



DRAMA

C R I T I C I S M

V O L U M E

30

DRAMA

C R I T I C I S M

Criticism of the Most Significant and Widely Studied
Dramatic Works from All the World's Literatures

VOLUME 30

Thomas J. Schoenberg
Lawrence J. Trudeau
Project Editors

江苏工业学院图书馆
藏书章



GALE
CENGAGE Learning

Detroit • New York • San Francisco • New Haven, Conn • Waterville, Maine • London

Drama Criticism, Vol. 30

Project Editors: Thomas J. Schoenberg and
Lawrence J. Trudeau

Editorial: Dana Ramel Barnes, Tom Burns,
Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kathy D. Darrow,
Kristen A. Dorsch, Jaclyn R.
Hermesmeyer, Jeffrey W. Hunter, Jelena
O. Krstović, Michelle Lee, Russel
Whitaker

Data Capture: Frances Monroe, Gwen
Tucker

Indexing Services: Laurie Andriot

Rights and Acquisitions: Scott Bragg,
Shalice Shah-Caldwell, Sara Teller

Composition and Electronic Capture: Gary
Leach

Manufacturing: Rhonda Dover

Associate Product Manager: Marc Cormier

© 2008 Gale, Cengage Learning

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. No part of this work covered by the copyright herein may be reproduced, transmitted, stored, or used in any form or by any means graphic, electronic, or mechanical, including but not limited to photocopying, recording, scanning, digitizing, taping, Web distribution, information networks, or information storage and retrieval systems, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

This publication is a creative work fully protected by all applicable copyright laws, as well as by misappropriation, trade secret, unfair competition, and other applicable laws. The authors and editors of this work have added value to the underlying factual material herein through one or more of the following: unique and original selection, coordination, expression, arrangement, and classification of the information.

For product information and technology assistance, contact us at
Gale Customer Support, 1-800-877-4253.

For permission to use material from this text or product,
submit all requests online at www.cengage.com/permissions.

Further permissions questions can be emailed to
permissionrequest@cengage.com

While every effort has been made to ensure the reliability of the information presented in this publication, Gale, a part of Cengage Learning, does not guarantee the accuracy of the data contained herein. Gale accepts no payment for listing; and inclusion in the publication of any organization, agency, institution, publication, service, or individual does not imply endorsement of the editors or publisher. Errors brought to the attention of the publisher and verified to the satisfaction of the publisher will be corrected in future editions.

Gale
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI, 48331-3535

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CATALOG CARD NUMBER 76-46132

ISBN-13: 978-0-7876-8114-2

ISBN-10: 0-7876-8114-8

ISSN 1056-4349

Preface

D*rama Criticism (DC)* is principally intended for beginning students of literature and theater as well as the average playgoer. The series is therefore designed to introduce readers to the most frequently studied playwrights of all time periods and nationalities and to present discerning commentary on dramatic works of enduring interest. Furthermore, *DC* seeks to acquaint the reader with the uses and functions of criticism itself. Selected from a diverse body of commentary, the essays in *DC* offer insights into the authors and their works but do not require that the reader possess a wide background in literary studies. Where appropriate, reviews of important productions of the plays discussed are also included to give students a heightened awareness of drama as a dynamic art form, one that many claim is fully realized only in performance.

DC was created in response to suggestions by the staffs of high school, college, and public libraries. These librarians observed a need for a series that assembles critical commentary on the world's most renowned dramatists in the same manner as Gale's *Short Story Criticism (SSC)* and *Poetry Criticism (PC)*, which present material on writers of short fiction and poetry. Although playwrights are covered in such Gale literary criticism series as *Contemporary Literary Criticism (CLC)*, *Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism (TCLC)*, *Nineteenth-Century Literature Criticism (NCLC)*, *Literature Criticism from 1400 to 1800 (LC)*, and *Classical and Medieval Literature Criticism (CMLC)*, *DC* directs more concentrated attention on individual dramatists than is possible in the broader, survey-oriented entries in these Gale series. Commentary on the works of William Shakespeare may be found in *Shakespearean Criticism (SC)*.

Scope of the Series

By collecting and organizing commentary on dramatists, *DC* assists students in their efforts to gain insight into literature, achieve better understanding of the texts, and formulate ideas for papers and assignments. A variety of interpretations and assessments is offered, allowing students to pursue their own interests and promoting awareness that literature is dynamic and responsive to many different opinions.

Approximately five to ten authors are included in each volume, and each entry presents a historical survey of the critical response to that playwright's work. The length of an entry is intended to reflect the amount of critical attention the author has received from critics writing in English and from foreign critics in translation. Every attempt has been made to identify and include the most significant essays on each author's work. In order to provide these important critical pieces, the editors sometimes reprint essays that have appeared elsewhere in Gale's literary criticism series. Such duplication, however, never exceeds twenty percent of a *DC* volume.

Organization of the Book

A *DC* entry consists of the following elements:

- The **Author Heading** consists of the playwright's most commonly used name, followed by birth and death dates. If an author consistently wrote under a pseudonym, the pseudonym is listed in the author heading and the real name given in parentheses on the first line of the introduction. Also located at the beginning of the introduction are any name variations under which the dramatist wrote, including transliterated forms of the names of authors whose languages use nonroman alphabets.
- The **Introduction** contains background information that introduces the reader to the author and the critical debates surrounding his or her work.

- The list of **Principal Works** is divided into two sections. The first section contains the author's dramatic pieces and is organized chronologically by date of first performance. If this has not been conclusively determined, the composition or publication date is used. The second section provides information on the author's major works in other genres.
- Essays offering **overviews of the dramatist's entire literary career** give the student broad perspectives on the writer's artistic development, themes, and concerns that recur in several of his or her works, the author's place in literary history, and other wide-ranging topics.
- **Criticism** of individual plays offers the reader in-depth discussions of a select number of the author's most important works. In some cases, the criticism is divided into two sections, each arranged chronologically. When a significant performance of a play can be identified (typically, the premier of a twentieth-century work), the first section of criticism will feature **production reviews** of this staging. Most entries include sections devoted to **critical commentary** that assesses the literary merit of the selected plays. When necessary, essays are carefully excerpted to focus on the work under consideration; often, however, essays and reviews are reprinted in their entirety. Footnotes are reprinted at the end of each essay or excerpt. In the case of excerpted criticism, only those footnotes that pertain to the excerpted texts are included.
- Critical essays are prefaced by brief **Annotations** explicating each piece.
- A complete **Bibliographic Citation**, designed to help the interested reader locate the original essay or book, precedes each piece of criticism. Source citations in the Literary Criticism Series follow University of Chicago Press style, as outlined in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993).
- An annotated bibliography of **Further Reading** appears at the end of each entry and suggests resources for additional study. In some cases, significant essays for which the editors could not obtain reprint rights are included here. Boxed material following the further reading list provides references to other biographical and critical sources on the author in series published by Gale.

Cumulative Indexes

A **Cumulative Author Index** lists all of the authors that appear in a wide variety of reference sources published by Gale, including *DC*. A complete list of these sources is found facing the first page of the Author Index. The index also includes birth and death dates and cross references between pseudonyms and actual names.

A **Cumulative Nationality Index** lists all authors featured in *DC* by nationality, followed by the number of the *DC* volume in which their entry appears.

A **Cumulative Title Index** lists in alphabetical order the individual plays discussed in the criticism contained in *DC*. Each title is followed by the author's last name and corresponding volume and page numbers where commentary on the work is located. English-language translations of original foreign-language titles are cross-referenced to the foreign titles so that all references to discussion of a work are combined in one listing.

Citing Drama Criticism

When citing criticism reprinted in the Literary Criticism Series, students should provide complete bibliographic information so that the cited essay can be located in the original print or electronic source. Students who quote directly from reprinted criticism may use any accepted bibliographic format, such as University of Chicago Press style or Modern Language Association (MLA) style. Both the MLA and the University of Chicago formats are acceptable and recognized as being the current standards for citations. It is important, however, to choose one format for all citations; do not mix the two formats within a list of citations.

The examples below follow recommendations for preparing a bibliography set forth in *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 14th ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1993); the first example pertains to material drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books:

Morrison, Jago. "Narration and Unease in Ian McEwan's Later Fiction." *Critique* 42, no. 3 (spring 2001): 253-68. Reprinted in *Drama Criticism*. Vol. 20, edited by Janet Witlec, 212-20. Detroit: Gale, 2003.

Brossard, Nicole. "Poetic Politics." In *The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy*, edited by Charles Bernstein, 73-82. New York: Roof Books, 1990. Reprinted in *Drama Criticism*. Vol. 20, edited by Janet Witlec, 3-8. Detroit: Gale, 2003.

The examples below follow recommendations for preparing a works cited list set forth in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 5th ed. (New York: The Modern Language Association of America, 1999); the first example pertains to material drawn from periodicals, the second to material reprinted from books:

Morrison, Jago. "Narration and Unease in Ian McEwan's Later Fiction." *Critique* 42.3 (spring 2001): 253-68. Reprinted in *Drama Criticism*. Ed. Janet Witlec. Vol. 20. Detroit: Gale, 2003. 212-20.

Brossard, Nicole. "Poetic Politics." *The Politics of Poetic Form: Poetry and Public Policy*. Ed. Charles Bernstein. New York: Roof Books, 1990. 73-82. Reprinted in *Drama Criticism*. Ed. Janet Witlec. Vol. 20. Detroit: Gale, 2003. 3-8.

Suggestions are Welcome

Readers who wish to suggest new features, topics, or authors to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions or comments are cordially invited to call, write, or fax the Product Manager:

Product Manager, Literary Criticism Series

Gale

27500 Drake Road

Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535

1-800-347-4253 (GALE)

Fax: 248-699-8054

Acknowledgments

The editors wish to thank the copyright holders of the criticism included in this volume and the permissions managers of many book and magazine publishing companies for assisting us in securing reproduction rights. Following is a list of the copyright holders who have granted us permission to reproduce material in this volume of *DC*. Every effort has been made to trace copyright, but if omissions have been made, please let us know.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL IN *DC*, VOLUME 30, WAS REPRODUCED FROM THE FOLLOWING PERIODICALS:

Conversations with Tom Stoppard, by Mel Gussow and Tom Stoppard. Copyright © 1995 by Mel Gussow. Used by permission of Grove/Atlantic, Inc. and Nick Hern Books Ltd.—*The Cambridge Quarterly*, v. 19, 1990 for “*The Wild Duck—A Revaluation*” by Malcolm Pittock. Copyright © 1990 Oxford University Press. Reproduced by permission of Oxford University Press and the author.—*Comparative Drama*, v. 30, spring, 1996; v. 39, summer, 2005. Copyright © 1996, 2005 by the editors of *Comparative Drama*. Both reproduced by permission.—*Contemporary Review*, v. 282, March, 2003. Copyright © 2003 by *Contemporary Review*. Reproduced by the permission of Contemporary Review Ltd.—*Ibsen Studies*, v. 5, 2005. Reproduced by permission.—*The Journal of American Drama and Theatre*, v. 16, winter, 2004. Copyright © 2004 Martin E. Segal Theatre Center. Reproduced by permission.—*Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*, v. 6, spring, 1992 for “*Allegory in the Technological Age: A Case Study of Ibsen’s The Wild Duck*” by Wolfgang Sohlich. Copyright © 1992 by the Joyce and Elizabeth Hall Center for the Humanities and the Department of Theatre and Film at the University of Kansas, Lawrence, Kansas 66045, U.S.A. Reproduced by permission of the author.—*Journal of Modern Literature*, v. 27, winter, 2004. Copyright © Indiana University Press. Reproduced by permission.—*Midwestern Miscellany*, v. 30, spring, 2002 for “*From Novel to Plays: Zona Gale and the Marriage Plot in Three Versions of Miss Lulu Bett*” by Marilyn Judith Atlas. Copyright © 2002 by the Society for the Study of Midwestern Literature. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of the publisher and the author.—*Modern Drama*, v. 21, September, 1978; v. 38, fall, 1995; v. 40, winter, 1997; v. 41, winter, 1998; v. 42, fall, 1999; v. 45, spring, 2002; v. 47, fall, 2004; v. 48, winter, 2005; v. 48, spring, 2005. Copyright © 1978, 1995, 1997, 1998, 1999, 2002, 2004, 2005 by the University of Toronto, Graduate Centre for Study of Drama. All reproduced by permission.—*Mosaic*, v. 7, summer, 1974. Copyright © 1974 Mosaic. Acknowledgment of previous publication is herewith made.—*New Literary History*, v. 33, autumn, 2002; v. 37, autumn, 2006. Copyright © The Johns Hopkins University Press. Both reproduced by permission.—*New Theatre Quarterly*, v. 21, August, 2005. Copyright © 2005 Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press.—*Papers on Language and Literature*, v. 36, fall, 2000. Copyright © 2000 by The Board of Trustees, Southern Illinois University at Edwardsville. Reproduced by permission.—*Scandinavian Studies*, v. 63, autumn, 1991 for “*Sense and Sensibility: Women and Men in Vildanden*” by Joan Templeton. Copyright © 1991 Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission of the publisher and the author.—*Theatre Journal*, v. 35, May, 1983. Copyright © The Johns Hopkins University Press. Reproduced by permission.—*The Virginia Quarterly Review*, v. 71, autumn, 1995. Copyright © 1995 by *The Virginia Quarterly Review*, The University of Virginia. Reproduced by permission of the publisher.

COPYRIGHTED MATERIAL IN *DC*, VOLUME 30, WAS REPRODUCED FROM THE FOLLOWING BOOKS:

Barlow, Judith E. From “Introduction,” in *Plays by American Women: The Early Years*. Edited by Judith E. Barlow. Avon Books, 1981. Copyright © 1981, 1985, 2001 by Judith E. Barlow. International Copyright Secured. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Boireau, Nicole. From “Tom Stoppard’s Metadrama: The Haunting Repetition,” in *Drama on Drama: Dimensions of Theatricality on the Contemporary British Stage*. Edited by Nicole Boireau. St. Martin’s Press, Inc., 1997. Text copyright © 1997 Macmillan Press Ltd. Reprinted by permission of St. Martin’s Press, LLC.—Chamberlain, John S. From *Ibsen: The Open Vision*. Athlone, 1982. Copyright © 1982 John S. Chamberlain. Reproduced by kind permission of Continuum.—Craig, Carolyn Casey. From *Women Pulitzer Playwrights: Biographical Profiles and Analyses of the Plays*. Copyright © 2004 Carolyn Casey Craig. Reproduced by permission of McFarland & Company, Inc., Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640. www.mcfarlandpub.com.—Guralnick, Elissa S. From “Stoppard’s Radio and Television Plays,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Tom Stoppard*. Edited by Katherine E. Kelly. Cambridge University Press, 2001. Copyright © 2001 Cambridge University Press. Reprinted with the permission of Cambridge University Press and the author.—

Keblowska-Lawniczak, Ewa. From *The Visual Seen and Unseen: Insights into Tom Stoppard's Art*. Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego, 2004. Copyright © 2004 by Ewa Keblowska-Lawniczak and Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Wrocławskiego Sp. z o.o, Wrocław. Reproduced by permission.—Lyons, Charles R. From *Henrik Ibsen: The Divided Consciousness*. Southern Illinois University Press, 1972. Copyright © 1972 by Southern Illinois University. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Meyer, Hans Georg. From *Henrik Ibsen*. Translated by Helen Sebba. Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., 1972. Copyright © 1972 by Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., Inc. Republished with permission of Frederick Ungar Publishing Co., conveyed through Copyright Clearance Center, Inc.—Schroeder, Patricia R. From *The Feminist Possibilities of Dramatic Realism*. Fairleigh Dickinson University Press, 1996. Copyright © 1996 by Associated University Presses, Inc. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Scott, Clement. From “An Unsigned Notice by Clement Scott, *Daily Telegraph*,” in *Ibsen: The Critical Heritage*. Edited by Michael Egan. Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1972. Copyright © 1972 Michael Egan. Reproduced by permission of the publisher.—Shafer, Yvonne. From *American Women Playwrights, 1900-1950*. Peter Lang, 1995. Copyright © 1995 Peter Lang Publishing, Inc., New York. All rights reserved. Reproduced by permission.—Simonson, Harold P. From *Zona Gale*. Twayne Publishers, Inc., 1962. Copyright © 1962 by Twayne Publishers, Inc. Copyright © renewed 1990 by Harold P. Simonson. Reproduced by permission of the author.—Thomas, David. From *Henrik Ibsen*. Macmillan Press, 1983. Copyright © 1983 David Thomas. Reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan.

Gale Literature Product Advisory Board

The members of the Gale Literature Product Advisory Board—reference librarians from public and academic library systems—represent a cross-section of our customer base and offer a variety of informed perspectives on both the presentation and content of our literature products. Advisory board members assess and define such quality issues as the relevance, currency, and usefulness of the author coverage, critical content, and literary topics included in our series; evaluate the layout, presentation, and general quality of our printed volumes; provide feedback on the criteria used for selecting authors and topics covered in our series; provide suggestions for potential enhancements to our series; identify any gaps in our coverage of authors or literary topics, recommending authors or topics for inclusion; analyze the appropriateness of our content and presentation for various user audiences, such as high school students, undergraduates, graduate students, librarians, and educators; and offer feedback on any proposed changes/enhancements to our series. We wish to thank the following advisors for their advice throughout the year.

Barbara M. Bibel

Librarian
Oakland Public Library
Oakland, California

Dr. Toby Burrows

Principal Librarian
The Scholars' Centre
University of Western Australia Library
Nedlands, Western Australia

Celia C. Daniel

Associate Reference Librarian
Howard University Libraries
Washington, D.C.

David M. Durant

Reference Librarian
Joyner Library
East Carolina University
Greenville, North Carolina

Nancy T. Guidry

Librarian
Bakersfield Community College
Bakersfield, California

Heather Martin

Arts & Humanities Librarian
University of Alabama at Birmingham, Sterne Library
Birmingham, Alabama

Susan Mikula

Librarian
Indiana Free Library
Indiana, Pennsylvania

Thomas Nixon

Humanities Reference Librarian
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Davis
Library
Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Mark Schumacher

Jackson Library
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
Greensboro, North Carolina

Gwen Scott-Miller

Assistant Director
Sno-Isle Regional Library System
Marysville, Washington

Contents

Preface vii

Acknowledgments xi

Literary Criticism Series Advisory Board xv

Zona Gale 1874-1938	1
<i>American novelist, short story writer, playwright, essayist, poet, biographer, and autobiographer</i>	
Henrik Ibsen 1828-1906	40
<i>Norwegian playwright and poet</i>	
<i>Entry devoted to the play The Wild Duck (1885)</i>	
Tom Stoppard 1937-	229
<i>Czechoslovakian-born English playwright, screenwriter, and novelist</i>	

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Author Index 371

Literary Criticism Series Cumulative Topic Index 483

DC Cumulative Nationality Index 499

DC Cumulative Title Index 501

Zona Gale

1874-1938

American novelist, short story writer, playwright, essayist, poet, biographer, and autobiographer.

INTRODUCTION

Although relatively unknown today, Zona Gale was a critically acclaimed writer of the 1920s and a leader, along with Sherwood Anderson and Sinclair Lewis, in the “revolt from the village” school of literature that was popular during the early decades of the twentieth century. Gale wrote novels, short stories, essays, and poems, but she earned her highest accolade with the play *Miss Lulu Bett* (1920), which was awarded the Pulitzer Prize in drama in 1921. The play, written in a realistic style, depicts the limitations, frustrations, and social restraints that women of the period faced, as well as exposing the drudgery and provincialism of small-town American life. In addition to her success as a writer, Gale was a prominent social activist and a generous supporter of community theater groups across the country. As a result, many critics and theater historians today regard her as a significant figure whose influence on the development of drama in America far exceeded her contributions to the genre. As Yvonne Shaffer has observed, Gale is an important figure in theater history not merely because she was the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for playwriting, but “because she moved away from the standard urban settings so typical of the theatre, particularly in New York, to present regional characters and settings.” Shaffer adds that although Gale cannot be considered a major American playwright, “either on the basis of the body of her playwriting or the quality,” she made noteworthy contributions to the genre and “established a precedent with her treatment of the character of Miss Lulu Bett. The theme and depiction are still appealing today.”

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION

Gale was born August 26, 1874, in Portage, Wisconsin. Her father, Charles Franklin Gale, was a railroad engineer, and her mother, Eliza Beers Gale, was a teacher. An only child, Gale maintained a close relationship with both of her parents, who later served as models for characters in her fiction. Her father introduced her to the writings of Plato, Ralph Waldo Emerson, and Charles Darwin. Her mother, a devoutly

religious woman, influenced Gale’s spiritual development, instilling in her a belief in a powerful, divine, and feminine life force. Gale attended public schools in Portage and began writing in high school, producing numerous poems and stories. She enrolled in the University of Wisconsin, graduating with a bachelor’s degree in literature in 1895. Gale worked as a reporter in Milwaukee for several years after graduating, but she returned to the University of Wisconsin to pursue a master’s degree, which she received in 1899.

In 1901 Gale moved to New York and worked as a reporter for the *Evening World*. But she resigned the job after only eighteen months to pursue her literary career. She published her first story in 1903 in the magazine *Success*. While living in New York Gale wrote several plays but failed to get them produced, and few of her earliest dramatic efforts have survived. During this time Gale also became romantically involved with the poet Ridgley Torrence. Persuaded by her mother’s objections to the relationship, she ended the affair in 1904 and returned to Portage. She continued to publish her stories, however, in such magazines as *Harper’s Weekly*, *Woman’s Home Companion*, *Smart Set*, and *Outlook*. These early short stories were based on Gale’s experiences in Portage and were written in a romantic, sentimental style, often extolling the virtues of small-town America. She secured notoriety and a steady income by publishing four volumes of short stories, including *Friendship Village* (1908) and *Peace in Friendship Village* (1919).

In 1910 Gale was approached by Thomas Dickinson, a professor at the University of Wisconsin who also organized the Wisconsin Dramatic Society, to write a one-act play to promote the emerging little theater movement in America. In response, she wrote *The Neighbors*, a play that resembles her short stories in theme and style. It was produced by the Wisconsin Dramatic Society in 1914 and was staged in New York three years later. Gale arranged for the Wisconsin players to have full access to the play, royalty-free, and made the same promise to any theater that would plant a tree in their community. As a result, the one-act work became popular among college and community theater groups across the country. Gale’s primary focus during this time, however, remained on writing fiction. In 1911 she won two thousand dollars in a short-fiction contest, which allowed her to return to Portage permanently. Over the next ten years she continued to write, producing short stories as well as novels.

During this time Gale's work gradually transformed. She shifted her focus from romantic, sentimental depictions, to sharp, realistic portrayals of small-town life, partly as a result of her increasing interest in social and political issues, such as pacifism, women's suffrage, and labor rights. During World War I she was placed under federal surveillance for her pacifist activities. The publication of the novel *Birth* (1918) marked her transition into realism. Her next novel, *Miss Lulu Bett* (1920), written in the same realistic style, was a best-seller. After being approached by Brock Pemberton, a producer, Gale adapted the novel into a play, which premiered on December 27, 1920, at New York's Belmont Theatre and ran for 176 performances. In 1922 she completed a one-act play titled *Uncle Jimmy*, which utilized the characters and themes from her early stories of Friendship Village. The play was successful with small theater groups and was eventually published in *The Ladies Home Journal*. Banking on the success of Gale's adaptation of *Miss Lulu Bett*, Pemberton encouraged Gale to dramatize her popular novel *Birth*, the result of which was *Mister Pitt* (1924). *Birth* was not easily adapted for the stage, however, since it lacked the compressed action of *Miss Lulu Bett*. Even after eliminating important characters and altering the plot, the play consisted of thirteen scenes and required multiple set changes. It received disappointing reviews and ran for only six weeks.

Gale then turned her full attention to writing fiction, publishing six novels and two collections of short stories. During this time she was also politically active and gave lectures on a variety of topics, including peace, prohibition, and women's rights. In 1928, at the age of fifty-four, she married William Breese, a banker and merchant from Portage. During the 1930s Gale returned briefly to playwriting, publishing three more plays, *Evening Clothes* (1932), *The Clouds* (1932), and *Faint Perfume* (1934), none of which enjoyed the popular or critical success of *Miss Lulu Bett*. On December 27, 1938, Gale died of pneumonia in a hospital in Chicago. She was buried in her hometown of Portage.

MAJOR DRAMATIC WORKS

In Gale's best-known and most successful play, *Miss Lulu Bett*, the eponymous protagonist faces the limitations of her existence and eventually seeks freedom from her narrow life. The story first appeared as a novel under the same title, and, according to her own account, Gale produced the dramatic version in just ten days. Although she made significant changes to the ending of the story, she otherwise maintained the novel's dramatic action and used much of the original dialogue. In both the play and novel, Lulu is a thirty-three-year-old, unmarried woman, living in the household of her mar-

ried sister, Ina, in small-town America. Her brother-in-law, Dwight Deacon, a successful dentist and magistrate, maintains the home's patriarchal position and allows Lulu, along with her mother, to stay in the house under the condition that she will clean and cook for the Deacon family. Neither Ina nor Dwight appreciate or respect Lulu, despite the fact that the household runs smoothly only because of her efforts. When Dwight's brother, Ninian, visits them, he recognizes and articulates the drudgery of Lulu's situation. One night, when Lulu and Ninian are waiting to leave for an evening out, Dwight convinces them to exchange wedding vows in an ostensibly mock ceremony; they realize only after it is over that they are actually legally married, since Dwight is a magistrate authorized to perform marriages. Ninian convinces Lulu to let the marriage stand, and they leave for their honeymoon. Meanwhile, the Deacon household falls apart with Lulu's departure.

After a brief time Lulu returns alone with the news that Ninian's first wife may still be alive, and their marriage, therefore, may be invalid. Dwight is only concerned with the family's reputation, and he forces Lulu to pretend that Ninian grew tired of her as the reason for their separation. At the end of the novel, Lulu escapes the Deacon household by accepting the marriage proposal of Neal Cornish, a music store proprietor, whom the Deacons originally considered a potential suitor for Diana, their eldest daughter. In adapting the novel, however, Gale was advised that two weddings in the span of one play would strain audience credulity. Thus, in the initial play version, Gale had Lulu kindly decline Cornish's marriage proposal and leave the Deacon house to make a living on her own. But after negative reactions from audiences of the early performances, and the complaints of some reviewers, Gale changed the ending yet again, having Ninian return to rescue Lulu from the Deacon house upon discovering that his first wife had died.

The predominant themes of *Miss Lulu Bett* pertain to Lulu's status as an undervalued member of society, and her transformation into a powerful figure, capable of changing the direction of her life. The stifling limitations of domestic life in a patriarchal society and the struggle for freedom are central issues in the play. Gale exposes the character of Dwight, partly through contrast with his brother, Ninian, as a manipulative and domineering man—an individual who uses his social status to suppress others. Lulu has been coerced into accepting a subservient role, and her own sense of self-worth has deteriorated in concert with the other characters' disregard for her feelings and needs. She is ignorant of Cornish's interest in her at the beginning of the play, because she believes that her only likeable attribute is her ability to cook. Her life is so diminished

by her status that when Ninian invites her to join them for an evening out, the only dress she considers wearing is the one she had been saving for her own funeral.

With only a little encouragement, however, Lulu begins to realize her strengths and power. After experiencing even a brief moment of freedom, she is transformed. Regardless of the changes made to the end of the play, Lulu is regarded by many critics as a complex and dynamic character; many, in fact, have compared her to Nora, from Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Riann Bilderback has asserted that *Miss Lulu Bett* "relates the story of a woman who rises above patriarchal authority and finds her own voice and direction in life. The play is particularly significant given Gale's active role in the woman's suffrage movement of the early twentieth century. Gale exposes the patriarchal system as being inherently flawed, and she further insinuates that masculine power and authority are based on deception and lies." Bilderback maintains that Lulu's gradual development in character "leads to a climactic rebellion in which she recognizes and appropriates her power in order to direct her own fate."

CRITICAL RECEPTION

Although Gale achieved fame and critical recognition with her play *Miss Lulu Bett*, she is best remembered today as a novelist and short story writer. Indeed, her critical reputation as a playwright rests exclusively on the success of *Miss Lulu Bett*, though she wrote and published six other plays during her career. These works, for the most part, were performed only by college and community theater groups. In fact, only three of Gale's plays were staged by professional companies. One of these, *Mister Pitt*, received only lukewarm reviews when it was first performed in 1925. Although some critics praised the characterization and central themes of the play, as well as its detailed rendering of common language, most found the multiple set changes and short scenes laborious. Few reviewers even noted some of Gale's innovations in the drama, such as her use of a group of female gossips to function as a chorus between scenes, as in Greek drama, interpreting and commenting on the action of the play.

When *Miss Lulu Bett* was first performed in 1920, it too had received mixed reviews. While some critics praised Gale for adroitly adapting her novel into dramatic form, others argued that the author's efforts had fallen short. Alexander Woollcott conceded that the play offered "a good many sources of genuine pleasure for those who are both familiar with and fond of the book," but he concluded that anyone unfamiliar with the novel would find "a rather dull and flabby play, one somewhat sleazily put together by a playwright who has but a

slight sense of dramatic values and no instinct at all for the idiom of the theatre." Many reviewers also criticized Gale's decision to cater to the wishes of popular audiences by revising the ending of the play. Ludwig Lewisohn suggested that the original dramatic version "was the most genuine achievement of the American stage since Eugene O'Neill's 'Beyond the Horizon,'" arguing that Gale "had turned her original fable into a play and had given it in its new form a weightier and severer ending." Lewisohn felt that in the revised ending, however, Lulu's "act of liberation is thus stultified and with it the significance and strength of the dramatic action sacrificed at one blow." Some critics even suggested that Gale's revision, far from offering a conventional, happy ending, is ambiguous, potentially leaving Lulu in a situation not so different from the one she had escaped. Although the controversy surrounding Gale's decision to change the ending of *Miss Lulu Bett* fueled interest in the play, increasing attendance as a result, it also created doubt regarding the author's skill as a dramatist for some critics, many of whom objected when she won the Pulitzer Prize in 1921.

Although interest in Gale's work waned after the 1920s, a new generation of critics, especially feminist scholars and others interested in gender studies, rediscovered the author in the 1970s and 1980s. Because of its themes of female subordination and patriarchal authority, the play *Miss Lulu Bett* found a receptive audience in this new group of critics. In addition to examining its thematic content, recent scholars have noted the formal attributes of the play. Judith E. Barlow has contended that "Gale's deviation from traditional dramatic structure is, in fact, one of the play's virtues. The repetitive dialogue and action—including Gale's masterful stroke of beginning two successive scenes with almost identical arguments—make this satirical comedy surprisingly modern." Marilyn Judith Atlas, offering a new interpretation of the playwright's revision process, has remarked that Gale's "style remained conservative when compared to radical experimentalists of her time, such as Gertrude Stein, but when she adapted *Miss Lulu Bett* as a play . . . , Gale for a moment, embraced a very modern attitude toward closure, or the lack of closure."

For the most part, recent scholarship has centered on the play's depiction of the stifling and limited domestic life of its main character. Kathleen A. McLennan has observed that *Miss Lulu Bett*, "though no longer capable of shocking, draws attention to the status of women in American society. Miss Lulu's struggle for recognition as a woman challenges the notion that a man's work, by definition, makes a significant contribution to society while a woman's work is secondary and marginal." McLennan has championed the play's relevance, arguing that its central issues "are as valid today as they were in 1920." Patricia R. Schroeder has argued that the play offers a multi-faceted examination of the limita-

tions that women faced through the characterization not only of Lulu Bett but of the other women in the household, as well, asserting that the play “uses the conventions of realism to criticize those limitations and to suggest some of the widespread cultural conditions that create and sustain them. In this way, the play makes a strong political statement regarding the rights of women.”

For some scholars, *Miss Lulu Bett* is Gale's most important work because it authentically depicts the female perspective of an important historical period and explores themes that have remained relevant after several decades. As Carolyn Casey Craig has declared, “despite the years since its creation, *Miss Lulu Bett* still holds merit. It boldly illustrates the issues that gave rise to the women's movement. And Gale's main argument—respect for the inner worth of every person—is poignant in a society grown even more preoccupied with status and externals. Gale also condemns a form of hypocrisy that still flourishes in family and society: the use of control in the guise of protection.” Craig concludes that above all, the play “holds merit and interest as the work of a woman who was vitally connected to her world and deeply committed to improving the status of women.”

PRINCIPAL WORKS

Plays

The Neighbors 1914
 **Miss Lulu Bett* 1920
Uncle Jimmy 1922
 †*Mister Pitt* 1924
The Clouds 1932
Evening Clothes 1932
 ‡*Faint Perfume* 1934

Other Major Works

Romance Island (novel) 1906
The Loves of Pelleas and Etarre (short stories) 1907
Friendship Village (short stories) 1908
Friendship Village Love Stories (short stories) 1909
Mothers to Men (novel) 1911
When I Was a Little Girl (short stories) 1913
Neighborhood Stories (short stories) 1914
Heart's Kindred (novel) 1915
A Daughter of the Morning (novel) 1917
Birth (novel) 1918
Peace in Friendship Village (short stories) 1919

Miss Lulu Bett (novel) 1920
The Secret Way (poetry) 1921
Faint Perfume (novel) 1923
Preface to Life (novel) 1926
Yellow Gentians and Blue (short stories) 1927
Portage, Wisconsin, and Other Essays (essays) 1928
Borgia (novel) 1929
Bridal Pond (novel) 1930
Old Fashion Tales (short stories) 1933
Papa La Fleur (novel) 1933
Light Woman (novel) 1937
Frank Miller of Mission Inn (biography) 1938
Magna (novel) 1939
The Unfinished Autobiography (autobiography) 1940;
 published in *Still Small Voice: The Biography of
 Zona Gale* by August Derleth
Miss Lulu Bett and Stories (novel and short stories)
 2005

*This play is an adaptation of Gale's 1920 novel *Miss Lulu Bett*.

†This play is an adaptation of Gale's 1918 novel *Birth*.

‡This play is an adaptation of Gale's 1923 novel *Faint Perfume*.

OVERVIEWS AND GENERAL STUDIES

Cynthia Sutherland (essay date September 1978)

SOURCE: Sutherland, Cynthia. “American Women Playwrights as Mediators of the ‘Woman Problem.’” *Modern Drama* 21, no. 3 (September 1978): 319-36.

[In the following excerpt, taken from a broader discussion of the treatment of the “woman problem” in the plays of Zona Gale, Zoe Atkins, Susan Glaspell, and Rachel Crothers, Sutherland argues that these playwrights’ portrayals of female characters in their works are not “trivial,” as later-day critics have maintained, but reflect a conscious attempt to “mediate conflicting views of women’s ‘legitimate’ place in society” and are fascinating in the ways they internalize “a particular system of sex differentiation and values.”]

Ibsen's Nora shut the door of her “doll's house” in 1879. Among the generation of American women born in the 1870's and 1880's, Zona Gale, Zoe Atkins, and Susan Glaspell all won Pulitzer Prizes. Rachel Crothers, the successful dramatist who wrote more than three dozen plays, characterized her own work as “a sort of Comédie Humaine de la Femme.” In an interview in 1931 she said: “With few exceptions, every one of my plays has been a social attitude toward women at the moment I wrote it. . . . I [do not] go out stalking the footsteps of women's progress. It is something that

comes to me subconsciously. I may say that I sense the trend even before I have hearsay or direct knowledge of it."¹ During a period in which most American playwrights confined their work to representations of the middle class, these women were distinctive because they created principal roles for female characters whose rhetoric thinly veiled a sense of uneasiness with what Eva Figes and others more recently have called "patriarchal attitudes."

By the turn of the century, the mostly "abolitionist" women who had originated the battle for suffrage in the 1840's and 1850's were either dead or retired, and a new generation of leaders was attempting to expand popular support through the use of muted political rhetoric which intentionally avoided controversy.² The majority of women resisted arguments advocating changes in sex roles on the grounds that their inherent femininity would be diminished and their homes threatened. In the *Ladies' Home Journal*, Jane Addams argued benignly that a woman who wanted to "keep on with her old business of caring for her house and rearing her children" ought to "have some conscience in regard to public affairs lying outside her immediate household."³ The conciliatory strategy of feminist leaders like Addams and Carrie Chapman Catt exalted the family, motherhood, and domestic values, minimized conflicts between self-realization and inhibiting social conditions, and often disregarded the arguments of radical feminists who insisted that only basic alterations in the organization of the family and sexual relationships could effect substantive changes in women's lives.

For many members of audiences, political issues continued to be dissociated from personal lives in which an equator divided the world of human activity marking "homemaking" and "breadwinning" as hemispheres. In 1924, a study of a fairly large group of young girls indicated that a substantial number planned to choose marriage over a "career" and that few had developed alternative goals. Asked to "name the four heroines in history or fiction whom [they] would most like to resemble," only two of 347 chose women identified chiefly or even at all with feminist causes.⁴ They elected, rather, to live vicariously through husbands and children, accepting the traditional sex-role differentiation in which "instrumental/task functions are assigned to males, and expressive/social functions to females."⁵

Glaspell, Akins, Gale, and Crothers chronicled the increasingly noticeable effects of free love, trial marriage, the "double standard," career, divorce, and war on women's lives. Public rhetoric generally subsumed private sexual rhetoric in the theatre during this period, and dramatic discourse tended to mediate conflicting views of women's "legitimate" place in society more often than it intensified dispute. Although the sector of life subtended by domesticity was being steadily

decreased by technological and economic developments in the early years of the century, feminist leaders, artists, and housewives shared the common inability to suggest an alternative social structure through which discontent might be alleviated.⁶ To the extent that female characters on the stage accepted the traditional sex role, a diminished state of consciousness manifested itself in language that avoided strong or forceful statements, evinced conformity, consisted of euphemism and question-begging,⁷ and celebrated the processes which safely domesticated erotic pleasure.⁸ As contemporary critics, we tend to be disappointed by portrayals of women who cannot express, much less resolve, their problems. Yet, here, precisely, I believe, is the reason for the popular success and the "critical" failure of many of these plays. The spectacle of dramatic characters conducting themselves in the ironic guise of people only half aware of conflicts between individuation and primary sex role has usually been interpreted as trivial, the result of mediocre artistry, rather than what it is—the theatrical encoding of a "genderlect," or to put it another way, a language that reflects the internalizing by members of society of a particular system of sex differentiation and values.

.

Another study of a woman's plight, Zona Gale's *Miss Lulu Bett*, opened at the Belmont Theatre on December 27, 1920 and subsequently won the Pulitzer Prize.⁹ Like Rachel Crothers and Susan Glaspell, Zona Gale had come to New York from the Midwest and was sympathetic to feminist causes despite her mother's caveat to shun radical politics and women's groups—"I would let that mess of women alone!" she had advised her daughter.¹⁰ The novel on which Gale had based her play had been immediately successful, and in eight days, she had hastily, though with considerable dramatic skill, adapted it for production.¹¹ Even though *Miss Lulu Bett* did not present a threatening subject (for "old maids" were commonly seen not as electing spinsterhood but as having had it thrust upon them by faithless lovers or deprivation),¹² strong critical pressure influenced Gale to alter the last act, in which, like Ibsen's Nora, Lulu walks out of the house in which she has been a virtual servant to become an independent woman.¹³ Gale rewrote the last act so that it conformed more closely to her popular novel, which concluded with Lulu comfortably established as a respectable wife.¹⁴ This story of a drab but resourceful and dry-witted woman—whom Fannie Hurst called a "shining star" reflected in "greasy reality"¹⁵—ran for 186 performances. Such capitulation to public opinion evident in the modification of the ending by a writer who had supported the Woman's Peace Union, the Woman's Peace Party (Wisconsin), Jane Addams and the Hull-House workers, and who later helped to write the Wisconsin Equal Rights Law,¹⁶ has considerable significance. It anticipated the new style of mediation used by playwrights who continued

to dramatize aspects of the "woman problem" in the 1920's.

.

The efforts of women to understand and determine their own lives, their failure to develop effective strategies for the realization of personal gratification, their continuing attachment to the perimeters of capitalism were portrayed by Glaspell, Gale, Crothers, and Akins less as a passionate subjugation than as the restless sojourn of half-articulate captives in a land that seemed alien to them. Marriage continued to be the first choice and a career the second of most women, as their enrollment percentage in colleges continued to drop steadily from 40.3 in 1930 to 30.2 in 1950.¹⁷ In the theatre, divorcees and professional women continued to be perceived as "threats" to the institution of marriage, because they personified women's fulfillment through chosen alternative social roles.¹⁸ Not until the late 1950's would public attention again focus on the issues probed so searchingly by this generation of playwrights. Certainly, isolated expressions of "feminist" theatre, like Sophie Treadwell's *Machinal* (Plymouth Theatre, September 7, 1928), had continued, but they were generally short-lived, and for a quarter of a century, there was no reappearance of the serious concern with the "woman problem" that had characterized the work of America's women playwrights from the Midwest.

My comments have been limited to plays written by middle-class women who bring to issue kinship rules and incest taboos in which primary sex role determines generic restrictions for dramatic action. A thoroughgoing analysis would have included, among others, the ordinary females and heteroclitics created by Clare Kummer, Rose Pastor Stokes, Alice Gerstenberg, Alice Brown, Sophie Treadwell, Rita Wellman, Neith Boyce, Lula Vollmer, Maurine Watkins, Charlotte Perkins Gillman, and Julie Herne. Nor have I mentioned Edward Sheldon, George Middleton, Bayard Veiller, Sidney Howard, George Kelly, Eugene O'Neill, and S. N. Behrman, who were remarkably sensitive to the predicaments of female characters and deserve to be reevaluated in this light.

As theatre historians and critics, we must now attempt to refine our working lexicon. Beyond female roles dictated by kinship structures (e.g., wife, mother, daughter, sister, bride, mother-in-law, widow, grandmother), there exist other roles which are more or less independent (e.g., coquette, ingénue, soubrette, career woman, servant, shaman, witch, bawd, whore) as well as interdependent roles (e.g., the other woman, mulatto). Only by developing descriptive categories with some historical precision can we hope to account for both formulaic successes and changes in dramatic modes. A more accurate vocabulary for female "dramatis personae" could help us to understand the inter-

relationships between the theatre and evolving social milieus in this and other periods.

Notes

1. Interview with Henry Albert Phillips, March 15, 1931; Scrapbook III, p. 59. Quoted by Irving Abramson, "The Career of Rachel Crothers in the American Drama" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1956), p. 193. Also see, Lois C. Gottlieb, "Obstacles to Feminism in the Early Plays of Rachel Crothers," *University of Michigan Papers in Women's Studies* I (June 1975), 71-84.
2. Cf. Deborah S. Kolb, "The Rise and Fall of the New Woman in American Drama," *ETJ* 27 (1975), 149-60. Also see, William H. Chafe, *The American Woman: Her Changing Social, Economic, and Political Role, 1920-1970* (London and New York, 1972), pp. 3-22; Aileen S. Kraditor, *The Ideas of the Woman Suffrage Movement 1890-1920* (New York, 1965); William L. O'Neill, *Everyone Was Brave: A History of Feminism in America* (Chicago, 1969); June Sochen, *Movers and Shakers: American Women Thinkers and Activists, 1900-1970* ([Chicago], 1973).
3. Jane Addams, "Why Women Should Vote," *Ladies' Home Journal* 27 (1910). Also see, *Democracy and Social Ethics* (New York, 1902), *passim*.
4. Lorine Pruette, *Women and Leisure: A Study of Social Waste* (New York, 1924), pp. 123, 138, *passim*. Jane Addams was chosen once, Frances Willard twice. Pruette's figures actually do not indicate clearly if the same person chose both women, so that it is possible that three girls were involved.
5. See David Tresemer and Joseph Pleck, "Sex-Role Boundaries and Resistance to Sex-Role Change," *Women Studies* 2 (1974), 72. Tresemer and Pleck acknowledge their indebtedness to T. Parsons and R. F. Bales's *Family, Socialization, and Interaction Process* (Glencoe, Ill., 1955). See also, Harriet Holter, *Sex Roles and Social Structure* (Oslo, 1970).
6. A notable exception, Charlotte Perkins Gillman, had written original and pithy sociology in works like *Women and Economics* (1898), *The Home, Its Work and Influence* (1903), and *His Religion and Hers* (1923). However, in her plays, she relied heavily on "romance" to mitigate feminist political content. See, for example, *Three Women* (1911) and *Something to Vote For* (1911), published in *The Forerunner*.
7. The "reduced state of consciousness" that is "favorable to political conformity" and its manifestation in the "decline of language" is elegantly

- described by George Orwell in "Politics and the English Language," in *A Collection of Essays by George Orwell* (Garden City, N.Y., 1957), pp. 162-77.
8. My generalization here is based, of course, on Claude Lévi-Strauss's *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, rev. ed., trans. Bell, Sturges, and Needham (Boston, 1969) and Georges Bataille's *Death and Sensuality: A Study of Eroticism and Taboo* (New York, 1969).
 9. The premiere had been presented by David Belasco at Sing Sing, December 26th, on a portable stage. See Jane F. Bonin, *Prizewinning American Drama* (Metuchen, N. J., 1973), p. 8.
 10. August Derleth, *Still Small Voice: The Biography of Zona Gale* (New York, 1940), p. 100. "Zona was already at that time heart and soul with the feminist movements of her time, and was particularly interested in suffrage for women, going so far as to speak on the subject on several occasions to gatherings." (p. 101)
 11. The other play under consideration was a domestic comedy by Frank Craven, *The First Year*. The jury, consisting of Hamlin Garland, William Lyon Phelps, and Richard Burton elected to waive the requirement that the play be an "original" American drama. Garland wrote to Frank Fackenthal: "Feeling that it would be a handsome thing to give the prize to a woman, Burton will join Phelps and me in giving the award to *Lulu Bett*." John Hohenberg, *The Pulitzer Prizes: A History of the Awards in Books, Drama, Music, and Journalism Based on the Private Files Over Six Decades* (New York, 1974), pp. 50-1. Also see, Harold P. Simonson, *Zona Gale* (New York, 1962), p. 79.
 12. See Dorothy Deegan, *The Stereotype of the Single Woman in American Novels* (New York, 1951; rpt. 1969).
 13. Ludwig Lewisohn, "Native Plays," *The Nation* 112 (February 2, 1921), 189. Lewisohn preferred the original ending, which, he argued, had "turned [Gale's] original fable into a play and had given it a weightier and severer ending . . . the most inevitable that we recall in the work of any American Playwright."
 14. In the revised third act, Lulu's "husband's" missing first wife is discovered to have died, a circumstance making his second marriage legal. In the novel, Lulu had married another less attractive but more stable suitor. See [Harold P. Simonson, *Zona Gale* (New York, 1962),] pp. 85-6.
 15. *Ibid.*, p. 82; letter from Fannie Hurst to Zona Gale, n. d.
 16. *Ibid.*, pp. 64-5; Derleth, pp. 45-6, 211, 261. Also see, Zona Gale, "What Women Won in Wisconsin," *The Nation* 115 (August 23, 1922), 184-85.
 17. [Mabel Newcome, *A Century of Higher Education* (New York, 1959),] p. 46.
 18. Cf. Donald Nelson Koster, "The Theme of Divorce in American Drama, 1871-1939," (Ph.D. diss., University of Pennsylvania, 1942).
- Yvonne Shafer (essay date 1995)**
- SOURCE: Shafer, Yvonne. "Zona Gale (1874-1938)." In *American Women Playwrights, 1900-1950*, pp. 216-28. New York: Peter Lang, 1995.
- [In the following excerpt, Shafer surveys Gale's career as a dramatist, concluding that while she "cannot be considered a major American playwright, either on the basis of the body of her playwriting or the quality," her work nonetheless offers "cleverly written dialogue" and "memorable characterizations."]
- Zona Gale (1874-1938) gained fame chiefly for her novels and short stories, but she contributed a few memorable plays to the theatre. She is an important figure in theatre history as she was the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for Playwriting. She is also important because she moved away from the standard urban settings so typical of the theatre, particularly in New York, to present regional characters and settings.
-
- Gale was committed to writing throughout her adult life and wrote hundreds of short stories and articles as well as twenty-two volumes of fiction. She was very active in a number of causes such as women's suffrage, Theosophy, spiritualism, and pacifism. She was sincerely interested in education, particularly for women, serving for many years as a member of the University of Wisconsin's Board of Regents. She was one of the writers of the 1923 Wisconsin Equal Rights Law and was Wisconsin's representative to the International Congress of Women in Chicago in 1933. Gale was a close friend of Jane Addams and was active in the Women's Peace Party (Breitsprecher 97). Her writing, particularly her immensely successful 1920 novel *Miss Lulu Bett*, reflects her concern for equality for women.
- In 1910, at the request of Thomas Dickenson, who was encouraging regional playwriting, Gale wrote a one-act play called *Neighbors*. In his foreword to *Wisconsin Plays* (which contains *Neighbors* and plays by two other playwrights, Dickenson explained the aims of Gale and the others involved in the Wisconsin Dramatic Society: