a dominion which they had won by their valor. The ceremony took place on Ascension Day. The Doge, the senators, foreign ambassadors and great numbers of the nobility, in their black robes, walk to the sea-side, where the magnificent vessel, the Bucentoro, waits to receive them. They then proceed about two miles up the Laguna, and when arrive at a certain place the Doge then rise from his chair of state, walks to the side of the vessel and throw a gold ring into the sea, repeating the following words: "We wed thee, O sea, in token of perpetual dominion." (Jobes 1961, 1410).

³ The Doge (Duke in English) was the chief magistrate and leader of the most serene republic of Venice for over a thousand years. Doges of Venice were elected for life by the city-state's aristocracy. Commonly the person selected as Doge was the shrewdest elder in the city.

Throwing the ring to the sea thus represents the human power over the sea and as if the sea itself belongs and personified by the human kind. On the other hand, the Stranger demonstrates such ritual to express not only his power over Ellida, but also his power over the human kind. He is a murderer, yet he does not regret, suffer or confess. It was “only done what was necessary and right” (Ibsen 1978, 627). He flees freely, travels the world and leads a free life. He comes as a freeman (which he calls himself, Freeman) and returns as a freeman. Only one could clutch such freedom within. It is none other than the sea itself. Like the ruler of the sea, Ægir⁴, the Stranger has “unearthly power” (Ibsen 1978, 628) over Ellida. A power which earth could not bear but the god of the sea could embrace. The personification of the sea, Ægir, reflects the mysterious and dominant nature to which Ellida Wangel is magnetically attached. The meaning of his name is associated with the sea and he was the epitome of the sea itself. He is often the overall personification of the sea, be it both good and bad.

How should one periphrase the sea? Thus: by calling it Ymir’s blood; Visitor of the gods; Husband of Rán; Father of Ægir’s daughters, of them who are called Himinglæva, Dúfa, Blodughadda, Hefring, Unnr, Hrönn, Bylgja, Bára, Kolga; Land of Rán and of Ægir’s Daughters, of ships and of ships’ names, of the Keel, of Beaks, of Planks and Seams, of Fishes, of Ice; Way and Road of Sea Kings; Likewise Encircler of Islands; House of Sands and of Kelp and of Reefs; Land of Fishing gear, of Sea Fowls, and of Fair Wind.⁵

Ægir is usually depicted as a man with a long beard. He was believed to be the creator of storms with his anger. Sailors fear Ægir and deem he would occasionally surface to destroy ships. He was accused of sinking merchant vessels for the gold and the loot they carried and became known for his greed. Early Saxons made human sacrifices to the god of the sea, possibly connected with Ægir. While many versions of myths portray him as a jötunn, in some text he is referred to as something older than a jötunn. In old Norse, the beings were called *jotunar* or *riser*, in particular *bergriser* (mountain-riser). Jötunn might have the same root as “eat” (Proto-German, *etan*) and accordingly had the original meaning of “glutton” or “man-eater”, possibly in the sense of personifying chaos, the destructive forces of the sea. Ægir’s shadows believed to be caused by its immense remoteness from the place of sunrise

⁴ Ægir; The God of the Sea in Norse mythology.

⁵ Online material of Section XXV of *Skáldskaparmál* in translation by Arthur G. Brodeur (1916, 1923), at Northvegr .<http://www.northvegr.org/lore/prose/137140.php>. Revised. 02.02.2010.

and sunset. The dark sea hence, which surrounds the earth in fact does not belong to the land, for the sun does not reach it; it is a part of the under world. As to the dark ocean, nobody knows what is in it, the truth behind its darkness, the gigantic of its waves, its mass of treasures, the tyranny of its beings, and the strength of its winds.

While the Stranger thus seems embody Ægir; the most powerful over the sea, he personifies the God of death as well. The thought of death by drowning lies near. For an element that overpowers all, the Stranger is absorbed in it, according to the primeval scrutiny, an element of death and obliteration. The sea thus, reflects as the kingdom of death and is really the underworld; the sea which the Stranger resurrects. It designates none other than the hell. The hell or the underworld, the darkness and the abysses become an alias of the sea in the play. The soul of the strange seafarer after his shipwreck/death joins with the realm of the underworld, which in eternity will not see light. He thus, features the life without a soul, the death. In Ibsen's first draft, The Stranger appears,

Outside on the footpath, beyond the garden fence, A Stranger in Travelling Dress enters from the left. He has bushy, reddish hair and beard [...]. [20]

His Dress proclaims the unconventional element, [...] his coloring is rare in Ibsen's play's only one other red haired man is seen, Mortensgård, and one other, Judas Iscariot, is referred to (Northam 1953, 140).

Further, Northam adds to footnotes in the same page,

And now he comes as a passenger on a tourist ship. He does not belong to the ship's crew. He is dressed as a tourist, not as a traveler. *Nobody* should know what he is. [...] Ibsen's own recommendation concerning the presentation of the part was that the Stranger should always stand in the background, half- concealed by the bushes [...] (Northam 1953, 140).

In "*The Lady from the Sea in a Mythological and Psychological Perspective*" (1997), Ellen Hartmann develops an argument based on the classic Greek myth *The Homeric Hymn to Demeter*. She believes that "the analogy between play and myth will throw light on the complexity and ambiguity of this play and provide increased understanding and psychological meaning to Ellida's persistent and terrifying attraction to *the Stranger*" (Hartmann 1997, 133). She argues that the Stranger is a personification of the sea and appears on the stage as a character. The vagueness in his character is his ambiguous identity. No one should know who he is or what he is called. The idea was Ibsen's own invention. Thus, the Stranger is neither a

natural nor an illusionary figure, “but an apparition of a mythical theme or an unconscious fantasy, and that the play as a whole has an intrinsic link to a mythical drama.” (Hartmann 1997, 136). Here, her hypothesis is that “the Stranger is *death as a lover* [...] death as last sexual act, a sexual union” (Hartmann 1997, 136). To support her argument, Hartmann describes in detail the parallels between the myth of Demeter⁶, Persephone⁷ and *The Lady from the Sea*. Here, she interprets Persephone as Ellida and Hades⁸ as the Stranger. Hades:

As lord of the wealth contained in the earth, he was also known as plutus⁹[...] He was king of the dead [...]. His name was so feared, it rarely was mentioned by mortals. Those who invoked him did so by striking the earth with their hands and in sacrifices to him turned away their faces. His name, meaning unseen, was sometimes uttered as an oath; those who swore by him bound themselves to destruction for failure to keep pledge. He usually was represented as a bearded man with a dense of mass of hair falling forebodingly over his forehead, [...] wearing his helmet of invisibility [...] (Jobes 1961, 706).

It is said that the God of the Underworld, Hades, once saw Persephone and fell deeply in love with her. One day, in a place where there is a lake embowered in woods which screens from the fervid rays of the sun, while the moist ground is covered with flowers, Persephone played with her companions. At a certain point Persephone came across a cosmic flower; a golden narcissus, which once she plucked it, the earth opened beneath her and stole her into the underworld. It is said that she was lured into love and compassion with the cold blooded king of the underworld; Hades. Her mother Demeter was heartbroken with rage and sorrow. Life on earth came to a standstill as depressed Demeter searched for her lost daughter, day and night. Finally, Zeus¹⁰ could not stand up with the dying earth and persuaded Hades to return Persephone. Yet, before sending her back Hades made her eat sweet pomegranate¹¹ seeds so Persephone could not resist him and must return to him. She ate it rather willingly or with her free will. Not in a single version of the myth, it was mentioned that she was forced to eat the pomegranate seeds. However, she was charmed and attracted to Hades by eating the fruit of the underworld. Therefore, she was forced herself to return six months per year to underworld, to her deadly lover, Hades. When Persephone returns to Hades, Demeter

⁶ Demeter; Goddess of nurture, cultivation and Earth in Greek Mythology.

⁷ Persephone; Daughter of Demeter, Wife of Hades and The Queen of The Underworld in Greek Mythology.

⁸ Hades; God of the Underworld in Greek Mythology , possible from the Greek word for wealth.

⁹ Plutus (Pluto); Pluto was the Roman God of the underworld.

¹⁰ Zeus; King of Gods in Greek Mythology.

¹¹ Pomegranate is considered as fruit of the underworld and the one who tasted it could not resist returning.

becomes miserable from her daughter's absence, withdraws plants from earth. Thus, believes it is the cold season, autumn and winter on earth. When Persephone returns back, Demeter becomes relieved and the earth experience the spring and summer.

While she is attracted by the overpowering magnetism of her lover, to the golden narcissus, she was horrified in his presence as she was raped and swallowed to the underworld. As in the original myth, Hartmann too believes that Persephone ate the pomegranate seeds apparently willingly "but later complains that Hades made her eat against her will." (Hartmann 1997, 138). As to Hartmann, "Hades is pictured not as a cruel rapist, but rather as a crafty seducer. One can hardly avoid the conclusion that Persephone is at least a half-willing victim who is both attracted to and terrified by her dark lover [...] the god of the underworld appears as the enigmatic personification of tempting sexuality and fearful death." (Hartmann 1997, 138). Thus, she believes that there are many parallels between the myth and Ibsen's play.

When the play starts Ellida Wangel is on the verge of going crazy, to be capitulated by her demonic lover. She lives with Wangel but when he is not present, she could not remember how he looks like. As though she lost him. "Like Persephone, she is only partly existing in the real world. Ellida's dual existence is also revealed in her suggestion to Ballested to use the half-dead mermaid as a subject for his picture." (Hartmann 1997, 141). On the other hand, the Stranger is a murderer, and he is "literally" believed to be returning from the dead, having drowned many years ago. Quoted from Wilson Knight, "The Stranger from the sea is, so far as imaginative associations can do it, death." (Hartmann 1997, 141). Furthermore, Ellida's sea-wedding corresponds with Persephone's commitment to the Hades and the underworld. Like Persephone, Ellida never could give a satisfactory explanation to her marriage to the Stranger or her wedding to the sea. She knows only, that it is incomprehensible, but it attracts and horrifies at the same time. Each time when the Stranger returns, it is autumn. He came to take Ellida in the last steamer of the summer; this is the time Persephone has to return to Hades. When the Stranger was drowned, it was believed, he was drowned to the land of darkness and shadows of death (the underworld). To the place of gloom, not only under the earth, but which begins at the ends of the earth. Such, the Stranger personifies the Sea and the Death at the same time.

In accordance Ibsen's metaphors and images develop somewhat diverse undertone as well. The most consistent motif is that of ships being carried along on the ocean represent the

voyage through life to death, moving towards future eternity. Variations of this subject bring in three sub plots in relation to protagonists and minor characters as well. Firstly as Lyngstrand's voyage with the Stranger (as a boatswain), secondly through Ellida's description, the Stranger's life as a ship's mate and thirdly the Stranger's return in a ship dressed for travelling. Yet, not least, there are two ship wrecks can be identified. One with Lyngstrand and the Stranger and the other at the end of the play, Ellida as "nothing more than – a shipwreck" (Ibsen 1978, 686) the Stranger barely remembers. As Arnholm reminds, Ellida is not a proper Christian name. "The pagan' – as the old priest used to call (her), because (her) father gave (her) the name of a ship instead of a proper Christian name" (Ibsen 1978, 605). Ibsen's palpable images correspond to delicate basics of the language regularly mirrors a fluid evocative of the sea.

The sea is inarguably among the most dangerous on the planet and there is a long and terrible history of shipwrecks around the rocky coasts. Nevertheless, juxtaposing the deadly nature, the sea similarly becomes a creative, optimistic, cosmic power, and presents the place of bliss. Ship ploughing through the seas is emblematic of delight and contentment. Pompay the great remarked, living is not necessarily, but navigation is. By living he understood as living for or in oneself, and sailing or navigating, by which he understood living in order to transcend. Nietzsche from his angle called living in order to disappear. Yet Homer reserves the end of the periplus, (literally, sailing around) of Odysseus for a triumphant but warm return to his wife, his hearth and home.

As always in the scheme of things, one man's sorrow is another man's fortune and the wreckage from these unfortunate vessels, and to reach the beach is a necessary part of life. Ibsen knew well enough that the sea was fickle, as quick to anger as it was to return to glassy calm. What it provided generously, one day it would callously and without remorse, take away the next. The shipwreck becomes a "rare piece of luck" (Ibsen 1978, 610) to the young, to be sculptor, Lyngstrand. Lyngstrand's life is just as lonely yet he faces the forces of malevolence with courage, rather than being pushed along blindly by the "tremendous gale". He has a vision and passion. When his mother died his father "packed him off to sea" as he was aimlessly lolling around the house. On the return journey the ship wrecked in the English Channel and the ship was destroyed. Just out of the sea, being for long in the icy water, he got his weak condition in the chest, though he believes it is hardly dangerous. And that was

“lucky” for him. The good fortune of the sea is akin to a lantern on treacherous water, which paves the path to his ultimate enthusiasm.

Lyngstrand. And now I can be a sculptor, which I want more than anything else. Imagine- a chance to work in that beautiful clay, to feel it so supple under your fingers, and to model it into form [...]. As soon as I'm able, I want to try for a large work- a group, as they call [...] It'll be based on something out of my own experience (Ibsen 1978, 610-611).

Thus, for Lyngstrand sailing the sea becomes an opportunity to reach his mountain of salvation. And, he personally accomplishes the prospect of his genuine ambition by imagining the resurrection of the strange boatswain he met. Accompanied his escapade, he is in the vein of a man reborn at the womb of the mother sea. The near death experience and recovery from it thus is the inner mental reality of Lyngstrand. He was carefree, yet could not accomplish his ambition; he led a life without a gist. This escapade brings his life back to fruition by his rebirth. The condition of his heart made him not suitable for any other employment but for his dream; to be a sculptor. To feel the wet clay in his hands and mold it to the utmost satisfaction of his heart's desire. On the contrary, the deathbed; the sea, and the man drowned in it foreshadow Lyngstrand's own approaching death.

Ibsen creates his own disparity of this universal symbol, mounting a unique figure of speech each time it is invoked. He uses all of the potentials suggested by this sea voyage. The tremendous gale, the ship courageously facing the storm, the man drowned on a voyage, the recently ship wrecked voyager whirling in the water, the man dragged out of the sea, and the rescuing boat finally reaching the shore only to find it just as abandoned and lonely as the middle of the ocean. Although the medium of contrast, that is the voyage across the sea, is not principally new, Ibsen is not satisfied to finite himself to the conventional image. The shipwreck metaphor, especially the “tremendous gale” analogous Ibsen's respect for the Stranger in large.

Lyngstrand. Then one evening we were running in a tremendous gale. [...] he was sitting there in the forecastle, reading in one of those papers again [...]. Then all of a sudden I heard him give out almost a kind of howl. And when I looked at him, I could see that his face had gone chalk- white. Then he twisted and tore the paper in his hands and ripped it to a thousand little pieces. But he did it all so quietly, so quietly [...]. But after sometime he said, as if to himself: ‘Married. To another man. While I was away.’ [...] ‘But she's mine, and mine she'll always be. And if I go home and fetch her,

she'll have to go off with me, even if I came as a drowned man up out of the dark sea.' (Ibsen 1978, 612-613).

In the above narrative as well as in the one linked with Lyngstrand, the sea defeats the voyager. The gale is the treacherous power, one that Ibsen identifies as the Stranger's anger in this narrative. The danger of the gale lies in its ultimate nadir, which harbor unexplained and terrifying substances. In his labors to portray the sudden shock and mental turmoil of the unseen image of the Stranger Ibsen's most dominating character, confronts to the portrayal of evil, for he is the man who will resurrect from death, the man who will rise from the deepest, darkest depths of the ocean. When the Stranger finds himself suddenly in danger he could not realize at once how to overcome with his feelings of fear, helplessness, and horror. The sudden news he experienced is called a traumatic experience, in psychology. During his trauma, he becomes overwhelmed with fear and anger. He experiences the ordeal mentally and physically. His knowledge, the woman he married is now belongs to another man caused his sudden change which is visible clearly physically and mentally. His face gone "chalk white", his voice "howled", his actions were slow and frightening. During uncontrollable chain of psychic pictures, he became plagued with his own mental torture. Soon after this experience, he re-experienced the trauma mentally and physically yet in the form of malice of the sea; the gale and the ship wreck. In the play, the hazardous gale liquefies, whirling the fateful ship which was destroyed into "thousand little pieces" alike the Stranger in his mental uproar tore the news paper into tiny bits. In such, the furious "howling" gale thus, unmistakably reflects the inner psychological confusion of the Stranger. The voyage on the sea represents a hazardous expedition, one which is disturbed by constant dangers, the utmost of which is shipwreck abandonment. Almost all the Ibsen characters feel the loneliness and uncertainty of a life without love or a proper vision. This isolated state overwhelms Ibsen beings.

Ibsen approves that fascination in water is a return to the original affirm, with a sense of death and extinction on the one hand, but of resurrection and rebirth on the other. Drowning does not mechanically express imagery of a new life. It is the primary death, and a death that indicates desolation, vulnerability, and even compliance. Which Lyngstrand and the Stranger give in to the element over which they have no power over it. At the same time, while one seeks a renaissance, other is believed to be dead. The overall presence of the sea prepares the

way of metaphors of drowning by creating a new life. Drowning imagery contains both aspects of fascination in water mentioned above. Most often, a character is interpreted in terms of a metaphorical at the verge of desolation or conquers. At other times, drowning reveals the optimistic understanding of rebirth through emersion from water into a new life. This second aspect is predominantly accurate in relation to both *Lyngstrand* and *the Stranger* where the narrative references to drowning appear in the past. Akin to the *Stranger's* present condition, his resurrection accents the negative facet of drowning, the helpless slide into death with the futile anticipation of resurrection.

On the other hand, recurrent steamer, the vessel that emerges as a thief in the dark sea, is a ship in which the primary method of propulsion is steam power. Steam is vaporized water and is transparent gas. Most often steam refers to the visible white mist that condenses above boiling water as the hot vapour mixes with the cooler air. This mist consists of tiny droplets of liquid water. In the play, steam emerges at the base of a spout of a tourist ship. Ballested's interpretation of the Steamer is up to no good. Jammed full of people, causing heavy traffic will gradually drags the beautiful isolated fjord village into pollution. "And with all the summer visitors, too. I'm often afraid our town's going to lose its character with all these strangers around." (Ibsen 1978, 596) says Ballested. On the other hand, Arnholm believes, "it seems like this place is a rendezvous for the whole live world. *Almost* the social capital for tourists." (Ibsen 1978, 635). On the contrary, the steamer is a possible opportunity to make an extra income for Ballested. For him, approaching the steamer is an opening to accomplish his practical requirements. In small towns, one needs to acclimatize in various fields to survive. Thus, the steamer becomes an open arena for him to practice his talent as a barber, hairdresser or as a dance instructor with summer visitors. Hitherto, Ballested is the smooth observer in a realistic sympathetic.

The Steamer here is the vessel which acts as a mode of transport for the *Stranger*, the one in the *Stranger* comes to take Ellida, his unfaithful wife. The heavy, boiling, erupting nature of the steam gives the energy, anger, anxiousness, suffering which the *Stranger* undergoes in the present situation. He comes to take his wife, which already married to another. Hence, in his anguish he does not know whether she comes or not with him. The power of steam or the blow of steam here indicates the *Stranger's* present mental trauma and his relieve of superfluous energy, "vigorous and unfeeling methods to gain something" (Jobes 1961, 1492-1493).

It seems paradoxical that Ibsen repeats same metaphors of the sea, so vibrantly developed to exhibit Ellida Wangel's lost soul, in relation to the Stranger who is entirely connatural to the sea itself. However, the way in which such a motif germinates and differs between the two characters not only a unity but also a better understanding of the two. Although Ellida unquestionably reverberates the past manipulation of the Stranger, she is vague about her role in her future life as well.

Ellida. [...] I believe that, if only mankind had adapted itself from the start to a life on the sea- or perhaps *in* the sea- then we would have become something much different and more advanced than we are now. Both better- and happier.

[...]

Arnholm (*playfully*). Well – maybe. But what's done is done. So once and for all we took the wrong turn and became land animals, instead of sea creatures. Considering the circumstances, it's a little late now to amend the error.

Ellida. Yes, there is the unhappy truth. And I think people have some sense of it, too. They bear it about inside them like a secret sorrow. And I can tell you – there, in that feeling, is the deepest source of all the melancholy in man. Yes – I'm sure of it. [...] The joy – it's much like our joy in these long, light summer days and nights. It has the hint in it of dark times to come. And that hint is what throws a shadow over our human joy- like the drifting clouds with their shadows over the fjord. Everything lies there so bright and blue – and then all of a sudden – (Ibsen 1978, 639).

One vital distinction in her perceptive is that Ellida develops the parables to describe herself, rather than Ibsen using them in other's narratives, signifying that this is Ellida's own acuity of her existence. The images of origin of species analogues herself to the wandered mermaid from the sea. A creature without any particular limbs to move on earth, drifting away from the sea, Ellida feels both unimportant and lost. Of necessity, the motif of the mermaid shifts to the narrative when Ellida identified herself as an outsider.

Apart from her daily baths, she spends the rest of the day in a summerhouse in the garden, which Wangel built for her. Her melancholia or rather the depression makes her desert the husband sexually and been unaware to external environment. The girls; Bolette and Hilda used to keep themselves to the veranda and Wangel used to go back and forth and keeps company for both the parties. Hence, it is obvious that Ellida has a very limited relationship with her family. Thus, the reader understands this clearly through Bolette and Hilda, "she simply hasn't any grasp of all those things that Mother took on so well. There's so much this one just doesn't see. Or maybe doesn't want to see- or bother with." (Ibsen 1978, 637). Or, as

to Hilda's hostility, "we'll never get along with her, never. She's not our kind. And we are not hers, either. God knows why father ever dragged her into the house-! I wouldn't be surprised if, one fine day, she was to go quite mad [...] It's not so inconceivable. After all, her mother went crazy. She died insane." (Ibsen 1978, 620). In such, Ellida develops similar view on family affairs. Family secrets are "Not for outsiders" (Ibsen 1978, 610), such as for the stepmother of the house; Ellida herself. She perceives that she is an outsider and an immigrant, a mermaid who lost her way back, in this household.

Through the gradual development, Ellida's conscience sublimates like the Sea's surface, while her psychic sphere, where the wild conscience lies hidden, is as vast as the ocean! Water predominates on Earth, exactly like fluctuation predominates the human psychic sphere. When Ellida dreams the Stranger staring at her, it truly expresses that she is reaching the dangerous and absurd content of her psychic sphere that provokes craziness to her human part. She recognizes the image; the creature not belongs to inland as a sign of her destiny, that she will be alone at death. For her, domestication is nothing but inflowing to the strange world that she never experienced in her spiritual life. The motif (domestication) becomes a wave of the fjord which carries her to the shore not to the sea, which results her own suffering. The motif of being a land animal, reflects the danger of her final passage to a parvenu life. She bears it inside it like a "secret sorrow", and that feeling is "the deepest source of all the melancholy" of her inner psyche and her obscure future.

The symbol of the sea prolonged into a placing into infinity or placing into the abyss; a bottomless or unfathomed depth, gulf, or chasm; hence, any deep, immeasurable conditions a suitable culmination to the theme of the sea that pursue through Ibsen's work. It becomes not only a representation of the destiny of individual characters, but a parable of the entire humankind. Exceptionally, it is as well an icon which has no straight connection with the present setting or narrative of the play, yet appears as the haunted past and as hint to the unknown future. As such, it explains Ibsen's capability to build up numerous links of metaphors in a sole labor, as well as the repeated option that he has to deluge of descriptions that attach with in him more or less uncontrollably. Moreover, it is proof of his originality, for if one could line up all of the images and symbols relate to the infinitive sea, without a difficulty, it could be shown that no two are precisely comparable, each individual adheres a considerably diverse feature of an otherwise universal premise.

2.2 The Dying Mermaid

The first impression to the lady of the house, is given by Ballested, as “the dying mermaid”. The next analogue is given by her own husband, but in the eyes of the town’s folk. “the people in town here can’t understand her. They call her “the lady from the sea.”(Ibsen 1978, 603). When Ellida becomes known, for the first time in the play, she appears as she actually comes out from the water as an authentic allegory to the title of the play. She appears “wearing a large, light robe, her hair wet and falling loose over her shoulders, comes through the trees“(Ibsen 1978, 603). In the point of view of Wangel, she is their “mermaid”. These repeated interpretations further links Ellida with the sea. Akin to her own affection, her family, her friends and town’s folk as well merge her with the sea. She is a metaphorical figure from the very moment she is introduced, and she embodies the image of the sea. When look through the microscopic eye, she creates an icon, literally something rises from the sea. Her appearance, references, attachment, love, sexuality, fear, horror, bitterness last but not least Ellida Wangel herself is questioned within and without the body of the sea. Within her compassion of the sea, the sea becomes a supreme approach to reflect the depth of Ellida Wangel. Near the sea, she is presented with a vibrant and wild personality. She experiences the extreme satisfaction, as if in the ultimate freedom. As if the sea itself is represented by her and as if she herself had vanished under the constant perpetual movement of the lively waves.

The image of the mermaid runs parallel to her emotional conflict with her past associations with the sea, and comes to light through the dialogue of the two artists, Ballested and Lyngstrand. Here, Ibsen introduces a metaphor with a dual understanding to Ellida. It is the central and focal figure in Ballested’s artwork, A Mermaid. A mermaid, who has wandered from the sea, lost its way back and expiring in the tide pools.

Ballested. [...] there’ll be a mermaid lying, half dead. [...] She’s wandered in from the sea and can’t find her way out again. And so, you see, she lies here, expiring in the tide pools. [...] I’ve thought of calling it the Dying Mermaid (Ibsen 1978, 594).

The association of the sea creature, the salt water being, “The Mermaid” with the lady of the house, Ellida Wangel is important as Ibsen’s initial intention was to name the play as “Havfrue”. When we understand the biological nature of the tide pools in parallel to the living condition of Ellida, it gives a clear picture of understanding to the identity of her present living condition.

Seawater filled rocky pools by the sea are called tide pools. These pools exist as unconnected entities at low tide. Uniquely adaptable habitats and hardy organisms were provided dwellings in these pools. These habitats face the challenge to cope with the constantly changing environment, fluctuation in water temperature, salinity and oxygen content. It thus not an easy task to survive in the tide pools. Huge waves, sturdy currents, exposure to burning sun and predators are only few hazards that these habitats undergo. Their life is a constant battle of life and death. While waves displace mussels, gulls pick them up and drop them to break them open. And when starfish prey on them, gulls become predators of starfish. These organisms depend on the tide pool's constant change for food while struggling to survive from the hazards of nature and predators. While rocks experience extreme conditions as exposing to hot sun and cold winds, tide pool zones receive wave spray from high tides and storms. "These shallow pools and surrounding areas uncovered by the retreating tides are often teeming animals and plants, which must adapt to environmental extremes to survive"¹². Therefore, only a few organisms can endure such harsh conditions.

Away from the sea, struggling to survive is not painless for Ballested's "expiring mermaid". Ellida is an organism, which struggles to survive in the tide pools. The absence of the sea in her present life gives a clear thoughtful and a suggestion to the reader that Ellida's difficulty in surviving at Wangel household with the present circumstances. Indeed, she lacks emotional intensity inland. This is not to say that she has no feelings, but it does mean that her emotions engaged not easily and they really do not run deeply. By living away from the sea, she is not apt to form those extremely close friendships and relationships, and she even feels smothered and threatened by strong emotional demands of others. The negative aspect of this absence of sea in her life has made her rather callous and cold, detached and unfeeling, irresponsible and neglected.

The sculpture "The Lady from the Sea" or the double sided figure-head, unveiled in August 2001, in Sæby was a direct inspiration of Ibsen's mermaid.¹³ The Norwegian artists, Marit Benthe Norheim created the statue of a woman as a double-sided figurehead in white concrete. Norheim has found her inspiration from the play where Ellida's image as a mermaid washed ashore and from the patron saint of Sæby; Virgin Mary. Ellida's attraction to the sea

¹² Online material;"Tide Pools". <http://www.seaworld.org/wild-world/ecosystems/info-books/tide-pools/what-is.htm>. Date revised 27.04.2010.

¹³ Online material "Fruen fra Havet". <http://www.skagen-tourist.dk/international/en-gb/menu/turist/omraade/saebys/fruen-fra-havet.htm>. Date referred 24.04.2010.

against intolerable forces within and outside herself has become an important piece in the sculptor. Also the image of Virgin Mary in a church of Sæby with bare chest, forward as a symbol of protection and allow people to seek refuge under her heart. Thus, the double-sided figurehead denotes the mermaid and the guardian angel at the same time. This dual-sided Janus- figure¹⁴ with two faces facing opposite directions symbolises the departure and return, the beginning and the end, past and present as well as looking forward to future.

Similarly, Ballested's mermaid gives a novel understanding to the dual nature in Ellida's character in the present era. Apart from Ballested's artwork, Wangel introduces Ellida to Arnholm as their mermaid; "Well, there's our mermaid". (Ibsen 1978, 601). Ellida's own husband, the man who she lives with, the man who once shared the same bed with her, identifies her as a mermaid. In the Freudian notion of the symbol of the mermaid, conflicts are fused in the metaphor of the unconscious, and restriction disguises mystery. Hybridization, ambivalence, polarity, duplicity, and dualism are the qualities that in psychoanalysis denote phantasms created by fear. As Meri Lao interprets in "Sirens; Symbols of Seduction" (1999), mermaids are the modern version of ancient sirens. The Mermaids or the Sirens (Sea Nymphs) in mythology were hybrid creatures, half woman and half animal. In other words, they are feminine divinities who are also a part of the animal order. They have two identities which coexists a double nature and are halved between beings with the prerogatives of both their components; irrational entities, eternally provoking and disturbing. Further she writes,

In the words of J.J. Bachofen (1815-1887) they are "rich in omens". He preferred the symbolic language of antiquity and art as a perfectly reliable – if antiacademic – instrument of knowledge. In his view, there are two paths to every form of knowledge and comprehension. One is long, slow, and difficult, and the other, imagination, is completed with the force and speed of electricity and is an immediate and total understanding of the truth, richer in life and color than that acquired through the intellect. [...] knowledge is transformed into comprehension only when it succeeds in grasping the origin, the process, and the end. The origin of any development, however, lies in myth[...] The distinction between myth and history [...] makes no sense and cannot be justified in the context of human development' (Lao 1999, 10-11).

Thus, the mermaid becomes not just a symbol, but a truthful rationalization. Ellida, is halved between the freedom and imprisonment. While the sea, her memories of the past becomes her desire for freedom, the fjord/the stagnant pond, her present life inland, becomes the state of

¹⁴ A figure with a two faces, opposite to each, facing opposite directions. Janus figure reminds the Roman deity with two heads, Janus. In Roman mythology Janus was the God of gates, doors, doorways, beginnings and ends.

imprisonment. Thus, this duality depicts through the link of the metaphor, the mermaid. As mentioned above a mermaid is a creature with a body of a woman in the upper part and below the naval with a fish tail. With such a description, Ellida thus presents her attachment to the past and the present. Her wild, carefree past near the sea; her lower part with a fish tail and her stagnant human life inland; her upper part with the human body. This reveals her attachment to the Stranger and Wangel as well. The relationship with the Stranger is a magnetic attachment in an erotic nature, an unspeakable, unexplainable enigma toward his power. In her horror or insanity she believes the father of her child is the Stranger.

Ellida (*averting her face*). [...] Wangel- how can we ever fathom this- this- mystery about the child's eyes-? [...] And you can't see it! His eyes changed color with the sea. When the fjord lay still in the sunlight, his eyes were like that. And in the storms, too-oh, I saw it well enough, even if you didn't [...] I've seen eyes like that before. [...] Out on Bratthammer- ten years ago. [...] The child had the stranger's eyes (Ibsen 1978, 631-632).

This confession embeds her sexual attachment to the Stranger. Herewith, her hallucination of the Stranger links with her directly through the metaphor, the lower part of the mermaid; with the fish tail. Therefore, one cannot isolate the idea, that Ellida's passion and sexuality belong to her past, to her fish like free life with the Stranger. By her nature of wilderness, with the freedom of the sea fish, by nature of ambivalent, she maintains a spacious quality while at the same time personifying the freedom; the medium which the free fishes live in. The idea expresses more than any other, her ambivalence.

On the other hand, her human part, the upper body represents, Ellida as a half human being as well: her earthly life with Wangel and the children. Ellida is by nature, physically weary, yet, psychologically trembling with unrest, a personality worn out from its anchors by cavernous and aggressive disturbances. Her survival is lifeless by a dark silhouette of melancholia, which disguises from the happiness and responsibility of daily life. She has no admiration for the dedication of a family, and no mutual sympathetic of her task of her home. Her husband and the step daughters are neglected. Even the regular housekeeping is left to one of the two step-daughters, Bolette. It is a family in jeopardy with disturbance by her indifferent unawareness. For more than three years she neglects the sex life with her husband, Wangel. This of course gives an insight to the symbol, only her upper body part lives with Wangel. Thus, both develop a kind of a platonic relationship as earthly human beings. She is an outsider to the family on the fjord, coming from a village where (as Wangel declares) there is

ebb and flow in the souls of the sea people. Her value is wholly sunken in stressed hallucinations of a romantic and altogether imaginary life. The "mermaid," as others call her, cannot be survived inland or make others survive, as she herself is "expiring".

In addition, it is not difficult to find several apparent resemblances between Ellida Wangel and Rebecca West. Even the metaphorical name "my seductive mermaid" is once used to the latter by, Ulrik Brendel. Thus, Rebecca West illustrates in *Rosmersholm*, as a seductive creature who was overwhelmed by her dynamic, powerful nature, similar to the sea.

Rebecca. It's perfectly true that I once tried every trick I knew to gain an entree here at Rosmersholm. Because I had a sense I could make out well enough here. One way or another/ you know. [...] I think I could have gotten anything- in those days. I still had the fearless free will I was born with. I never knew second thoughts. No one could stop me. But then it began- the thing that crushed my will at last- and filled my life with a wretched fear. [...] It came over me- this wild uncontrollable desire-! Oh, John-! [...] For you. [...] I thought it was the meaning of "to love"- then. I did think that that was love. But it wasn't. It was just what I said. It was wild, uncontrollable desire. [...] It came over me like a storm at sea. Like the one of those storms we have sometimes up north in the winters. It takes you- and sweeps you along with it- for as long as it lasts. You don't think of resisting (Ibsen 1978, 573).

In *Rosmersholm*, "the mermaid", Rebecca West represents as a frantic and a seductive creature. Many critics have interpreted Rebecca as a demonic character whom was drowned in her own inner conflict, who lured three human lives to self sacrifice. As a result, when working on *Rosmersholm* Ibsen moved more from Rosmer's role towards Rebecca. Thus, in *The Lady from the Sea*, Ibsen came a long way through his interest of inner nature of characters, which played the main role in Ellida's life. In this sense, one can see a common relationship between Rebecca and Ellida. Forced by her wild nature Rebecca could not resist the uncontrollable desire, yet, not love, toward Rosmer. Similarly, Ellida is fascinated toward the Stranger. He is something that "terrifies and attracts ". It is not love that she has toward the Stranger. It is much complicated. It is "part of the horror in you (Ellida). You (Ellida) both terrify and attract" (Ibsen 1978, 666) Wangel understands. Similar with Rebecca, Ellida attracts to the Stranger in an erotic nature. She does not love him, yet, suffering from an irresistible desire of suppressed sexual attraction towards him. Her lower body part, below the naval, her fish part, longs for the Stranger, while her upper human part loves Wangel. Thus, she honestly claims Wangel, "I love no one else but you." (Ibsen 1978, 629).

2.3 Searched Sanctuary but feel *Sick*.

In their unity and on the spherical movement of the water, all the rivers run into the sea yet the sea is not filled. The water which flows to the sea ultimately returns to the fountain through rain. Fountain water or earthly water is sweet, for it is the water comes from the depths of the mother earth's bosom, which from the sweet and pure water springs originate. Thus, the water in the fjord, which stands in the midst of this eternal flow can be explained partly sweet and partly salty; the brackish water. It is Ellida who has let herself fluctuate on the two waters, this fresh and sweet, and that salt and bitter. She has placed herself between them as a vulnerable creature in the "ebb and flow" who is unable to decide which conduit to take.

Ellida. Fresh! Good Lord, this water's never fresh. So stale and tepid. Ugh! The water's sick here in the fjord. [...]. Yes. it's sick. And I think it makes people sick, too.

[...]

Arnholm. It seems more likely to me, Mrs. Wangel, that you have a peculiar tie to the sea and everything connected with it.

Ellida. Oh, yes, it's possible. At times I almost think so- [...] (Ibsen 1978, 604).

The first and foremost visual illustration of an element of water; the fjord, comes into view through the set design of the first act. "*Through the trees the fjord can be seen, with high peaks and mountain ranges in the distance.*" (Ibsen 1978, 593). The path along the shore is lined by the trees, the half hidden fjord, thus, can be seen through those. Wangel family lives in this small village by the fjord, isolated, hidden by the outside wide world. The hidden fjord hints the nature of the characters themselves. They are much attached to the nearby half hidden fjord, than the distant open sea. The next attention to fjord comes through the dialogue between the two artists; the painter, Ballested and the sculptor, Lyngstrand. Although, Ballested is a man with some aesthetics and tries to add the fjord into his painting, he does not see anything remarkable in the fjord. "Ballested. Oh, there's nothing remarkable to see yet. But please, if you want to, come in. [...]. (*painting*). It's the fjord there between those islands that I'm trying to get." (Ibsen 1978, 594). As the dialogue proceeds the reader gets to know that he was not born in the village but came here with Skive's Theater Company as a scene painter. When the theatre ran into financial problems, the company broke up, yet he stayed

on. He believes that he did well for himself in this village as he has acclimatized himself here and has attached to the place by time and habit and became a versatile person in this fjord village. And he is an observer without any psychological affection to the watery nature he lives in. Yet, he moves with the tide, which makes him survive in the flux without been collided.

The word *fjord* is used for a narrow inlet of the sea. Geographically, a fjord is a valley shaped by the passage of one or many glaciers, which dug deep into its earth, giving it the form of a glacial channel, a "U" shaped valley with a rapid and grand rock faces. Most fjords are therefore much deeper than the adjacent sea (Sognefjord reaches more than 1300 m below sea level) and fjords generally have a sill or rise at their mouth caused by the previous glacier's terminal moraine. Fjords converse with the sea at one edge and obtain an input of fresh water from the other, combining sea and fresh waters. Hence, fjords are characterized as obvious water stratification or forming water into layers. The water circulation obeys to specific and evens spectacular physical laws and the tidal flow and ebb over the sill cases extreme currents in many fjords, as Saltstraumen. In the fjords only the upper layer (above the sill or rise) circulate both by input from the sea and from the rivers. The deeper layers are not circulating and can be contaminated and "dead".

Water entering the loch over the sill is sometimes dense enough to sink down to the bottom of the basin, displacing water already there [...] Typically, the sea-water is insufficiently dense to displace deep water (which thus stagnates); instead, the inflowing water travels up the fjord at intermediate depths [...] River water mixes with water already in the fjord and forms a low salinity layer near the surface. These circulatory features arise because the density of water depends on its temperature and the amount of salt that it contains [...] Lighter water (i.e. that with a higher freshwater content) will float on heavier water (that with more salt). The resulting layering is opposed by turbulence (stirring or mixing) generated by friction between water flows and the loch bed, or between two flows in opposing directions. Entrainment involves waves forming between water layers; when these break they transfer water into the less dense layer, like surface waves breaking (and releasing spray) into air.¹⁵

Thus, the fjord becomes an important entity with a unique, dynamic, complex and a spectacular eco system which upraise the understanding of the present conditions in the play. It is not only a transforming combination of salted water from the ocean and fresh water from

¹⁵ Online material. Glaciation and fjords.<http://www.lifesciences.napier.ac.uk/teaching/env/Envglac3.html>. Date revised 27.04.2010.

the rivers; between the upper “living” layers and the deeper “dead” layers, but also a system which faces the dangerous currents at the inlet by flow and ebb. Therefore, while the flow and ebb of a fjord depicts a dramatic symbol, the deeper “dead” layers are associated with death; the abyss of repressed thoughts of human kind. The healthy open sea outside and the input of healthy fresh water from the rivers at the bay of the fjord juxtapose this “dead” water from the fjord and the stagnant pond. The references to sea-lanes “sund” in the play (in the original text) is however, is in a Danish context. In Denmark the “sund”s can be locked, because there are no currents. Only in south eastern Norway the innermost parts of a fjord can be locked with ice as the Oslo fjord. The fjords of western and northern Norway due to the currents, sea-lanes will never be locked. Thus, it is important to underline that Ibsen’s play is situated at a Norwegian fjord in the southern eastern coast of Norway where sea lanes can be locked with approaching winter.

It is not a wonder that Ibsen used such a distinctive and vibrant fact to reveal his protagonist’s unpredictable life. The visible outward layer of the fjord is attached with her earthly life, though in deep depths the eternal yearning for the salty dead seas emerges. Ellida is motivated primarily, more so than by a reflective impetus pleasure or anything else by a vital drive rooted in the darkest depths of her being. The layered and fluctuating live and dead fjord waters akin to her uncertainty and unpredictability in the present and future. The eternal mixture and flow of the upper most fresh and salt water depicts her being as a pendulum between Wangel and the Stranger. Although, she does accept Wangel, the deep layer of high salted dead waters of the fjord thus hints us, her cherished emotions of the sea though she locked the get away by refusing the Stranger. Thus, we as the readers could not underestimate her suffering for her unexplainable desire. When Hilda Wangel reappears in *The Master Builder*, she mentions only about her father to Solness. She does not mention about a stepmother. Thus, no one can dismiss the idea that Ellida may after all left Wangel. We never can guarantee Ellida’s choice as nothing is concrete. Her choice may change and fluctuate as the nature water.

Her ritual swim does, in fact, penetrate her conscience, but then the danger of analysis is present. Swimming has become a ritual in her daily life. “Swimming is Buoyancy and confirming” (Jobes 1961, 1518) to Ellida. Wangel sees this as a passion in her life. “It’s her regular practice now, everyday- and in all sorts of weather [...] Although she’s definitely shown signs of nervousness in the past two years. Off and on, I mean. I really can’t make out

just what the trouble is. But the bathing in the sea- it's become almost the one ruling passion of her life." (Ibsen 1978, 603)

This obsession and attachment to water through her daily swimming signals her search for refuge from her depression. She searches mental refuge from this brackish water although never satisfied. Her swimming ritual indirectly suggests the inner turmoil, which she undergoes daily, and her attempts to release the pressure of repressed psychic feelings through the ocean of her unconscious. The ease with which her activity will give clues, how well she navigates through those very complex parts in herself. Swimming can represent moving forward in her life and trying to achieve her goal, to get somewhere in her life, and freedom from her usual limitations. Expanses of water usually symbolizes the unconscious. Her daily habit thus, shows how she trusts the unconscious and supports by it. She has confidence and is receptive to its creative power. Nevertheless, her deepening dissatisfaction with the water indicates her struggle to move toward her achievement of her longing for liberty. Bathing and swimming are always symbols of cleansing and renewal. Swimming outdoors denotes success in the future; everything is looking up, because of the gaining strength and endurance.

However, Lyngstrand's main intention in this summer resort is to build up his strength and "savor the ocean bathing". The first picture of Lyngstrand gives the impression of a fragile personality without delicate health. Each time he enters the scene, through the gate as a civil, respectful outsider. He never comes to the garden jumping over the fence as the Stranger does. Lyngstrand is the first person who mentions his attachment to the ocean. Though the sea has been literally cruel he embraces the outcome. His intention of ocean bathing is something physical, related to health yet not spiritual. Swimming and bathing are activities that can be both recreational and mediating. Lyngstrand's attempts to strengthen the physical health by ocean bathing gives hope for cure and life as well. Ocean bathing thus becomes a fabulous workout, which has been found to be not only beneficial for his human body, but also perfect for relaxing the mind of the young ailing body undertaking it. It enhances the flexibility for him and provides the scope for boosting the physical activity workout level. Hence, Lyngstrand's attachment with his ocean bathing and swimming is a means of personal gain of health, literally a mean of practical purpose for him to turn a new leaf in his life as a sculptor.

On the other hand, Arnholm is "not very much of a swimmer" (Ibsen 1978, 634). He sticks to the shore, to the earth. He believes that he belongs to the land. Water is not a dialect, which

amuses him. “I never got the impression humanity was so very melancholy. Quite the contrary, I think the majority take life for the best, as it comes- and with a great, quite, instinctive joy.” (Ibsen 1978, 639) he says. He came in hope of Bolette, because of his misinterpretation of Wangel’s letter. Yet, even he found out Wangel meant Ellida not Bolette, he bonds to his impression. Nevertheless, he was the aging tutor of the young girl, when he saw the opportunity, he bought her up. On the verge of despair and insecurity, when no one is there to turn to apart from her father, Bolette sold herself to Arnholm, hoping to get education in return. It is the eternal bargain, which infinitively recur in the social capitalist world.

Arnholm. [...] All this that you’ve said – these doubts you’ve had – they don’t frighten me. If I don’t have you whole heartedly now, I’ll find the ways to win you. [...]

Bolette. Now I can live in the world, in the midst of life. You promised me that. [...] Imagine – to be free – and to come out – into the unknown. And not to worry about the future, or scrimping to get along – (Ibsen 1978, 679).

2.4 Contaminated and Stagnant as the deeper layers of the fjord.

The first impression to the element of water attached to a human being taken to beam with Bolette. She is the protagonist in the sub plot, which runs parallel to the main. Bolette, the eldest daughter of Wangel, by his first marriage is a teenage in the marriageable age. Since the death of her mother, she took the family chores as her own responsibility and took care of her father and the little sister Hilda. Even though when her stepmother; Ellida, a woman who is not much older than she is entered the family, the things did not change. In literary, she is the mother of the house when the play starts. She is responsible for the domestic things, she is responsible for making the house clean and neat, she makes sure whether her little sister behaves well, she is worried about her father’s health, she is well aware of her step mother’s situation, she is the one who understands the truth, but suppressed family reality within the house. She is the person in the play who has sacrificed herself for others happiness. Thus, she has become pathetic. She suffers from deep sadness and bitterness for been neglected. On the other hand, she is bubbling with energy, which of course, has been repressed inside, to break through, to go to the wide unknown world .We see the first glimpse of Bolette as, “Bolette Wangel *comes out through the open door to the veranda. She is carrying a large vase of flowers, which she sets down on the table.*” (Ibsen 1978, 593).

The very first sight of Bolette depicts her reality. She carries a large vase of flowers. Since the flowers are inside, it can be assumed that she carries a vase filled with water. She carries a container of water, which the water takes the shape of the vase. Bolette her self in reality is a substitute of the water in the container. She could not flow, she could not feel the ambivalent nature of the water. If describe simply, she is not free. She is restricted and moulded by the container she lives in. When placed on the table with flowers in it, everyone could notice it. Yet, all will notice the flowers not the water in it. When days pass, the water in the vase gradually becomes stagnate, however none will notice until the flowers dried out. When the flowers dried out, without a beauty, without a smell, the water will be thrown away. Her present life in this small fjord village undergoes this gradual stagnation. None notices her situation and look beyond her. Even though they will appreciate her responsibilities (the flowers), the true inner nature of Bolette Wangel (the gradually contaminating water) will be ignored; the depressed, weeping, pathetic and isolated soul.

In contrast, on average, all pure bodies of water; fountains underneath fills ponds and represent the womb; pregnant with desires to return the mothering waters and be nourished or escape responsibility. It also emerges the knowledge that is deep or mysterious; possibly occult or metaphysical; one's inner world of feelings or emotions. The mirror like surface symbolizes reflection that leads to awareness. However, the immediate body of water, the stagnant pond in the play credits as the abode of impurification of the life and emerging unconscious material that demotes the growth of Ellida and Bolette. The impure body of water represents tranquility and desire for more quiet time for both. It is the symbol, which reflects their truthful situation and what happens in and around their lives. Everything is contaminated and limited. No flowing out, no freedom and no place for deeper meaning of life. It suggests that they keep their feelings contained and such feelings represent the water in the flower vase as well. The surrounded imprisoned nature of the pond links the moments when they look inside their own emotions.

Same as Ellida, Bolette has been going through a lot of transitions lately, and has been focusing a lot on trying to improve herself. She was wondering what to do with her life and wondered if she was truly happy or just deceiving herself. Thus, the impure water more or less represents her depression and stagnation without a hope to break away.

Bolette. Yes, I read every book I can get hold of and that I think I can learn from. One wants so much to know something about the world. Because here we live so completely cut off from everything that's going on. Well, almost completely. [...] I don't think we live very differently from the carp down there in the pond. They have the fjord so close to them, and there the shoals of great, wild fish go streaking in and out. But these poor, tame pet fish know nothing of that, and they'll never be part of that life. [...] we live our snug little lives out here, in our fish pond (Ibsen 1978, 635-636).

What she wants is to get away and to break away the boundaries of the snug little pond. She has no will power in her to speak about her heart desires; to speak her real wishes seriously and unequivocally. Born without a will power is "one trait" she has picked up from her father. She is a pathetic character who demoralizes on her actual proviso. She sees that Wangel is much involved with Ellida and has no little time to think of her future, and not much interest either. On one hand she is a loving, devoted, responsible daughter and a mother figure to Hilde. On the other, she cognizes the bitter truth in her life in this small stagnant pond like dwelling. She is helpless and feels utterly powerless to make an attempt. Even though, she gets the chance, she "dread(s)" to leave her poor father's soul. Her love and kindness towards him made her attached her life with him although she definitely believes that when he goes, she does not have any one to turn to. Nevertheless, her bubbling desire to erupt does not give room for her to hide her irritation towards both Wangel and Ellida, "But it does seem so unfair that I should have to stay on here at home! It's really no earthly use to Father. And I have obligations to myself too[...]. I'm just fated to stay in my fish pond, that's all" (Ibsen 1978, 637). It is noticeable that Bolette is very open toward Arnholm, though she considered him as a "decrepit specimen" at first. Throughout the whole play, she opens her inner self only to Arnholm. She seeks refuge from him through her denotations and confessions. In the verge of utter helplessness she thus breathes a hope of life when Arnholm offers a helping hand. Yet, when she realizes the bargain, she was stunned, embarrassed and felt she's been cheated. A pure bargain she has to admit if she wishes to swim away from the pond to the fjord.

The poor fish in the tiny pond become the reflections of some content from the unconscious, emotions, or life energy that are been stirring around in the unconscious from the beginning of the life. Ellida is in the verge of a scrutiny, so is Bolette. In this way, fish symbolize the stirring selves of Ellida and Bolette, themselves. Ellida must choose, between imprisonment

and freedom, between stagnant present and unknown future, between Wangel and the Stranger, so does Bolette. She must choose between limited and unlimited. Thus, she must choose between pond and fjord; between her father and Arnholm, between domestication and education. However, when compared with Ellida, Bolette is satisfied with the nearby brackish fjord.

The fish is a very powerful and positive image in many world traditions.¹⁶ Fish was considered as a symbol of fertility by Babylonians, Phoenicians, and Assyrians. As it can swim to the abyss of the ocean and explore the hidden depths, Native Americans considered fish as the image of the mystical secrets. In Scandinavia, fish was considered as a symbol of sensuality, love and sex. The ancient Christians believed the fish as the symbol for the consciousness of the Christ. It was according to the notion of the Greek acronym for; Jesus Christ, Son of God. There is also the fact that the coming of Jesus escorted in the Age of Pisces the Fish, which enclosed the spirituality, love, and contentment to which all world mores ascribe to the fish. It may suggest their need to look to earlier situations for guidance in a present situation. In an astrological perspective, twin or double fishes can represent the astrological sign for Pisces. The last sign of the Zodiac, Pisces, intimately entangled with the symbolism of water and of the dissolution of forms, which takes place in the universe. It may or may not a coincidence that Ibsen himself belongs to the Pisces in the zodiac according to his birth date.

If Capricorn marks the beginning of the process of dissolution, Pisces denotes the final moment which, for this very reason, contains within itself the beginning of the new cycle. [...] when transposed, by analogy, to the existential and psychic plane, denotes defeat and failure, exile or seclusion, and also mysticism and the denial of the self and its passions. The dual aspect of this symbol is well expressed by the zodiacal sign itself, composed of two fishes arranged parallel to one another but facing in different directions: the left hand fish indicates the direction of involution or the beginning of a new cycle in the world of manifestation, while the fish that faces the right points to the direction of evolution- the way out of the cycle (Cirlot 1971, 256).

The poor fish in the pond, however when interpreted in relation to the divine element of Pisces, the two fish swim opposite directions yet abound together with the silver code, give the spiritual and emotional in nature of expression. Pisces instinct and mind's eye are at once

¹⁶ Jobs, Gertrude. *Dictionary of Mythology Folklore and Symbols*. The Scarecrow Press, Inc. New York. 1961. Pages 574-575.

their power and weakness. They are engrossed to the mystical side of things, and herein lay potential peril, for when drawn below the waves of contemporary life, the scope of thoughts and the subconscious offer constitution. Lacking the base of reality, it becomes easy to struggle and to mislead the direction. Thus, for the two fishes in the play, Ellida and Bolette reality is just a shared illusion, and, in a superior sense, it is the truth of their lives. Nevertheless, they still struggle to survive in this shared illusion of reality and the toil of these compassionate females feel the pain of their society. There is no easy escape for them. When Ellida tries to swim to the past, Bolette tries the opposite. Astrologically, the water element, which connects with Pisces, symbolizes sensation and passion. Water runs deep and searches its own path until it finds the way to flow. The cycle of water is endless with the snow falling and melting. The fountain streams join to make the great rivers that run to the sea. The tides and currents whip the oceans. Similarly, the feelings of Ellida and Bolette are flowing as they connect the present with past and seek the future, *the way out of the cycle*.

On the contrary, the pond is “more mysterious.” thinks Lyngstrand. And, it is “more thrilling” for Hilda. They find adventure and excitement in this stagnation and limitation. Lyngstrand finds more value to his life when he thinks Bolette waiting for him, yet he does not want to marry her as she might be too old for him when he returns. To think a woman wasting a whole life for him becomes *thrilling* for Hilda. In addition, to think herself as a grieving young bride dressed in black *thrilling* as well. This is the woman who led a man¹⁷ to the top of a tower and let him kill himself and says “But he went straight, straight to the top. And I heard harps in the air.” (Ibsen 1978, 860).

¹⁷ Solness in *The Master Builder* (1892)

3. On the Verge of Modernity.

Water as the eternally moving and penetrating mode of life in the Mother Nature, the appeal of the elemental play pervades *The Lady from the Sea* as a poetic disposition for uncertainty. Uncertainty of the minds of human beings in the verge of the great break through to the 20th century. The first sketches of the play, which dated back to 1880 already depict this penetrating theme; that is the confusion within the orthodoxy and unconscious potentiality towards modernity in the late 19th century. Especially within some astonished minds, such as Ibsen's himself. A brief flash back prior to the birth of *The Lady from the Sea* confirms the notion of his fluctuating confusion within the drastically changing society with less values.

Norway was more empathetic towards *The Wild Duck* than it has been towards *The Enemy of the People*. The language of the play itself depicted Ibsen's vigorousness and his attachment to Norway. Nevertheless, the criticism which followed *The Wild Duck* totally confused him. Norwegians always had contradictory and heated attitude toward his plays, although it indicates how closely they were rooted in the depths of the country life in Norway. But, this time it was more than conflict but bewilderment! "It is a queer book" wrote *Fedraheimen* and further confirmed by Henrik Jæger. Jæger wrote to *Christiania Intelligentssedler*: "The public does not know which way to turn, and they will not be much wiser after reading the criticism that had appeared: one paper says this and the other that." *Aftenposten* wrote, "One can puzzle and puzzle over what Ibsen means and still not find it out." Margrete Vullum wrote, "There is a mockery here that has depths upon depths. Statement is opposed to statement, so that each time one thinks one has caught 'the intention of the play,' a new statement comes to erase one's impression." *Morgenbladet* did not understand the play at all. It said, "Since people had expected some truth or other that the author wanted to impress on his age, or some kind of problem that was to be discussed, their expectation will hardly be satisfied." The action of the play was thus just as peculiar as it is tenuous [...] it would be hard to string together a strange set of details[...] and the total impression is hardly anything more than a strong feeling of emptiness and uneasiness." (Koht 1971, 359). Thus, Ibsen was labeled neither a conservative nor a liberal. However, *Dagbladet* managed to find a pattern to connect Ibsen into the liberal movement noting "a new element" in it. "What Ibsen had not done

before, he has done in this book; from a basis of humanity he advocates the cause of humanity, even a very tattered humanity. He has become a realist in the fullest sense of the word.” (Koht 1971, 360), it said.

On 14th of June 1885 in Trondheim, Ibsen spoke at a function of Worker’s Society, which was organized in honor of the great play writer.

There is still much to be done in this country [...] before we can be said to have achieved full freedom. But our present democracy scarcely has the strength to accomplish the task. An element of aristocracy must enter into our political life, our government, our members of parliament and our press. I am of course not thinking of aristocracy of wealth, of learning, or even of ability of talent. I am thinking of aristocracy of character, of mind and will. That alone can make us free. And this aristocracy, which I hope may be granted to our people, will come to us from two sources, the only two sections of society which have not yet been corrupted by party pressure. It will come to us from our women and from our working men. The reshaping of social conditions which is now being undertaken in Europe is principally concerned with the future status of the workers and of women. That is what I am hoping and waiting for, and what I shall work for with all my might (Meyer 1971, 55).

What was written above is his consciousness of what to come in the future, however not understood by his contemporaries. The traditional believers were naturally against him and Ibsen was aware of the hatred poured toward him. He later recalled that he has been afraid of that the people may have stood against him with their canes and may have spat on his back. Yet, he was as strong, intellectual and brave as ever and warned the public on 4th of September 1886 in Molde, that the ideas he wanted to give birth to the world may not win the sympathy of all but the elements he set forth would respect his view as he respected theirs.

During his visits to Norway he has mentioned about the “nobility of spirit” he longed to encounter. And here, he met the man who became the man who struggled and squeezed in his own inner conflict, Count Snoilsky. And in this man, Ibsen encountered the unquenchable yearning, sense of vulnerability and the true spirit of nobility. Thus, Snoilsky became the hidden spirit for the origin of Rosmer in *Rosmersholm*. Although Rosmer dreams of awakening people he could not escape from the old traditional ties, and thus results the fatal for him who yearns to break through. His struggle thus, is against the inheritance of the past and his own personality. Placing the main character between two women Ibsen follows the

same pattern from *Catiline* and *The Pillars of the Society*. The memory of the past and the living in the present thus intertwined parallel to the two women.

Shortly after the publication of *Rosmersholm*, a group of young students wrote to him and asked his intention on the play. As a result, he emphasized the “necessity of the work “and stated the play was certainly contemporary and ““the struggle that every serious person has to engage in with himself in order to bring his life conduct into harmony with his understanding’ [...] ‘our moral consciousness, our consciousness’ has such ‘deep roots in tradition and generally in the past,’[...] that it does not keep pace with purely intellectual advances. But ‘first and foremost the play is, of course, a literary work about human beings and human destinies.’” (Koht 1971, 377).

Nevertheless, the feedback he received was shocking. It got the worst reviews among his late mature plays except *Ghosts*. *Aftenposten* “knocked” it twice within one week. The play was found to be distasteful and characters were disapproved as fake and totally disagreeable. “They would do better to keep their thoughts to themselves,” it wrote. “Is this decadence and decline, or merely an ebb?” questioned Bredo Morgenstjerne:

Writers move towards a greater clarity and harmony as they grow older, Ibsen has done the reverse, employing his technical skills to disturb and depress, leading us not to clarity but darkness, not to calm contemplation but to the fruitless pondering of unsolved riddles. Ibsen seems more and more to have withdrawn into himself and turned away from life and its realities [...] devoting himself more and more to pessimistic speculation[...] Will Ibsen ever return to a more wholesome a positive outlook? (Meyer 1971, 70).

His isolation of Norwegian politics therefore was completed after *Rosmersholm*. The speech he gave in Trondheim in 1885 declared his future visions and beliefs. He believed that “the present age was the end of an era and that a new age was dawning, a third kingdom in which ‘current political and social conceptions will cease to exist’.” (Meyer 1971, 77). As Professor Francis Bull interpreted, Ibsen had a program in 1885 when he was in Trondheim and identified himself with age. Yet, he had a dream vision in Stockholm in 1887. And, afterwards “he cherished only a vague hope for an unguessable future” (Meyer 1971, 77). Ibsen further emphasized this, when he wrote to the editor of the *Aftenposten*, Amandus Schibsted on 27th of March 1888. “I, who have never in my life concerned myself with politics, but only social questions! And my presumed opponents refuse to understand this. It is

not praise or favor that I ask for, but understanding. Understanding!” (Meyer 1971, 102). Nine years later, the great playwright powerless to “acclimatize” him to the changed society wrote his old friend George Brandes,

Can you guess what I am dreaming about, and planning, and picturing to myself as something delightful? It is, to make a home for myself near the Sound, between Copenhagen and Elsinore, on some free, open spot, where I can see all the sea-going ships starting on and returning from their long voyages. That cannot do here. Here all the sounds are closed, in every sense of the word- and all the channels of sympathetic understanding are blocked. Oh, dear Brandes, it is not for nothing that a man lives for twenty – seven years in the wider, emancipated and emancipating spiritual conditions of the great world. Up here, by the fjords, is my native land. But – but – but! Where am I to find my homeland? (Weigand 1960, 210).

Ibsen’s emotive words show his deepening longing for a deep powerful atmosphere and at the same time his consciousness for this desire and the opulent complement of his craving to flee from the stifling atmosphere of a country that caress retreating wave of conservative to radical beliefs of “ebb and flow ”. When Ibsen came back to Norway after twenty seven years of physical exile he expected to see his motherland as when he was left. Yet, the vast physical and intellectual change within and without the country and the beings living there made him paralyzed within his yearning for a land, which he knew, thus he was consciously or unconsciously aware of the incoming future. The fluctuation of the late 19th century Norway mingled in the currents of the changing conservative society and unconscious towards the approaching modern era thus, I claim, is symbolized in the play, *The Lady from the Sea* by eternally changing element of *Water*.

3.1 The two steps of modern development in Norway.

When it was decided to dissolve the Norwegian national council by the Danish king and the Danish authorities in 1536, Norway’s means of National sovereignty was demolished. Norway was to be entirely cooperated into Denmark turning into nothing but a Danish province. This was then not a redundant peril but the land was to be sacrificed for the profit for the Danish ruling class. The new amendments gave the authorities dominant intellectual and enriching powers. In 1536, the Danish king was converted to Lutheranism and was given

possession of all church property. Following, initiated by the king, an industrial development of mining and manufacturing immediately started and since the 16th century, Norway had been the modern and industrialized part of Denmark-Norway. The union which lasted less than 300 years was noteworthy when consider what Norway did gain out of this.

The population had increased sixfold; economically the country was richer and much more developed; and it had got back its own ruling classes. Admittedly it had taken over the written language of Denmark, and the spoken language of Norway too was much influenced by Danish. But there was an awareness of Norway's distinctiveness that was at least as strong in 1814 as it had been in 1536. Thus the break itself in 1814 was surprising (Danielsen 1995, 123).

During the Denmark-Norway union a stable economic growth was in progress although Norwegians lost several territories as a result of complicated wars waged by Denmark against Sweden. A new constitution was drawn up in 1660 accompanying a period of total monarchy following the election of Frederik III as king of Denmark-Norway. Although, Norway was governed from Copenhagen, the real power of the union was based on the state officials in Christiania, which was advised by the Norwegians on higher ranks before implementing policies and decisions. In the wake of regional economic developments, an urban upper and middle class began to emerge in the Norwegian towns during the late 17th and 18th centuries. As a result of their challenges against the government's on-going efforts to make Copenhagen the economic hub of the two territories, the efforts were well paid along with demands for a Norwegian University (founded in 1811 and established in 1813) and the national bank, thus symbolized the growing national consciousness and the light to modernity. Thus, while Denmark was a feudal, agricultural country, Norway was compared with Denmark and most countries in Europe (or the world) a modern, industrialized country by 1814 based on natural resources and energy with a large timber export and mining based on water power and a merchant fleet of sailing ships.

In the history of Norway there has been a clear propensity to see the union with Denmark in the glow of the actions of 1814. For some historians, 1814 was the accepted result of a long course of interior growth primarily to political and state independence. For others 1814 was the result of the association of foreign powers in a Danish Norwegian union that was still both secure and strong. When we consider in a wider global view point it is easy for us to understand the place of Norway in the Europe and its share in its overall development. It is

noteworthy, that the “other countries of Europe the years 1500-1800 were not called the Danish period or ‘the time of union’ rather one talks of the ‘early modern period’” (Danielsen 1995, 125). This overall development occurred both in the areas of population and economic growth. The economic growth was, however, faster than the growth of the population. This initiated the great breakthrough during the industrial revolution of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The growth of the economy accomplice with the globalised labor, communication, trade and urbanization. The development visible in the 1800 however did not occur within an overnight, but has extended roots to the Middle Ages. The new era between 1500- 1800 is the result of a gradual development in the adjacent bonds with the other parts of the world when the great inventions and discoveries ensure around 1500. Without a doubt the Europeans had the high profit out of these acquaintances as a result of constructive mercantile bonds and import of precious metals like silver. But, only certain countries had these connections with other parts of the Europe. Over the time the connections were bound within the Mediterranean to Spain and Portugal and then to France, Netherlands and finally to England. It was in England the major economical and industrial revolution began. Thus, the worldwide contacts moved further.

For Norway the stimulus came via an increased demand for, above all, timber, fish and metals. In exchange, Norway took not only corn and cash, but also a wide variety of more finished goods. In this one sees a feature that was much clearer in the relationship between Europe as a whole and the other parts of the world; the heartland build up the production of ever more advanced goods while the periphery stagnated as a supplier of raw materials. Apparently, one finds in Europe a corresponding periphery, of which Norway was a part (Danielsen 1995, 126-127).

On the other hand within the Norwegian society there were a hierarchy of ranks and distinctive social societies within the population due to the Norwegian topography and cultural landscapes. This resulted as a means of low population and great distances among the populated areas. Larger proportion of the population lived by the sea. Thus, boats and the small vessels became the speedy means of communication and goods were transported by the sea. However, communication was more complicated in the inland, mainly in the mountain areas. Although the wheeled transportations were not easy inland when the rivers and lakes froze during winter, it opened the opportunity for transport by horse and sleigh. When compared to the rest of the Europe Norway had a better means of communication. Thus,

At the local level however, Norwegians had a greater circle of contacts. Taken together with the ever-wider interaction brought about through travel or seasonal migration in connection with trade, transport, shipping and fishing, the impression is sharpened that Norway was usually mobile and unusually open, both internally and externally (Danielsen 1995, 143).

Around 1500 with a population of about 150,000, the agriculture and the fisheries gained the means of employment. The exportation of dried fish supported the importation of the grain. When the population grew in six fold three hundred years later, the seacoasts were explored more for fish to finance the supplement of grain. While Norwegian forests supplied vast timber stock for export, the mines were investigated for minerals. Besides, Norwegian shipping industry achieved a major position in the world's shipping industry.

All in all we find an increase in the growth of diversity of the Norwegian economy. The growth of population and the growth of international market were undoubtedly the two most important forces behind this expansion. [...] Native skills lay behind the growth of agriculture, fishing, and forestry, while foreign expertise contributed much to trade and shipping and practically everything to the emergence of a Norwegian mining industry. A contemporary approach to calculate the income derived from the Norwegian export industries in the 1805 gives an indication of the relative strengths of each. The export of fish was set at 2.7 million riksdaler; timber at 4.5 million; the products of the mines at 0.8 million; and the income from shipping at 2.0 million (Danielsen 1995, 156).

Within these growth and development in the Norwegian society, the increased population, natural environment and economical stability initiated a spontaneous growth of self-awareness within the Denmark-Norway union. Even though, at the end period of this union, the bonds between the two kingdoms began to fall apart, the administrative acquaintances between Danish and Norwegian authorities were stronger immediately before the Napoleon wars. Economical contacts between the two nations were powerful in shipping and exchanging goods. Consequently, those reached to conditions that are more liberal after 1780s onwards. The cultural associates extended in advanced scales, strongly and freely around 1800 than the previous years of the union.

The association collapsed first because, in the course of 300 years Norwegian society has grown large enough, rich enough and self-conscious enough to step into the ranks of independent states. A governing elite lacking in 1536 had finally developed. This elite saw itself as Norwegian, and this awareness, in the end, proved stronger than the closer links with Denmark. [...] But [...] Oldenburg monarchy was drawn into a major

European conflict in 1807 that, with one blow opened up a serious crack within it (Danielsen 1995, 197-198).

At the end of the Napoleonic wars, the union between Denmark and Norway was dissolved in 1814. Norway and Denmark were with France during the war and after Napoleon's defeat, Norway could have been handed over to Sweden who had fought for the opposing side. This could have happened after the treaty of Kiel in January 1814 as a compensation for Sweden's loss of Finland (to Russia) in 1809. In April 1814, Karl Johan searched help from his allies to establish the Peace of Kiel. However, within a few months, a national assembly was called in Norway and a constitution was carried unanimously at Eidsvoll 17th of May. Anyhow, there were negotiations with the Storting (The Norwegian parliament) about the conditions which a union with Sweden should take place. As a consequence, Norwegians believed that the Eidsvoll constitution had been renowned the facts. Thus, having the Swedish king and the foreign policy in common, Norway joined a union with Sweden as an independent nation. During this union the Norwegians were fortunate to have extended freedom and their own parliament Storting. The extraordinary Storting in consequence a novel institutional congregation met on 7th of October. As a result, Cristian Fredrik gave up the throne and the Storting revised the constitution with a view to a free union and a weaker monarchy.

During the early years of the union National independence and political freedom were considered as the most valuable to the existence of the nation. The Norwegian political system was empowered by the labored attempts to establish and nourish the united values. The rising sentiment of natural harmony was brought about by the development of political and cultural life of the fresh Norway. The nation was considered as united administratively as well as economically. Since 1814, Norway experienced a vast economic and a higher degree of a social growth compared to its history.

The population increased from 0.9 million at the beginning of the nineteenth century to 2.2 million in 1900 and in excess of 4 million today, in spite of great wave of emigration from 1865 to the First World War. Throughout the whole of this period the old primary industries had been in full retreat relative to industry, trade and service sector. At the same time the majority of the population had moved from the countryside to the town. Also, in the course of the nineteenth century Norway became one of the world's leading maritime nations. Economically, culturally and politically, the country became ever more closely integrated into the international community (Danielsen 1995, 218).

Nevertheless, as the Swedish king was an absolute monarchy, he clashed repeatedly with the Norwegian parliament “Storting” during this union, until the parliamentary system was established in Norway in 1884. The years immediately following 1814 were not in favor of the Norwegians. Both the countries had to pay compensation in full for the lost war and at the same time to establish their own independent bank and currency. During this period, Norwegians were exposed to the worst economic strain they had ever undergone in Norway’s history. Their common marketing bonds with Denmark were defused and the British market was turned back to Norwegian timber. With this dissolution, Norway was initially pulled into economic despair. Mines and sawmills lost their foreign customers. Most of the wealthier upper class merchants in the south-east Norway went bankrupt. The disaster was deep and exhausting. During this economical crisis there were however number of attempts was taken to strengthen the relationship between the Swedish monarch and the Norwegians. As a result, the crisis in 1821, the Swedish monarch assembled troops outside Oslo to force the Storting to accept increased power for the monarchy, was rejected. However, Norwegian parliamentary assembly, the Storting, abolished the nobility and the bureaucracy created an exclusive class of civil servants in 1821.

Following decades however, the nationalism became a prior concern in order to establish a secure common identity. Gradually the idea was injected to the young minds in schools and higher educational institutions. The educational ideas marked a significant position in the nation building movements. This kind of an image was considered as a necessity inside the forerunners of a novel nation. Starting from 1830, with a notable peak in 1840 there was a tendency from moving away from the ancient world and into the depths of the Norwegian people. Subsequently, Norway benefited a period of economic buoyancy of more independent trade customs from 1830s. Mercantile rights were expanded and tax free trade was encouraged. Norway took part fully in the general trends affecting Europe in the years followed. New organizational methods were initiated in agriculture. The first textile factories and engineering workshops were set up in urban areas. Public health facilities and a universal elementary education system were introduced. Postal and telegraphic links were established and new roads and railways were constructed.

However, the steam engines took over in the 19th century and Norway was reduced to a secondary nation (among the new industrialized nations) without steam engines, large local markets and favorable landscapes for development of railways and channels. Norwegians did

not have coal for the steam engines and had to import it. The new industry from the 1840s which was basically based on steam was small and targeted the local market. Although Norway owned the largest fleet of sailing ships in the world, Norwegian hydro powered technology was outdated to compete with other nations who developed modern fleets of steam ships in the 19th century. Thus, seen from the eye of 19th century Europe, Norway was a poor, backward and provincial nation. Before 1840 most likely only agriculture and fishing output was significantly higher when compared the pre war era. 1840 onwards the growth became more ordinary and the economical factors depended more on timber and fishing. In spite, in the 1870s Norway by no means consider as underdeveloped, yet not modernized either based on the Gross National Product (GNP) on the period. It had the same strength as Denmark yet ahead of Sweden in the period of 1850-1870. “Was the standard of living higher? It is not possible to give even a reasonably reliable answer to this basic question, and certainly not before 1850. The indicators are fairly crude. Down to the middle of the century, most people had to make a living within the peasant economy.” (Danielsen 1995, 248). Agriculture was the basic supplier for the demand of the food and in addition fish, timber, handicrafts and shipping added an extra income to the country. Even though the overall income was higher in 1850 than in 1815, all the member of the rural peasant society did not benefit it. Those who were without property, the crofters and the day laborers, did not benefit the increasing standards and faced the worst. The number of the crofters and the day laborers reached a peak in 1850.

According to the concept of Marxism and Marxist sociology, Proletarianization refers to the social process whereby people move from being either an employer, or self-employed, to being employed as a crofter or a day laborer by an employer. In Marxist theory, proletarianisation is the most important form of downward mobility in the society to the degree to which an individual's family or group's social status can change throughout the course of their life through a system of social hierarchy or social layers. However, with in the Norwegian towns,

[...] too there was no evidence of increased proletarianization. The group that was made up of labourers, ordinary seaman and servants increased in size, but at a lower rate than the broad middle layer of small traders, handicraft master and the journeymen, factory owners and white-collar workers and ships' masters. *Embetsmenn* and richer merchants, who topped the social hierarchy in the towns, also declined in numbers relative to the rest of the urban population (Danielsen 1995, 250).

As an overall view, after 1850, economic growth of Norway was in a strong condition so that the population benefited an increased living condition when compared to the earlier years. New work places were cropped up and more compatriots moved to the towns in search of employment. Not to forget the *American Fever* either. Approximately 100,000 emigrated between the years of 1866-1873 to America. Wider range of these emigrants was belonged to the farmers and their families from rural areas. Thus, the social and geographical conditions in this period “helped to break up the existing social structure” ((Danielsen 1995, 251).

Throughout the 19th century, the Storting came into regular conflict with the Swedish monarchy in its efforts to establish a greater degree of autonomy within the union, although the economic developments were poor and accompanied by rising political consciousness. Liberal Party leader Johan Sverdrup contributed deep separatist’s aspirations to the early political development by 1882. As a result, Swedish king; Oscar II attempted repeatedly to reject Sverdup’s bill yet failed. Thus, though reluctantly the Swedish monarchy requested Sverdrup to form a government which clearly derivative its authority from the Norwegian Storting rather than the Swedish crown. Within the 19th century labors to initiate an independent nation from Sweden was intensified. Clashes on the theme of the union finally came to fruition in the early years of the 20th century with an argument over Norwegian demands for a separate foreign ministry and the institution of Norwegian consulates overseas. Within this political struggle, the radical step toward the new era of Norwegian modernity came at the end of the 19th century with the outburst of electricity. This was an opportunity not to miss for Norwegians as the electric power and the new engine technology based on fuel and no longer on steam. Hence, Norway was not reluctant to take the advantage of its natural resources by generating hydropower from its natural waterfalls. The Norwegian towns were the first in the world to get electric streetlights and Norwegian homes were electrified long before other countries.

When Ibsen returned to Norway, he was amazed and impressed of the development and change which has occurred during his years of exile. However, it was not until after 1905, Norway entered the new modern age becoming the world’s largest producer of products based on electricity and electric power. In addition, the Norwegian merchant fleet became not only one of the largest in the world, but by far the most modern. Despite of the great immigration period from 1865 and the two world wars, primary industries of Norway regained their

position and retreated in relation to industry trade and service sector in the course of the 20th century. Within this development majority of the population moved into towns from countryside. More over Norway became one of the pioneers in the maritime industry and the country became more involved economically, culturally and politically within the international community. Today, the *backward* country in the out skirts of Europe after 1814, regained the position economically and culturally as the continent's most developed. The majority of the population gained a position of an earlier impossible standard of welfare and prosperity. During this endeavor the Norwegian state's function as an organizer and an integrator became more cogent.

As described above, Norwegian modernity relatively began a good era before 1814 and it was on the contrary a developed and industrialized country prior to 1814. Therefore, Norway got its own constitution in 1814 and entered the union with Sweden as an independent country with its own parliament and extended self-rule. Because of numerous reasons after 1814, Norway lost its position and pulled backward as a seemingly underdeveloped country. In addition, it continued to have this position until the end of the 19th century and it was after 1905 that Norway regained its position as a modern nation. When the union with Sweden officially dissolved in 1905 from franchise of about 400,000 people who voted in favor of an independent nation, Swedes accepted the decision and Norway became an independent constitutional monarchy. This was one year before Ibsen's death. Therefore, the 19th century Norway was not a modern nation to Ibsen yet, but a nation, which was steadily empowered towards the unconscious potential of modernity.

Ibsen was fully aware that he lived in an era characterized by enormous consequential technological changes, and he in fact invested in both tramway and railway shares. At the same time he doesn't appear to have been particularly interested in information technology; he wrote a tremendous number of letters, yet rarely sent a telegram. Despite their obvious dramaturgic advantages, he does not employ telephones in any of his plays. [...] Neither did Ibsen have a telephone installed at home. He seems to have taken steamships and trains for granted [...] (Hjemdahl 2006, 175).

Thus, I affirm that Ibsen was not writing about the developed modernity of Norway in 1888, but through his knowledge and capability to sense, he writes what is to come and what will emerge. By means of water as a symbol of eternal change, *The Lady from the Sea* opens dialectic for a modern development/modern conditions to come/ to take place in the future

and the human dilemma within this perpetual shift towards modernity. Hence, it was not a surprise for his contemporaries to understand Ibsen's symbolic drama, *The lady from the Sea* in general by living within the current situation. For us, however who have become fortunate to live in the 21st century, it is possible to interpret Ibsen through the knowledge of history and development, and thus not unfeasible to give a meaning for Ibsen's enigma in *The Lady from the Sea*.

3.2 Modernity and self-reflection.

In *Modernity and Self-Identity* (1991), Anthony Giddens's writes that:

Modernity can be understood as roughly equivalent to 'the industrialized world', so long as it be recognized that industrialism is not its only institutional dimension[...] A second dimension is capitalism, where this term means a system of commodity production involving both competitive product markets and the commodification of labour power (Giddens 1991, 15).

The modern institutions with their diverse dynamisms, weakens the orthodox of individual habitual actions. Thus, "modernity radically alters the nature of day-to-day social life and affects the most personal aspects of our experience[...] the transmutations introduced by modern institutions interlace in direct way with individual life and therefore with the self" (Giddens 1991, 1). As Giddens interprets the self-identity is configured by the "institutions of the modernity". However the self is not understood here as an inactive existence which is sharpened only by the external environment, but an entity of direct contribution to the society in its signification. According to Giddens, changes within self-identity and globalizations are the two rationales of local and global circumstances of modernity. Transformations within self are highly connected with social connections. Thus, the self and society is intertwined in the global context. Accordingly, modernity acquaints an elemental energy into human relationships and in relation to 'trust' in 'risk environments'. Further Giddens writes,

The reflexivity of modernity extends into the core of the self. [...] in the context of post- traditional order, the self becomes a *reflexive project*. Transitions in individuals' lives have always demanded psychic reorganization, something which was often

ritualized in traditional cultures in the shape of *rites de passage*¹⁸. But in such cultures, where things stayed more or less the same from generation to generation on the level of the collectivity, the changed identity was clearly staked out- as when an individual moved from adolescence into adulthood. In the settings of modernity, by contrast, the altered self has to be explored and constructed as part of a reflexive process of connecting personal and social change (Giddens 1991, 32-33).

In *The Lady from the Sea*, self-identity presents as a complicated dilemma in the verge of modernity in comparison with social relations of the self in more traditional conditions. As “[A]ll the human beings continuously monitor the circumstances of their activities as a feature of doing what they do, and such monitoring always has discursive features” (Giddens 1991, 35), Ibsen’s beings however constrained to deviating consciousness of the circumstances of their commotion. Their everyday activities assimilated with the practical awareness. This practical awareness is a basic identification of spontaneous counsel of their acuteness, but it is “non-conscious, rather than unconscious” (Giddens 1991, 36). It is the psychological and emotional depths of the philosophical security of the human psyche in the small fjord village. The notion of security is closely linked with the practical awareness. Thus, to face the matters in the most crucial moments an arrangement of reality is presented and the decision becomes strong and robust by the degree of authenticity of the present social interactions.

In the gateway to the new modern era, the protagonist, Ellida Wangel is not depicted as a random self, but as an individual whose knowledge bisect in the areas of marriage, protection, disturbance and established turmoil. Her anxiety, disturbance and depression twisted with her individual combat with her belief in the dependability of social authenticity. She could not isolate the fact but recognize her living conditions under the rule of arbitrated faith, thus possible among other choices.

Ellida is the “expiring mermaid”. Living on an earthly ground away from the salty breeze and “inherently unsettling, and feelings of anxiety [...] particularly pronounced during episodes which have a fateful quality.” (Giddens 1991 181-182). Her unsettled confused feelings thus mingled with the sea, fjord and the pond. In the past, those were vigorous, buoyant, and wild.

¹⁸ A ceremony, often religious, marking a significant transition in a person's life, as birth, puberty, marriage, death or an event, achievement, etc. in a person's life regarded as having great significance.

In addition, the present becomes brackish and stagnant though through her unconscious becomes salty. Her future is veiled by uncertainty. She was forced to choose between her past, present and the future; between past radical nature, present traditional conservative and unknown future. When it comes to her fate, risk and security, she cannot detach completely from her conceptual structure of non-conservative situation, even though Wangel dissolved the marriage and offered her “the full freedom”. This is the truthful situation of living in a society of high fluctuating risks. Yet, there is the possibility to guide alone one’s lifestyle between the diverse potentials endeavored in an indefinite society. Appended trust in many attachments is more encroach on the individual life. And, it is not possible to disconnect one from the basic practical individual needs. Thus, Ellida considers her marriage to Wangel as a bargain, which she grabbed at a time when she had no other means to turn herself to.

Ellida. [...] Because the truth – the plain, simple truth is that you came out there and- and bought me. [...] Oh, I wasn’t one particle better than you. I met your offer- and sold myself to you. [...] But what else can I call it? You couldn’t bear the emptiness in your house any longer. You were out after a new wife- [...] I on my side – I was helpless then, not knowing which way to turn- and so utterly alone. It was such a good sense to accept your offer- since you proposed maintaining my life. [...] Yes. So you did. But the point is, I never should have accepted. Never, for any price! I never should have sold myself! The meanest work- the poorest conditions would have been better – if I’d chosen them myself, by my own free will! (Ibsen 1978, 663).

Ellida withdrew herself from the possible agnosticism or ambiguity with a sensible or a depressed angle towards a hypothetical system that alters her life’s contingent but repents it throughout the rest of her life. Parallel to Ellida, Bolette longs for the unquenchable need to be educated and see the world beyond the small fjord village, sells herself to Arnholm with the hope of been maintained. The price she pays to Arnholm; her aging old teacher is her body and sexuality with the hope of education and protection in return. With or without her free will she has to grab the opportunity when the path is clear although she does not know what lies ahead. She repeated the same cycle of Ellida. Bolette’s attempt thus seems akin to Ellida’s decision of marriage with Wangel. The society which Bolette lives in now has an affinity with Lyngstrand’s passion as well. Lyngstrand totally unaware of what becomes in his future mobilizes back through the orientation of traditional authority toward unknown existence. He believes that his aesthetical value, the gratitude he sets for his artwork must be the focal point of the happiness to the woman he marries. The wet clay which can be molded

through the fingers becomes his conviction of the place of the traditional woman, molded by a male dominated society.

Likewise, Ibsen's contemporary Camilla Collett discussed a similar theme in *The Governor's Daughters* (*Amtmandens Døtre*) which presents the breakthrough of woman's image in Norwegian literary history and the novel is an objection touching the civilization and humanity of the precedent century as acted by the narrow administrative system. It was enveloped in Norway and had its own standard name: *embetsmannskulturen* – the culture of the official. This culture interpreted the uppermost cultural principles such as modification, ethical responsibility, and the love of life's noble qualities; but Camilla Collett argues whether this society also barred women from presumptuous the same level of accountability for their own lives. When a time a woman's utmost purpose in her life was to marry, be supportive to and dedicated to her family life, Collett demonstrates the problem when this mission of the life was not based on free will. Ibsen recurred this subject in *The Lady from the Sea* followed by its successor *Hedda Gabler*. The radical element of the woman's place demands that women be allowed to choose their own husbands is that it would result in women being treated as independent and responsible individuals, which was hardly the case at that time. Nevertheless, "Today's debates are in many ways similar to the situation in the 1880's. In the same way as during the cultural fermentation at the end of the last century, women will today claim their right to influence society on a par with men. A society in change is a mobile society. During such periods of transformation there are openings for profound social changes."¹⁹

However, Lyngstrand's aesthetical fundamentalism, when interpreted diversely, it resolves the conundrum of how to live in a world of multiple options. As the clay can be molded to one's heart's desire, the life could be molded as well to suit the given situations. In other words, more blended forms of aesthetical idea, however may clearly offer significant support in shaping significant life decisions. Most of these torments among characters in the play become specifically important and accomplished with distinctive force when come to fatal moment and decisions in their individual lives. Since critical moments are,

[...] highly consequential, the individual feels at a crossroads in terms of overall life-planning. Fateful moments are phases when people might choose to have recourse to

¹⁹ Woman's role in cultural life in Norway by Norwegian National Commission. Page 26.

more traditional authorities. In this sense, they may seek refuge in pre-established beliefs and in familiar modes of activity. On the other hand, fateful moments also often mark periods of reskilling and empowerment. They are points at which, no matter how reflexive an individual may be in the shaping of her self-identity, she has to sit up and take notice of new demands as well as new possibilities. At such moments, when life has to be seen anew, it is not surprising that endeavors at reskilling are likely to be particularly important and intensely pursued (Giddens 1991, 143).

Thus it is not surprising the outcome of the two crucial moments in the play; Ellida's decision to stay back and Bolette's decision to breakthrough illustrates the "ebb and flow" of the society on the edge of modernity. Ellida decides to reconcile her pre established beliefs of Wangel; love, security, support and freedom within the bourgeon domestication and rejects the *Unknown* (The Stranger) while Bolette accelerates towards the obscure new possibilities. Similarly Ibsen's contemporaries rejected the facts of what will become in the unknown future and embraced the current situation, while Ibsen, the prophet although was not fortunate to live long to fondle his predictions tries to hint what occurred in his unconscious mind through *The Lady from the Sea*.

3.3 The *Unknown*.

The Stranger is known to no one. He has no name or has several names. He is the unseen and appeared half hidden. He *attracts* and *terrifies* at the same time. The memory he created in Ellida's mind ten years ago at Bratthammer did not imaged in her when she recounts him at present. He has changed and she could not recognize him. He is not a ship's mate, not a boatswain not even a tourist. He appears as an average traveller with a back pack and a cap, nevertheless carries the past stains of a murder. Ellida saw hallucinations years after his departure. She saw him staring next to her. She saw his eyes through her child's eyes. He did suffocate her with guilt, fear, disappointment and a feeling of unfaithfulness. He managed to create her minds vision into an imprisoned state, which reminded her often of her bargain with Wangel and then of her been sold to the bourgeon society. Nevertheless, he offered the *free will* to her. What does Ibsen try to depict after all? Nothing but the late 19th century dilemma. How could we reject the full fathom of the dilemma of the conservative minds in the verge of a breakthrough? Can The Stranger not be the *Unknown*? The personification of

the unknown future in a modern age, which Ibsen's conservatives failed to identify? In fateful moments like encountering a modern era with new possible freedom in a free nation with promising industrial developments with its natural sources, it is not a surprise for the individuals in the Norwegian society to undergo a critical period.

In its early phase, the movement was pre-eminently concerned with securing equal political and social rights between men and women. In its current stage, however, it addresses elemental features of social existence and creates pressures towards social transformations of a radical nature. The ecological and peace movements are also part of this new sensibility [...] Such movements, internally diverse as they are, effectively challenge some of the basic presuppositions and organising principles which fuel modernity's juggernaut (Giddens 1991 208).

Unconditionally in early modernity, the Norwegians lived in an antithetic sense from pre eras of their history. Everyone persisted a confined life as the water in a pond with limited movement. Moreover, the restrains of the self guaranteed that all individuals in the late 19th society were structurally positioned in time and space. Nonetheless, for Ibsen, the conversion of the place and the interference of detachment into limited performance united with the centrality of formally judged knowledge. It radically modified what the society in reality is. This is so both on the point of the unique humanity of the individual and the common universe of social activity within which cooperative public existence is accomplished.

3.4 Emerging Madness.

In 1895 (seven years after publishing *The Lady from the Sea*), Christian Krohg exhibited August Strindberg's portrait, which he has completed in Munich, at *Statens Kunstutstilling* in Christiania. During this exhibition at the advice of Sigurd, Ibsen bought this painting for 500NOK and hung it above his writing desk. Ibsen wrote to Suzanna and told, "[...] Sigurd calls it 'Revolution' and I call it 'Emerging Madness'." (Hjemdahl 2006, 185). And, when William Archer expressed his surprise at Strindberg portrait, Ibsen's response was "But I rejoice in that portrait; I think he looks so delightfully mad." (Hjemdahl 2006, 187). Further he named Strindberg as his *mortal enemy*.

The often extreme radical Strindberg was always been Ibsen's opponent. His novel *The Red Room* (1879) made him famous and his best-known play is *Miss Julie*. His writings were always compared with Ibsen's. He was considered as a naturalist, an expressionist and he attained what he called 'Greater naturalism'. He considered Ibsen's plays as common and boring as he believed Ibsen always tried to give a slice of life to his audience. Thus, he did not favor descriptive character experiences. He accepted that the accurate naturalism was the birth of psychological campaign of intelligence. Two people who abominate each other and attempt to crusade the other to doom is the type of mental hostility that Strindberg strove to describe. Furthermore, he intended his plays to be impartial and objective, quote a desire to make literature somewhat of a science. Moreover, he was quite young, experimental and modern in his thought which made Ibsen envies him. Thus, Strindberg's demanding ideas which Ibsen calls *Emerging Madness* might be a hint to the madness within a changing society which approaching to an unknown era.

When we consider Ellida Wangel's madness, her oppression is obviously a self-protective process, premeditated to demolish the remaining of the subdued significance and to protect herself against its return. Her human hospitability is centered not on her social impulses but on the self-conscious and conversion of anti- social impulses. It is obvious her sublimating attitudes have been secured from cognizant thought and advanced intrusion. A creature like Ellida, absent with the congenital humanity protests against the human demands of her society as those were promptly obvious to her that her humanity is profoundly duplicitous and made up of apparatus of reserved egoism, self bound guilt and de-sexualized shared emotion. The very asset of her being awake might detach the strength of these provisions since it is the trait of scruples notion to change, work over, take responsibility and frequent appraisal of its control opposing the fact of the sanity and the inner needs of her mortal life.

The beginnings of human society were *traumatic*- that is, that they were occasioned by an overwhelmingly powerful and unexpected event for which our ancestors were not prepared by any instinctual responses of an automatic sort and which left long-lasting and indeed indelible effects on the human psyche. Because the change to the hunting society was, in evolutionary terms, a sudden one and because the human id was not adopted for it [...] Unable fully to abreact their responses to the trauma in their still quite limited conscious awareness, and unprepared by evolution for the revolutionary change which had suddenly overtaken them, our distant hominid ancestors dealt with the upheaval in their psychological and social lives in part by repressing it and forcing out of consciousness the irreconcilable conflicts which now occupied their instinctual drives (Badcock 1983, 26-27).

Here, isolated by tyranny from straight consciousness, rational picture lives on unsuspected and unknown. Like the stagnate and still fjord depths, like the sea paths frozen with ice, they remain frozen in time. Likewise, unscathed by the change, stagnation and restitution continuously modify the system of the awareness of the psyche. This is the destiny of the base of human social life. It is been broadly reserved, as if not the clash between the inner motifs and the public existence would have been more tender and unsettling than it is. It is cynical if, but for the forces of subjugation, the moral social life of the human species could ever have become what it has.

The majority of Ibsen's contemporary plays are set in tranquilized, middle-class society where there is something to preserve, whether it is a custom or a need to protect status in the society. Yet, with approaching new ideas; there are warnings of an insurrection of the psyche. Analogous with Ibsen, Nietzsche produced his writings on freedom of humankind from religious devotion, domineering ethics and scruples. Together with Freud, Ibsen was within the same age of transformation and the yearning to attain the emotional liberation of the individual. Thus, not to deny but to accept the confusion of the social, intellectual and psychological change is the theme conjectured through *The Lady from the Sea*. Change causes torment. On the contrary to Ibsen, his characters' turmoil a struggle to gain power over their inhabitation. As Bjørn Hemmer puts it, "The bourgeois citizen is constantly facing a threat to position, order and stability – for mankind it is a far more serious question: the loss of something as irreplaceable as one's "self." (Hjemdahl, 2006,157). As Ellida's predecessor and successor clearly illustrates, Rebecca leaps into the mill race and Hedda shoots herself; both lose themselves. And, while Ibsen's most popular heroine Nora leaves in order to save herself, Peer Gynt embraces the bitter truth of nothingness. Ibsen's thoughts of the greatest of all worries in Ellida is the angst linked with loss of meaning, self-respect and individuality as well as the sentiment of having shattered her life. Her anxiety over bareness and termination of the self make aware something about Ibsen himself. Yet, he abides manacles to his sophistry, his possessions and his ordered behavior in order to advance with his exploration into what it means to be a modern human being.

4. “All that is Solid melts into Air”²⁰

The opening questions I posed in this thesis were why did *The Lady from the Sea* become unsuccessful? How do the symbol of water and its associations stand as an approach to self-reflection? How does it open out the real nature of characters? And, how does water thus, become reliable as an overall substance to understand the Norwegian society, which Ibsen's characters live in? Following these problems, I have in the thesis tried to explain how we can understand the play, consuming *Water* as the key to dissolve the enigma in it. I argued that ahead of typical contemporary critics exclusively unobservant of the approaching modernity, Henrik Ibsen devoted his art to portray the figment of the imagination of the innovation and the *Unknown* in the anguished minds. As a result, I have tried to suggest my understanding of *The Lady from the Sea* as a prologue to the modern transformation in the late nineteenth century Norwegian society. Ibsen, the master builder, builds up a hierarchy of ideas to encompass the value for his conscience through *Water* as the eternal and dominating element of change and resurrect. Ellida's dilemma, Wangel's vulnerability, Bolette's contract, Lynstrand's dream, Hilda's thrill, Arnholm's bargain, Stranger's power and Ballested's vision are all clear proofs to detrimental effect that freedom and estrangement have on all humans alike. Thus, Ibsen voices the changes within the order of humanity, finally to shove itself into another vital pace closer to modernity.

The inspiration of modernity is awareness within the structure of history flowing ferociously onwards. Modernity would be hollow in a society without a chronological order of concept in its history and coordination of time sphere in accordance with a recurrent replica. Embracing modernity by Ibsen's characters based, according to the fact that they live in a conflicting world full of compromises and fluctuations. As the individual wrestles against it, he/she realizes that by rooted to the current world; he/she positions a critical inherence in himself/herself. Nevertheless, no one triumphs in the play even though they accept the bourgeois domestication and become ethically flexible to pertain in the changing society.

²⁰ The title is borrowed from *All That is Solid Melts In To Air*, by Marshall Berman (1991). The idea is derived from Karl Marx and is repeated in many other texts, such as Anders Todal Jenssen (1998) *All that is solid melts into air: party identification in Norway* or Peter Wagner (2001) *A history and theory of Social Sciences; Not all that is solid melts into air*.

Modernity forces the humanity to lose its grips on true human beliefs even though it is an unforgivable error. Therefore, Ibsen was already adumbrating the mistake of the humanity in the past, by taking the wrong turn and became a land animal instead of been a sea animal. A modern nation has its own self-image, which identified with the practical means of living conditions in a bourgeois society. Thus, when a human with a notion of a free self-image as Ellida Wangel discovers her representation is not enlightened and free, she undergoes a torment of grief, depression melancholia and alienation. This constant means of alienation residues an idiosyncratic feature right through social values of the bourgeois society. The inner turmoil of the characters submerged to this renovating social sphere synchronized in the fact that the absent of the flexibility to *acclimatize* to the hope of an independent nation of modernity.

Hence, Ibsen reflects the inner self of his characters whom been isolated themselves in the small fjord village through the element of Water. The water performs their imprisonment and estrangement with the intrinsic cause of alienation in relation to the bodies of waters they attached with. His characters achieve and symbolize a spherical self-determining fact. Thus, the sea, fjord, and the pond or water in general determines a recurring phenomenon. It measures at the level of the personality that performs their identification and entranced force as a self-generating device, that mirror the conjoined reflection which take place at a broader social sphere. Its natural function symbolizes at a social level, the core of the devolution of the social organization, which once more throughout its effects recurs and chisel its characters through a subconscious circular contrive.

When preparing to the modern human conditions, life believes to achieve a full freedom and the freedom approaches in the play without a struggle for many. Bolette achieves her to be educated phenomenon by accepting Arnholm's proposal. Lyngstrand believes he has been lucky to suffer from a heart problem to continue his life as a sculptor. The Stranger accepts Ellida's refusal unconditionally and go on board toward the wide eternal freedom. When Wangel dissolves the marriage unquestionably not knowing he regains his life's desires, Ellida chooses him in free will. When the public and personal spheres clash within the persons, Ibsen offers the freedom to change their thoughts towards one's self (the core of a society). Here, the surging bodies of water encounter as a consciousness of one's own self and its possibility to change.

Wangel. Ellida, your mind is like the sea – it ebbs and flows. What brought the change?

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

Wangel. And the unknown – it doesn't attract you anymore?

Ellida. It neither terrifies nor attracts. I've been able to see deep into it – and I could have plunged in, if I'd wanted to. I could have chosen it now. And that's why, also, I could reject it.

Wangel. I begin to understand you- little by little. You think and feel in images- and in visions. Your longing and craving for the sea- your attraction toward him, toward this stranger- these were the signs of an awakened, growing rage for freedom in you. Nothing else (Ibsen 1978, 686).

To realize this awakened growing rage for freedom as a nation, yet, is unpredictable and shifting, is an obligation for survival in a society which drastically moves toward modernity, failed by Ibsen's harsh critics. For Ibsen, who's been undergone a physical exile for twenty seven years could apprehend this conclusion without difficulty as it is evident to identify the unfamiliarity as he observes as an outsider in a floating society in 1888.

Thus, he gives the vital *clue* to understand *The Lady from the Sea*.

Ballested. The sea-lanes will soon be locked in ice, as the poet says. It's sad, Mrs. Wangel. And now we'll lose you, too, for a while. [...]

Wangel. No, not anymore. We changed our minds this evening.

[...]

Arnholm (*to Ellida*). Well, this is quite a surprise – !

Ellida (*smiling gravely*). You see, Mr. Arnholm – you remember, we talked about it yesterday. Once you've really become a land animal, then there's no going back again – into the sea. Or the life that beings to the sea, either.

Ballested. But that's just how it is with my mermaid.

Ellida. Yes, much the same.

Ballested. Except for the difference – that the mermaid dies of it. But people, human beings – they can acclam-acclimatize themselves. Yes, yes- that's the thing, Mrs. Wangel. They can ac-cli-matize themselves (Ibsen 1978, 687-688).

This conclusion provoked the critical vigor of Ibsen's contemporary opponents and labeled the play as his least convincing work of art. Yet, what they have neglected to cognize is Ibsen's structure of the play: *Water mirrors the inner self*. In a letter to Bjørnson (in 1867), Ibsen writes, "there is nothing fixed in the world of ideas" (Ibsen 1964, 67). In 1888, he writes, *the sea-lanes will soon be locked in ice*. Therefore, what his attackers bypassed is; *the sea-lanes will soon melt when the summer comes*. This universal cycle will remain perpetually fluctuating. So do Ibsen's characters and so does the society.

The essential experience, "the experience of the space and the time, of the self and others, of life's possibilities and perils – that is shared by men and women all over the world today [...] this body of experience" (Berman 1991, 15) becomes modernity. To become a modern human being is to live in a space, which assures the freedom, competence, pleasure, evolution, and revolution of the human kind and the society he lives in. And, at the same time the space which jeopardizes and eradicates what he/she has, what he/she knows, what he/she believes and what he/she is. Modernity makes the world a global village. It forces the human to unmask his limits, desires, longings, and dogma; hence, it strengthens the human bonds. "But it is a paradoxical unity, a unity of disunity: it pours us all into a maelstrom of perpetual disintegration and renewal, of struggle and contradiction, of ambiguity and anguish. To be modern is to be part of a universe in which, as Marx said, 'all that is solid melts into air.'" (Berman 1991, 15)

It is not a surprise for a society to feel as caught in a whirlpool when the promising leap to the 20th century is on the verge. It might have felt that it was first one and might be the only one who's going through the turmoil. Nevertheless, this sensation occupies a numerous melancholy myths of "pre modern Paradise Lost". The feeling of terrifying and attracting have been embraced by Norwegians for more than five hundred years. Despite of arguments of conservatives, that the modernity is a threat and risk to their history and tradition; it has helped them to urbanize a rich history and a culture on their own. The confusion of modernity in the Norwegian society has been nourished from countless origins. Industrial development, new technology, power struggle, class clash, emigration, urban growth, expansion of aesthetical and educational values, emerging freedom, radical environment, social movement, increasing conflict between the civilians and the political and economical leaders to obtain power and free will over their own lives; altogether have laid the foundation for an eternal escalating, significantly changeable entrepreneurial society. Ibsen challenges the innermost

ambiguity of modernity, the effort of men and women to fit into the missing pieces of transformation in order to appreciate the humanity and nurture it in their habitat. He performs an open-ended discourse with the reader so that he/she may comprise his or her own knowledge as a conservatory of the three chapters of history of Norwegian innovation. These three historical phases of evolution in Norway begin with the first phase ranging from union with Denmark- Norway from the 16th century to the 18th century, when Norwegian civilization is still habituating to the development in the society and changes in their life. A radical public movement distinguishes the separation of different contradictory second phase beginning at the 19th century, when principles of modernity begins to take shape. In the latter half, 19th century society lost in thought with a nostalgic craving to gain awareness of non-modern conditions of humanity. Finally, during the last phase in the 20th century, modernity as a progression encircle the entire Norwegian society, yet concurrently disjointed as humanity no longer relates to the supreme contemporary and cultural structure in a practical approach. Hitherto, there is numerous diverse and opposing behavior of sympathetic which modernity portrays, incapable of further denotation to human lives. Ibsen thus, interprets his conscious knowledge and adds a limelight to this challenge of breakup, caused by the arrival and the dialectical effect of modernity in the minds of human kind in the late 19th century, through the element of *Water* in *The Lady from the Sea*. Fortunately, we, the dwellers of the 21st century could comprehend the ambiguous forces of the society whirled in the tornado of modernity; including incoherent geographical borders, cultures, self-identities and anguished minds; that present themselves as obstacles to understanding the modern world.

In the course of understanding Ibsen's play, his perspective of water structure appears to me the endowed answer which all credentials in detail abide, to both the modern transformation of society as comprehend into purposeful combinations and to the diffusion dialogue on human minds on the verge of modernity. Ibsen saw modernity far too unmistakably based on his critical approach to knowledge, as an outsider not totally withheld from his aura of motherland. However, his critics despised it and underestimated by the multiplicity of orthodox involvements hidden behind those established and prevented the option for the reader to grasp understanding. It was far too often supposed that the rising concentration of affairs of statements lead to the general incomprehension of the play. In addition, it emptied the freedom between the reader and the comprehensive understanding of Ibsen's ordinary human minds. Thus, it ignored the ability of immediate knowledge to offer break from guide

achievement. Moreover, its doubts towards contextualized perceptions are treated by overturn reliance in the reader in realistic terms. It effortlessly if not the lead into a vision formed by harsh critics.

These misunderstandings are the potential interpretations of the obscure preparation of modernity in the ideas of independence and the direction of human social life. However, Ibsen did not overlook the impossible escape of tensions between the self understandings of human relationships. In contrast, his approach explained the transformations and highlighted an essential ingenuousness of modernity in terms of human psychology and central desires that emanate vaguely from the conflict and tension between vital dreams. Over the past century, Ibsen scholars have mostly only provided alternative of attempts at the psychological level withholding the dawn of modernity by dropping or declining the play.

Thus, to understand through the flowing water, becomes an acceptance the transformation. Accepting this fluctuation as a standard would escort *The Lady from the Sea* winning its contextualized grasp on Ibsen's works. It may be promising to persuasively reveal that contemporary Norwegian society in the late 19th century is indeed not driven by the balanced individual who is not the archetypal form of human being. But does it not remain the task of an Ibsen scholar to encompass thoughts for present era? This is a question to which a complete answer cannot be given, yet I traced out a prelude in this thesis.

Since the wave of critique, at the end of 19th century Norwegian society represented a society that moved gradually towards both beliefs in individual truths and beliefs that everything is caused. In this milieu, revolutionize of expressions from a fluctuating society to modernity enhances significance. Modern society refers to a social organization that acquires its modernity from a meticulous fundamental and established practice. Approaching modernity in the play is seen as a concealed and confused social structure. Similarly, modernity refers to a condition, a condition which humans present themselves or in which they discover themselves. This situation is indeed the interpretation of *The Lady from the Sea*, though such interpretation can always be competed. The terms free will and independence, among other undertones also determine for the human capability for unpredictable beginnings and they signifies that there is a connection of individual to the society and to themselves that is always conceivably enigmatic.

There are always a variety of choices and possibilities rise up under conditions of modernity, even though if some are improbable. Yet, the history of modernity discloses both advantage and feasibility and there will be a hypothesis that apprehends the past and present heterogeneity and the promises that are open to the future. Although, the obligation of a solitary and a constant notional perspective has been affirmed as an imperative, neither firm analysis nor critique would possible. The view I held in my thesis, is the understanding *The Lady from the Sea* in the ambiguity of modernity and the problematic that the modern conditions poses for human abyss through the symbol of eternal transforming element of water. In other words, modernity is essentially distinguished and Ibsen remains open, not by precise explanation to known tribulations. Thus, I find appropriately, the explore for positive information and precision, the subject of the continuity of the human and behavior of relation between the lived present to time past and time future, with the acceptance of human composition . Thus, this hypothesis could be taken for granted, as it does not lead towards concrete solutions. Such as Ibsen ends his play with the analogue, the sea lanes will be locked in ice (yet will melt soon); an approaching modern society will excessively conceive problematic, yet infinites possibilities.

These problematic and infinity emerges with modernity, and they can neither be discarded nor be grasped through contemporary explanations . Momentarily secure explanations can thus indeed found through scholars that believed the invented gist to search answers for Ibsen's riddles. Those explanations can always again be challenged and then new ways of negotiating with problems have to be amplified. Ibsen's most dramatic transformation was the transformative calamity of modernity. What the Ibsen scholarly world needs to take from this knowledge is that the foremost riddle and insanity of modernity will be apt to re emerge and they will always have to be interpreted in their concrete humanness at their precise historical position.

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