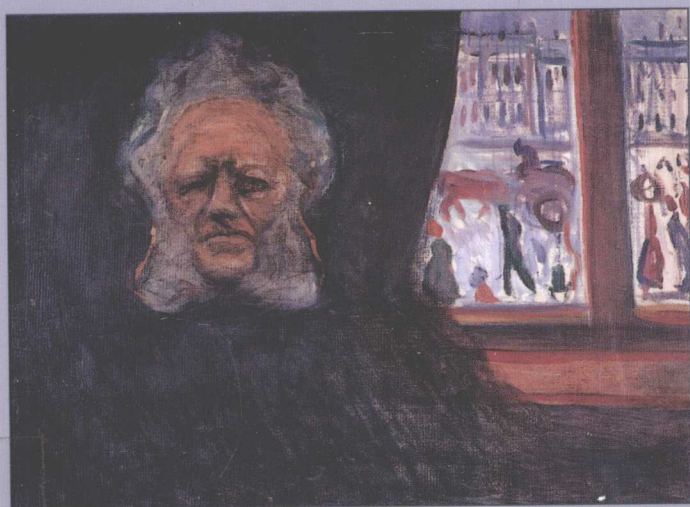


# IBSEN'S SELECTED PLAYS



SELECTED AND EDITED BY  
BRIAN JOHNSTON

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

A NORTON CRITICAL EDITION

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IBSEN'S  
SELECTED PLAYS



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AUTHORITATIVE TEXTS OF

PEER GYNT  
A DOLL HOUSE  
THE WILD DUCK  
HEDDA GABLER  
THE MASTER BUILDER

BACKGROUNDS  
CRITICISM

*Selected and Edited by*

BRIAN JOHNSTON

CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY

W. W. NORTON & COMPANY

*New York • London*

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# Introduction

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Henrik Ibsen's ascendancy to the front rank of European writers in the second half of the nineteenth century was achieved against stupendous odds. He was born in 1828, in Skien, in southern Norway—a small provincial town in a culturally remote outpost of Europe. As William Archer, his first major English translator, wrote: "His Dano-Norwegian language is spoken by some four and a half million people in all, and the number of foreigners who learn it is infinitesimal. The sheer force of his genius has broken this barrier of language."<sup>1</sup> At the age of fifteen, after the bankruptcy of his father, he left home (never to return) to be apprenticed to an apothecary in Grimstad, a small town on the seacoast. He left Grimstad for Christiania (now Oslo) six years later, in 1850, having written a number of verses (some in support of the revolutionary events of 1848) and a tragedy, *Catiline* (1850). Twenty-five years later, he remarked how the play prefigured much of his subsequent work with its "conflict between one's aims and one's abilities, between what man proposes and what is actually possible, constituting at once both the tragedy and comedy of mankind."<sup>2</sup> The play was published just before Ibsen left for Christiania; it was enthusiastically reviewed by a young critic and later friend of Ibsen, Paul Botten Hansen, and quite favorably noticed by a few others, but it failed to interest the public. It sold very few copies and remained unperformed.

Christiania (then a raw, newly emerging "city" of about 30,000) was the capital of a country that had no dramatic tradition. The theater in Norway at the time was dominated by Denmark; its plays were performed mostly by Danish companies and imported from the current European repertory. They included no examples of major drama. Ibsen's early dramatic criticism in Christiania continually deplored the dismal state of the theater and the public's lack of taste. He wrote a one-act play, *The Warrior's Barrow* (1850), that was accepted and produced by the Christiania Theater; edited a student paper; and wrote various journalistic pieces and reviews of plays.

1. *William Archer on Ibsen*, ed. Thomas Postlewait (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1984), 55.
2. *Ibsen: Letters and Speeches*, ed. Evert Sprinchorn (New York: Hill and Wang, 1964), 12.

He also had ambitions to be a painter. He was later to abandon this plan, but we can see in his plays a very heightened sense of the visual aspects of drama: he uses the stage space like a canvas to create a thoroughly "composed" and powerful theatrical iconography. *The Warrior's Barrow*, for example, though it handles its huge historical dialectic—the conflict between paganism and Christianity—with considerable naïveté, nevertheless introduces a theatric device that will be of immense importance to the development not just of Ibsen's drama but of modern drama in general. The play, in fact, is named after this device—the onstage visual *symbol*—the Viking, masculine burial mound, recently strewn with flowers from a Christian, feminine hand. The flowers reveal the present at work upon the past represented by the tomb of the pagan warrior. This visual symbol encapsulates the pagan-Christian, masculine-feminine dialectic of the play; the contest between the distant past and the present continues all through Ibsen's work, making it his distinctive theme.

The stage object, however, not only *symbolizes* the conflict; it plays a decisive part in the *action* of the play. In his later plays (such as *A Doll House*) Ibsen will compose the entire stage set simultaneously as a vehicle of symbolic meaning and as an active element of the drama, using meticulous stage directions, lighting, and props as ways of extending the metaphoric action. The set, in fact, will become a major "actor" in an Ibsen play, its props, lighting, and layout all reinforcing the action and extending the overall metaphor of the play. Visual imagery is as important to Ibsen's art as verbal imagery is to Shakespeare's.<sup>3</sup> It creates a "poetry of the theater" for those modern plays, following *Peer Gynt*, in which he abandoned the verse medium and created modern realist drama. The stage space is not just a setting or milieu, but a potent source of metaphors and an integral and active element of the plot. The dynamic interplay between the stage space and the characters who occupy it generates much of the dramatic tension of Ibsen's dramaturgy.

In 1851, Ibsen was engaged as playwright in residence for the newly created Norwegian Theater in Bergen, founded by an eccentric genius, the violinist Ole Bull, (founder of the colony of Oleanna in the United States). Much of Ibsen's artistic responsibility in Bergen consisted of staging what he termed "Scribe and Co's sugar-candy dramas"<sup>4</sup>—that is, well-made plays by, or after the model of, Eugene Scribe, a prolific French dramatist. It is still de-

3. One of the first commentators to detect the importance of this was Jennette Lee in *The Ibsen Secret: A Key to the Prose Dramas of Henrik Ibsen* (1907; reprint, Honolulu, Hawaii: University Press of the Pacific, 2001).

4. In a review of Karl Gutzkow's *Zopf und Schwert*, April 13, 1851. *The Oxford Ibsen* (London: Oxford University Press, 1961), 1:600–603.

bated to what extent the technically adroit but intellectually vapid formula of the "well-made play" influenced Ibsen's dramatic method. Whatever the case, Ibsen's involvement, early in his career, in the actual staging of plays gave him a firm grounding in the technical aspects of the theater.

The standing of the theater in the 1850s was at its lowest, in both Europe and the United States. In Britain, for example, the last new play of any significance to appear until the arrival of *A Doll House* in London in 1889 was Richard Brinsley Sheridan's *The School for Scandal* (1777). During one of the most prolific periods of English-speaking literature, which saw the full flowering of the Romantic movement in poetry and the arts and the rise of the realistic novel as a major literary genre, not a single drama of major significance appeared. It was the period, in fiction, of Austen, the Brontës, Dickens, George Eliot, Hawthorne, Melville, James, Wharton; in poetry, of Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, Tennyson, Browning, Whitman. No other period has been at once so rich in literature and so barren in drama.

In France, a fine dramatic poet such as Alfred de Musset wrote only "closet drama"—intended only for reading—finding the theater unfit for work of any literary value. The French theater, controlled by a vigilant censorship determined to suppress any resurgence of the revolutionary sentiments of 1848, set the dramatic agenda for Europe. The dramatists developed popular, morally stereotypical melodramas in which, as on Broadway today, audiences were dazzled by spectacular stage effects and the violent exercise of conventional emotions. More refined tastes preferred technically adroit, well-made plays whose main themes were adultery and murder in the fashionable classes. Later came "thesis plays"—well-made plays taking up some theme of topical social morality for a thoroughly uncontroversial airing. In 1851, the thesis play *La Dame aux camélias* by Alexandre Dumas created public commotion for the sentimental treatment of its courtesan heroine. The official censor allowed the play to be performed because the scandal usefully distracted attention from the more serious political and financial problems of the government.

In Germany, Friedrich Hebbel (1813–1863) was the last of a line of great German dramatists beginning with Gotthold Ephraim Lessing (1729–1781), and including Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749–1832), Friedrich von Schiller (1759–1805), and Heinrich von Kleist (1777–1811). Their works, though, were primarily *literary* dramas with little impact upon the theater of the day. Ibsen's early work reveals influences from the German dramatists and their Danish followers. His first play, *Catiline*, owes a debt to Schiller's *The Robbers*; *Peer Gynt* could not have been written without the

precedent of Goethe's *Faust*. By the time Ibsen came to the theater, however, there was no challenge to the flood of popular well-made plays from Paris that, in Bergen, he was obliged to stage.

The theater in Britain and the United States in the nineteenth century had fallen into social disrepute: it was a vehicle for melodrama and farce and a venue for dubious social assignments. No respectable family would venture into such an unsavory milieu—hence the rise of the novel for innocuous “family reading” for the benefit of the middle classes. A handful of Shakespeare's dramas continued to be performed, so drastically “adapted” to the needs of inappropriately elaborate staging and the vanity of actor-managers that Bernard Shaw, in the 1890s, protested that if Sir Henry Irving were to present himself on the stage in as mutilated a condition as he presented Shakespeare's text, a shriek of horror would go up from the entire audience. “In a true republic of art Sir Henry Irving would ere this have expiated his acting versions on the scaffold. He does not merely cut plays: he disembowels them,” Shaw remarked of Irving's production of *Cymbeline*.<sup>5</sup>

Attempts at modern verse drama only produced escapist costume drama whose rhetoric was utterly remote from the realities of modern industrial-capitalist society. By the late nineteenth century the British theater struggled to emerge from this disreputable past. In the 1880s the middle classes began to be lured back to the Savoy Theater by the “wholesome” delights of Gilbert and Sullivan, and by theatrical fare to which a father could safely take his young daughter. Reassured that it would encounter nothing unseemly or alarming, the public returned, and in great numbers; the theater suddenly became a very lucrative business, making theater managers excessively cautious about what they deemed fit to offer.

Victorian society concealed a host of skeletons in the closets of its private and public life and maintained highly developed antennae for detecting “impropriety,” in response to which it uttered what Henry James, in a review of *Hedda Gabler*, called “those cries of outraged purity which have so often and so pathetically resounded through the Anglo-Saxon world.”<sup>6</sup> Theater audiences, from the stalls to the gallery, reflected the class divisions of the nation and there was great fear of alienating any one social group or of setting one class against another. The precautionary strategy of actor-managers was to present works in which the maximum dramatic excitement could be aroused with the minimum of intellectual risk: the formula for most popular drama and cinema today. In the nine-

5. George Bernard Shaw, *Our Theatres in the Nineties* (London: John Constable and Co., 1932), 2:197–98.

6. Henry James, “On the Occasion of *Hedda Gabler*” (1891), in *The Scenic Art* (New Brunswick, N.J.: Rutgers University Press, 1948), 245.

teenth century this meant melodramas and well-made plays plagiarized from Paris and bowdlerized in Britain. The huge expense of mounting a production lavish enough to lure the public meant that failure threatened financial ruin for all concerned. Oscar Wilde's strategy of infiltrating subversive commentary on society in his otherwise conventional (and expensive) fashionable melodramas ended with his own social disgrace and ruin—which only reinforced the theater's alarm over even the mildest challenge to the status quo. However, a cultural space was now emerging into which a dramatist independent of the London commercial scene and its moralizing censorship could enter.

Ibsen's volatile confrontation with the theater of his time is one of the great ironies of cultural history. His identity as a dramatist was the direct opposite of Wilde's; it seemed almost programmed to repudiate, at every point, the theatrical medium he was intellectually to dominate. Although he was continually rejected and assailed by the public, reduced to poverty, in exile, he doggedly worked upon public hostility and the debased condition of the theater of his time until he forged a modern drama for his own revolutionary artistic purposes and vision. Even after his first major success, *Brand* (1866), at the age of thirty-eight, he kept up his contentious stance toward the public.

At a time when a playwright was hardly more than a hack supplying "material" to be reshaped by the actor-manager, or an opportunist reworking approved theatrical formulas, Ibsen, like his contemporary Richard Wagner in the opera, was determined the medium should be remade to conform to his artistic demands. More than Wagner, Ibsen put the integrity of his art above all temptation to exploit a potentially very lucrative medium. Michael Meyer, in his biography of Ibsen, estimates that even at the height of his fame, in the ten years following *A Doll House* in which he created *Ghosts*, *An Enemy of the People*, *The Wild Duck*, *Rosmersholm*, *The Lady from the Sea*, and *Hedda Gabler*, Ibsen earned less from this total output than a fashionable playwright would make in a single year.<sup>7</sup>

Ibsen's drama required rejecting the falsity of sentimentalized artistic representations of modern reality; it is an act of total cultural demolition accompanied by an unsettling new idea of what authentic human life, and art, might be. This meant reformulating what theatrical art should be. Ibsen's advocates insisted his plays needed a new kind of presentation, a new kind of acting, to do justice to their revolutionary form. In his critical writings, Bernard Shaw insisted on the complete unsuitability of the old acting style for the "New Drama"—a theme taken up by Ibsen's translator,

7. Michael Meyer, *Ibsen, A Biography* (New York: Doubleday, 1971), 472.

William Archer, and by Elizabeth Robins in *Ibsen and the Actress* (1928). The tremendous care with which, in London, the Ibsen texts were translated and prepared for performance, despite pitifully impoverished means and for runs often of no more than two or three days, was something entirely new. The great respect for the author's intentions, and the evolution of a critical tradition to introduce, champion, and interpret the plays in the face of an unremittingly hostile critical reception, constituted a collaborative discipline between scholars, interpreters, actors, and enthusiasts that stood in stark contrast to the cavalier indifference to the text shown by the traditional theater.

A minority public hungry for a theater into which it could take its intellect was evolving; in part this accounts for the astonishing success of Ibsen with the "thinking world" when, in the 1880s, his plays began to appear on the European stage. Ibsen offered a drama that was in tune with the leading ideas and artistic achievements of the time. His audience was made up of a highly critical, often rebellious intelligentsia variously at odds with the aesthetic, moral, political, and religious premises of conventional society. Ibsen's dramas addressed all these levels of cultural alienation. Henry James, Thomas Hardy, George Moore, Oscar Wilde, Bernard Shaw, and James Joyce were among the many who, with the progressive men and women of Europe and, later, the United States, took up the cause of Ibsen and the new independent theater movement. This minority theater, the cradle of serious modern drama, came into being in Berlin (the Freie Bühne, 1889) and London (the Independent Theater, 1891) specifically to perform Ibsen's *Ghosts*. In Paris, André Antoine's recently created *Théâtre Libre* performed *Ghosts* in 1890. George Moore, sitting in the audience, was so moved by the play that he became a founding member of a new Irish Literary Theater—later to become the Abbey Theater.

Drama now followed the other arts by splitting into mutually incompatible—and often hostile—mainstream and minority camps. Performing an Ibsen play was considered virtually an insurrectionary act (*Ghosts* was banned from public performance in England for twenty-three years), and Ibsen became the most vilified, championed, talked- and written-about individual in Europe. "It may be questioned," wrote James Joyce in his review of *When We Dead Awaken*, "whether any man has held so firm an empire over the thinking world in modern times."<sup>8</sup> Within an astonishingly short time the theater, through Ibsen, had shaken off its insignificance and disrepute to become a major, and highly controversial, force in modern culture.

8. James Joyce, "Ibsen's New Drama," *Fortnightly Review* 73 (April 1, 1900): 575–90.

The dominant middle class of the nineteenth century was as potentially tragic—or comic—as any in history. The modern world was a post-Darwinian, industrial-capitalist, pragmatist culture, uncertain of its identity, history, or destiny, and unwilling to acknowledge the sources and consequences of its materialist success. Most art and public discourse supplied a reassuring image of conventional values that the public gratefully consumed. Many thinkers, however, were deeply uneasy about the discrepancy between these flattering images and the grim realities that contradicted them. In response, a revolution in sensibility in all the arts took place, which in literature led to a radical rethinking of the (potentially tragic) human condition. Earlier tragic characters, from Sophocles' Ajax to Jean Racine's Phèdre, agonized over the threat to their *integrity*; the tragic dilemma of Romantic and post-Romantic characters can be stated as loss of *authenticity*: an existential doubt as to whether they have an identity to be true to. This dilemma is exemplified by Ibsen's Peer Gynt, who can ask:

Was I ever myself? Where, whole and true?  
Myself, with God's seal stamped on my brow?

The terror of nonidentity and the quest for authenticity are the driving forces of Ibsen's drama. They bring Nora Helmer, of *A Doll House*, to realize she knows neither the world she lives in nor her own identity in it. Gregers Werle, of *The Wild Duck*, sees his mission as the rescue of the Ekdal family from a swamp of inauthenticity, presided over by his manipulative father and the dispenser of false identities ("life-lies"), Dr. Relling. The same quest fuels Hedda Gabler's simmering resentment of the role assigned her in the "absurd" world she finds closing around her, and it urges Halvard Solness, of *The Master Builder*, desperately to recover and replay one genuinely authentic, supremely self-willed action: his ascent and challenge to the "Creator." An Ibsen play is the uncovering of an abyss concealed beneath the reality we think we inhabit. It is not the airing of some problem to be put right. As early as 1907, Jennette Lee protested against this still prevalent, anodyne interpretation: "The conception of a problem play as one in which some problem of modern life is discussed by the characters and worked out in the plot is foreign to Ibsen, as to all great artists."<sup>9</sup>

A deep fissure ran through nineteenth-century culture. On the positive side, it was a time of political and intellectual emancipation. From Eastern Europe to Ireland, peoples struggled for independence from foreign rule. There were the stirrings of universal suffrage; the unparalleled advances of knowledge, prosperity, and

9. Lee, *The Ibsen Secret*, 9.

science; and, in the arts, a dynamism such as never had been seen before, creating a series of revolutions in form and subject matter. On the negative side, it was the age, also, of cynical colonial imperialism in the Middle East, Africa, and the Far East; of the dispossession and annihilation of the native inhabitants of North America; of the creation, in Europe, of huge cities with their hideous slums and an exploited proletariat living and working in inhuman conditions. Modern humanity was markedly more rapacious, destructive, and violent than the moral and religious pieties it proclaimed, especially in its literature and art. As the Old Man of the Dovrë tells Peer Gynt:

You human creatures are all of a kind.  
In your speech it's all "spirit" that governs your deeds;  
But you count on your fists to take care of your needs.

Ibsen's aim was to liberate society's imagination by making it face up to a more adequate idea of itself. This emancipation from self-deceit meant exploring the active presence of the cultural past that lives on in us, making us what we are: those forces and powers that both drive our conflicts and set limits to our capacity for freedom. The past is always ambiguously present in Ibsen's modern plays: on the one hand, it is a power imprisoning our souls, encouraging the lethal atavisms that still plague us—the "ghosts" that Helene Alving, in *Ghosts*, sees as numerous as the grains of sand, making humanity fearful of the light. On the other hand, the past is the reservoir of neglected, forbidden, and banished forces that, if resurrected, could help liberate us from the tyranny of dead habits and thoughts.

For Ibsen, conflict is the healthy condition of the spirit, not the destructive disorder that so appalled the Shakespearean worldview. All that the Shakespearean drama considered positive—order, hierarchy, established tradition—now is seen as unnatural, intolerably constraining, standing in the way of self-determination. The result is that there will be a total change in all the main elements of drama: in dramatic scene, character, action, dialogue. The method of *A Doll House* can stand for all the plays. The *scene*—the pleasant, tastefully furnished Helmer home and its assured place in its community—will be exposed as a realm of unreality, of false consciousness. The social order that sustains the *character* of Torvald as a pillar of society and Nils Krogstad as a social outcast is based on a false idea of reality, one held by most in Ibsen's audience. When Torvald declares, "I literally feel sick when I'm around someone like [Krogstad]," he reveals that he is actually living off the moral as well as financial credit advanced by Krogstad, who performs the convenient role of moral villain by which Torvald can define himself as

moral pillar. The separation of humanity into mutually exclusive categories is a common but lethal fiction. "A man shares the responsibilities and the guilt of the society to which he belongs," Ibsen wrote.<sup>1</sup> From the intricate web of human history in which we all are entangled, there is no innocent class, race, or gender.

Under the pressure of events (the *action*), the charming and reassuring Helmer home becomes, in the evolving consciousness of the main character, Nora, first suddenly fragile, something to be desperately defended, then an unbearable prison of inauthenticity from which she flees to search for her own identity and the nature of the world she inhabits. As she undergoes this evolution, the *dialogue* (her language's imagery and key terms—and that of the other characters) also evolves, discarding false concepts and evolving new ones. There is, for instance, the dialectical evolution of the meaning of the key term "wonderful" in the three acts: from material happiness (Act 1), to a romantic fiction of mutual heroism (Act 2), to, finally, a call for a new form of human existence (Act 3). The dialectic is irreversible; there can be no going back to a previous phase of consciousness: the Nora of Act 2 has journeyed irrevocably from the Nora of Act 1 and is evolving the equally irreversible consciousness of the Nora of Act 3. Torvald, too, at the end, no longer inhabits the same world, speaks the same language, or is the same person as in Act 1. Ibsen's theater brings to the Helmers, at Christmastime, the devastating gifts of truth and freedom that everyday life is designed to deny.

Dialectical evolution, in which situations are forced to reveal, and overcome, their inherent contradictions, is the pulse beat of the whole twelve-play Realist Cycle (see p. 142), driving its irreversible sequence of evolving forms from the first play, *Pillars of Society*, to the last, *When We Dead Awaken*. At first glance, no two plays could be more different than these in both subject and dramatic method. Viewed side by side in isolation, they seem to be written by radically different dramatists. But Ibsen insisted on "the mutual connections between the plays," and he added: "Only by grasping and comprehending my entire production as a continuous whole will the reader be able to conceive the precise impression I sought to convey in the individual parts of it. I therefore appeal to the reader that he not put any play aside . . . experiencing them intimately in the order in which I wrote them."<sup>2</sup> If we read the realist plays in order, we will see how *Pillars of Society* and *When We Dead Awaken* are linked in a single, evolutionary chain. This is the imaginative voyage Ibsen invites us to share with him.

1. *Letters of Henrik Ibsen*, ed. John Nilsen Laurvik and Mary Morison (New York: Duffield and Company, 1908), 334.

2. *Ibsen: Letters and Speeches*, 330.

Realism, in the nineteenth century, was an extension of the Romantic movement.<sup>3</sup> From Romanticism came the conviction that society and its conventions are forms of false consciousness, of alienation, that stand in the way of achieving our free and full humanity. The purpose of art is not to imitate this "bad" reality but to create an alternative artistic space where it might be possible to see to what extent our potential humanity has been disfigured, warped by history, and what forces might be summoned to restore to us a more adequate human identity. "Art reveals life to us as it should be," wrote Ibsen's son, Sigurd. "If the natural process that life is, for the most part, could ever be organized in such a way that existence should be recreated in the image of humanity, then art would be superfluous: for life itself would have become art."<sup>4</sup> Present life is a defective work of art, a disfigurement of the "image of humanity," which a true artist must seek to restore or re-create.

It is through his plots, working upon the material contained in the play's stories, that Ibsen sets in motion this process of the undoing of false reality. If Ibsen's plays are plot-driven, it is not in order to subject his stories to the thrilling artifices of the theater but because the plots are the dialectic in action, reshaping "bad" reality into a medium more responsive to the possibilities on which everyday reality has turned its back. In the cunning plotting of *A Doll House*, the "false" Nora of the opening action already is being re-created by the pressure of the uncanny coincidence of events, little by little, into the "true" Nora identity that is waiting for her, still as a project only, at the play's end. This is no implausible, sudden change of character: all through the play, one seismic shock after another undermines the reality of her world, as Nora futilely attempts to evade the insight that finally devastates her illusory identity.

Dialectical procedure in drama is as old as Aeschylus. The house of Atreus in the *Oresteia* undergoes its triple convulsion as the trilogy journeys painfully from a world of savage vendetta violence, through the god-directed and suffering avenger, Orestes, to the enlightened world of democratic justice. In *The Master Builder*, the dialectical three-act plot releases the hero, Solness, from his conventional condition of crippling self-reproach and self-torment and sets in motion the recovery of an alternative past and a new, fearful, and fatal liberation. In *The Wild Duck* and *Hedda Gabler* the corrosive action of the dialectic seems to end only in negation; in the cycle as a continuous whole, however, and for us as audience, these, too, are necessary stages of the cycle's evolution.

3. Cf. Charles Rosen and Henri Zerner, *Romanticism and Realism* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1984), *passim*.

4. Sigurd Ibsen, *Human Quintessence* 1911; reprint (Freeport, N.Y.: Books for Libraries Press, 1972), 93.

Ibsen spent all but the last few years of his major creative life in self-imposed exile, reimagining from a distance his Norwegian scene as a metaphoric space for his dramatic vision, a space in which archetypal forces invade the modern scene. Art, wrote Sigurd Ibsen, "gives liberty of action to forces and possibilities to which life does not grant the chance of coming into their rights."<sup>5</sup> The metaphoric space of the cycle extends from "the depths of the sea" (*The Wild Duck*) to the mountain heights and beyond of the last four plays. This landscape of seasons, light and darkness, sunrises and sunsets, storms and avalanches, undertows and cosmic rhythms is echoed as an internal landscape within the responsive characters. To be unresponsive to these natural forces, and to the historical past, means being trapped in the condition of one-dimensional humanity. A note to an early draft of *When We Dead Awaken* reads, "In this country it is only the mountains that give an echo, not the people."<sup>6</sup>

Even before it sought the séance or the psychoanalytic couch, the nineteenth-century middle class was deeply uneasy about itself; it was attacked from the right for its crass materialist values and tastes and from the left for its gross social injustices. This, however, made it an ideal fictional subject. Its tortuous complexities were good dramatic material; the proletariat has not been able to rival it in interest, however much it might surpass it in virtue. This guilt-ridden class, whose passing the cycle seems to envisage, also carried, if only unconsciously, a huge cargo of archetypal memory, the reproachful ghosts that erupt continually to the surface of the psyche and extend the scale of the modern drama.

The present translations are based on the edition *Henrik Ibsen: Samlede Værker* (København og Kristiania: Gyldendalske Boghandel Nordisk Forlag, 1906), vols. 2, 4, 5.

5. *Ibid.*, 92.

6. *The Oxford Ibsen*, 8:355.

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