Pioneering Ibsen's Dramas
Agents, Markets and Reception 1852-1893

Magnus Qvistgaard

Thesis submitted for assessment with a view to
obtaining the degree of Doctor of History and Civilization
of the European University Institute

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European University Institute
Department of History and Civilization

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the dissemination of the plays of the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen to Denmark, Germany and Britain. The investigation covers the time from when Ibsen's dramas were first attempted to be introduced to the time when they broke through in each of the three countries spanning the period 1852-1893. In this way, the thesis offers both a synchronic and diachronic view of the process. The thesis' approach builds on theories of cultural transfer and investigates the agents that carried out the transfer, the cultural markets through which the plays were disseminated and finally how they were integrated into local culture. Through the three case studies, the thesis offers a transnational scope on the transfer of Ibsen's drama as well as incorporating a plurality of perspectives to show how the transfer was contested and negotiated locally. The cultural markets, such as local and transnational book and theatrical markets, are investigated to show how structural conditions influenced the transfer, and contemporary notions of nation and national literature are explored to place the transfer in an ideational context. Thus, the investigation of the transfer of Ibsen's plays offers a prism for the study of cultural markets, agency in the field of culture and the circulation of Scandinavian cultural products in the latter half of the nineteenth century.

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Notes on the text

Translations

All translations of texts into English of the Scandinavian languages are mine unless otherwise noted. In my translations, I have chosen to adhere closely to the original in terms of the structure and the length of sentences in order to show the complex, even wordy, style of the time.

Henrik Ibsen's correspondence

As Ibsen's correspondence has been made available through numerous publications, I only give the date and the recipient when referencing the letters. For my work, I have relied on the online archive based on *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter* (2005-2010) at: http://www.ibsen.uio.no/brev.xhtml. In the case of the letters of Ibsen's Danish publisher, Frederik V. Hegel, I follow the same format albeit Hegel's letters remain largely unpublished and only available in the form of Hegel's draft letters in the manuscript collection of the Danish Royal Library.

Abbreviations

DBL: Dansk Biografisk Leksikon, eletronic resource: *http://www.denstoredanske.dk/Dansk_Biografisk_Leksikon*.

HIS: *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter* (2005-2010)

NBL: Norsk Biografisk Leksikon, electronic resource: *https://nbl.snl.no*

NDB/ADB: Deutsche Biographie, electronic resource: *http://www.deutsche-biographie.de/search*

ODNB: Oxford Dictionary of National Biography, electronic resource: *www.oxforddnb.com*

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Introduction

Ibsen research as transfer history

The success that the drama of the Norwegian Dramatist Henrik Ibsen (1828-1906) experienced as books and on the stages across Europe during the last quarter of the nineteenth century was in many ways extraordinary. It was extraordinary due to the extent of the success: by the close of the century, his plays were staged throughout Europe and celebrated successes in Paris, London, Berlin, St. Petersburg, Vienna and Rome. The plays were performed in North America and in the British colonies all the way to New Zealand. Extraordinary was also the dramas' ability to win over people to a new dramatic literature: in Scandinavia, it was seen as the epitome of the 'modern breakthrough'. In Germany, Ibsen was hailed by the young naturalists as the initiator of the new German drama, in France his plays were embraced by the avant-garde theatre, and in Britain his drama was as the embodiment of what was simply known as 'new drama'. Yet, what more than anything seemed extraordinary about Ibsen's success was the fact that it was initiated in Norway; located as it was on what seemed to be the very fringe of the European cultural space. The fact that Ibsen was from Norway, a country that at the time, compared to other European countries, possessed a negligible literary tradition has inevitably prompted the question of how his success was at all possible.

Traditionally, the answer to the question has been to point to Ibsen's dramas and thus explain their success through their aesthetic or ideational qualities, not infrequently summing them up as bearing witness to 'Ibsen's genius'. In a recent article, Brian Johnston places himself in this long tradition by reiterating William Archer, arguably the most important of Ibsen's contemporary British pioneers, on the subject:

> The odds against Ibsen becoming a major figure in world literature were formidable in the extreme. William Archer […] himself wondered at the extent of Ibsen's success on the European scene: "…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…"[1]

Explaining how Ibsen managed to break out of his local context and managed to gain a place in world literature by claiming Ibsen's 'genius', may not be wholly wrong, but it is a way of reducing a process which was very complex to an explanation that is very simple. Yet, authors do not exist in a vacuum and their works do not reach their audiences by themselves. The processes which eventually brought Ibsen's plays to stages across Europe was long and, besides Ibsen, involved the hard work and agency of a great number of middlemen, without whom Ibsen

[1] Brian Johnston, 'The Ibsen Phenomenon', *Ibsen Studies*, 6 (1) (2006), p. 6. Johnston quotes William Archer's 'The Real Ibsen' (1901).

would not be the author that he is today. Furthermore, it was a process that was embedded in specific historical contexts in which cultural markets and cultural institutions and networks played a decisive role in shaping the fate of Ibsen's dramas. It is from this realisation that the present investigation into what I will frame as the transfer of Ibsen's dramas takes its cue in the following.

In this thesis, I investigate Ibsen's initial European breakthrough using three case studies spanning the time 1850-1893. The investigation of the dramas' dissemination and local appropriation is based on theories about 'cultural transfers'. From this perspective, the thesis investigates the people, the institutions and the cultural markets that were involved in the transferral of the dramas, and which eventually made Ibsen's success possible. The overall research question is:

- How were Ibsen's dramas transferred to Denmark, the German Empire and Britain during the time from when they first emerged in translation to their general breakthrough in each of the countries.

The core of the thesis is the three case studies that investigate the transfer of Ibsen's drama to Denmark, to Germany and to Britain. In each case they cover the time from when Ibsen's plays were first introduced to the time when they broke through. It is important to note that Ibsen's dramas were not introduced and did not break through at the same time in the three countries. For the thesis as a whole, this has the consequence that the cases may be seen as three waves in what was a gradual dissemination of Ibsen's drama. The first case study, the investigation of the transfer to Denmark, focuses on the period from 1852 when Ibsen submitted a play to a Danish theatre for the first time to the early 1870s when his plays experienced their great breakthrough in Danish theatres. The second follows the transfer of Ibsen's drama to Germany through three internal waves from the mid-1870s to the eventual lasting breakthrough in the late 1880s. The third, which covers the transfer to Britain, followed it from the first translations in the early 1870s, but focuses on the time from the late 1880s to the end of 1893, a time during which Ibsen's plays time became the object of general public awareness for the first. Besides being linked to their respective geographical and linguistic areas, the three case studies also cover three phases in the development in Ibsen's work, which means that it to some extent was with different works that Ibsen broke through in the three countries. The chronological progress between the studies furthermore has the methodological advantage that highlights the fact that the dissemination was gradual and that the transfer to an increasing number of countries and languages was built on the reputation of former successes. In this way, it helps to draw attention to the fact that the appropriation of Ibsen's plays were not isolated national receptions, but that they were interlinked.

The three counties are selected due to the importance in the initial dissemination of Ibsen's plays that led to his general European breakthrough and the plays' eventual entry into world

literature. Denmark was the country from which Ibsen's drama experienced their Scandinavian breakthrough, and was Ibsen's first step from being a purely national writer towards being an author of international renown. The transfer to Germany, which followed the Scandinavian success, was a crucial next step in the overall dissemination of Ibsen's drama, and the plays' introduction to German speaking audiences was the first time they appeared in translation. Ibsen' success in Germany was not only crucial in establishing him as a European author, but the German translations of his drama in many cases served as the bridge for the first translations into a number of European languages, particularly those of Eastern and Central Europe. Like the transfer to Germany, the transfer to Britain was central in the dissemination of Ibsen's drama and it was particularly in English translation that his plays would travel the world and find their place in world literature.

Previous research

Research on Ibsen has a long history and both Henrik Ibsen and his plays have been objects of scholarly attention for more than a century. The first early academic works were most often biographies combined with interpretations of his plays. Following Ibsen's death in 1906, his reputation was cemented through authoritative collected editions of his works and the translation and publication of his surviving correspondence. By the turn of the century and in its first decades there was already a number of studies that had appeared that investigated the various national receptions of the plays, something that may be seen to testify to the growing international canonisation that already began in Ibsen's own lifetime. Early examples are Valdemar Vedel's *Ibsen og Danmark* (1898), Philipp Stein's *Henrik Ibsen zur Bühnengeschichte seiner Dichtung* (1901), William Eller's *Ibsen in Germany* (1918), Miriam Franc's *Ibsen in England* (1919), and Ibsen's central position in Archibald Henderson's *The Changing Drama* (1919).

Since emerging as a field of research, Ibsen studies has continued to develop and has been a very varied field over the years. A large part of the research has been, and continues to be, interpretations of Ibsen's plays, which rely on narrow aesthetic contexts, take their lines of approach from current issues or produce dehistoricised readings. These studies are an important part of the process which keeps Ibsen's work alive and without which it would soon lose its place in world literature. The continual reinterpretations, however, have few points of contact with an investigation of the historical transfer of Ibsen's dramas and I, therefore, do not analyse this body of literature in the present overview.

Of importance to the present investigation is first and foremost the research which investigates the reception and productions of the plays. The research has been conducted from various approaches, ranging from the collection of reviews and establishing the diffusion and chronology of productions, to investigating the role of translators, translations, and theatrical

adaptations. What characterises this body of literature, however, is that the studies are almost all worked out within the framework of single nations. I see this this national approach, as one of the shortcomings of the field, and one which a transnational investigation, based on the cultural transfer approach, may help to overcome. As this is a point with important methodological implications, I return to it in detail below. The consequence of the national approach is that the national receptions are viewed in isolation, and the research in this way is robbed of the opportunity to find larger transnational patterns.

The turn towards studies of literary reception in German literature studies in the 1970s can be seen as paradigmatic for the focus of the research.[2] This includes the many studies of 'reception history' that followed Wolfgang Iser and Hans-Robert Jauss' launch of the field in the late 1960s and early 1970s, which sought to investigate the relation between the author, the text and the reader. An example of this approach may be found in Jauss' prominent article 'Literaturgeschichte als Provokation'. In this body of literature, the studies of the reception of Ibsen's plays were often part of larger investigations of the relation between Scandinavian and German literature, often with emphasis on the dissemination of theatrical productions, the so-called 'Bühnengeschichte',[3] or appropriation of Ibsen's work by German writers.[4] Of particular interest are a series of studies carried out at Kiel University in the framework of the research project 'Zur Rezeption Skandinavischer Literatur in Deutschland 1870 Bis 1914', which counted a series of book publications.[5] Although not all of these are on Ibsen, they provide an analysis of the import of Scandinavian literature during the time when Ibsen's plays were first produced in Germany. Within this movement, Ibsen and the Norwegian Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson are seen as key figures, though the research has made it evident that there were many other Scandinavians whose works were translated during this period. It should, of course, be noted that studies on the German reception history are not limited to the German Empire, but include other German speaking areas as well.[6]

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[2] Hans-Robert Jauß, *Literaturgeschichte Als Provokation.* (Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp, 1970).

[3] Wolfgang Pasche, *Skandinavische Dramatik in Deutschland : Björnstjerne Björnson, Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg Auf Der Deutschen Bühne, 1867-1932* (Basel: Helbing & Lichtenhahn, 1979); Marc Boettcher, *Henrik Ibsen: zur Bühnengeschichte seiner 'Gespenster'* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: P. Lang, 1989); Sabine Fleischhacker, 'Ibsen Im Liche Der Münchner Presse (1876-1891)', in *Contemporary Approaches to Ibsen Vol. V* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1983); Karin Wolgast, 'Reinhardt, Ibsen Und Munch in Berlin: «Gespenster» an Den Kammerspielen Des Deutschen Theaters 1906', *Divinatio*, 2011, 7–62.

[4] David E. R. George, *Henrik Ibsen in Deutschland. Rezeption Und Revision.* (Goͤttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1968); Vera Moe, *Deutscher Naturalismus Und Ausländische Literatur: Zur Rezeption Der Werke von Zola, Ibsen Und Dostojewski Durch Die Deutsche Naturalistische Bewegung (1880-1895)* (Frankfurt am Main; New York: Peter Lang, 1983); John Osborne, 'Zola, Ibsen and the Development of the Naturalist Movement in Germany', *Arcadia*, 2 (1967).

[5] Alken Bruns, *Ubersetzung als Rezeption : Deutsche Ubersetzer skandinavischer Literatur von 1860-1900.* (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz, 1977); Walter Baumgartner, *Triumph Des Irrealismus : Rezeption Skandinavischer Literatur Im Ästhetischen Kontext, Deutschland 1860 Bis 1910* (Neumünster: Wachholtz, 1979); Robert Fallenstein and Christian Henning, *Rezeption Skandinavischer Literatur in Deutschland 1870-1914*, 1 (Neumünster: Karl Wachholtz, 1977).

[6] Astrid Surmatz, 'Ibsen Am Burgtheater Zur Direktionszeit Max Burckhards (1890-1898): Ein Durchbruch Der Moderne?', in *Theaterinstitution Und Kulturtransfer*, ed. by Fritz Bärbel, 1 (Tübingen: Narr, 1997).

There are a number of studies of the reception of Ibsen's plays in Denmark, but compared to the literature on Germany or Britain, the Danish reception of Ibsen's plays is evidently understudied. Ulla Strømberg has provided a basic overview of the production of Ibsen's plays in Denmark in *Ibsen på Dansk* (2006) and the reception of the play *A Doll's House* is studied by Tom Hansen in *Kampen om Nora* (1988), though the latter has a didactic rather than scholarly aim.[7] Besides these, a number of articles have investigated Ibsen's relationship to the Danish Royal Theatre, both in terms of the production of his plays and also the theatre's presumed influence on the young Ibsen.[8] One may speculate about the reasons why there is comparatively so little research on the Danish reception of Ibsen's plays. One reason could be due to Ibsen research to being dominated by Norwegian researchers, something which seems to be an overall Scandinavian tendency. Another explanation could be that due to the closeness of the Scandinavian cultural fields in the latter part of the nineteenth century, especially the Danish and Norwegian, the research tends to draw on reception across Denmark, Norway and Sweden, thus indirectly covering the Danish reception. This is, for instance, the approach adopted in the commentary volumes to the individual plays in the latest critical edition of Ibsen's works, *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter* (2005-2010), in which a short overview of the reception in the Scandinavian countries is presented in connection to each of Ibsen's plays. *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter* also touches on the German and English receptions. One specific aspect of the Danish Ibsen reception that has received considerable scholarly attention is the relationship between Ibsen and the Danish critic Georg Brandes (1842-1924). Ibsen and Brandes were both leading figures in what is known as the 'modern breakthrough' in Scandinavian literature, and Brandes was arguably the leading contemporary authority on Ibsen, both in Scandinavia and abroad. Both Brandes' reception of Ibsen's work as well as the relationship between the two men has been studied, and in recent decades the assumption that the two supported one another has been spiritedly debated.[9]

The British reception of Ibsen's plays has been studied extensively. The focus of interest has overwhelmingly been the debates in the British press which followed the productions of Ibsen's modern problem plays in the late 1880s and the first part of the 1890s. As part of these studies, extensive collections of reviews and articles from the debates have been published, though these collections cover the reception from the first published writings of Ibsen in British media in

[7] Tom Lerdrup Hansen, *Kampen omkring Nora: et Dukkehjem's tilblivelse og dets modtagelse 1879-80* (Copenhagen: Gyldendal, 1988); Ulla Strømberg and Teatermuseet, *Ibsen på dansk* (Teatermuseet i Hofteatret, 2006).

[8] Jytte Wiingaard, *Henrik Ibsen: En Essaysamling* (København: Multivers, 2004); Jytte Wiingaard, 'Henrik Ibsen and Denmark', *Ibsen Studies*, 2 (1) (2002); Inga-Stina Ewbank, 'Ibsen in Wonderful Copenhagen 1852', *Ibsen Studies*, 1 (2001), 59–78.

[9] Astrid Sæther, Jørgen Dines Johansen and Atle Kittang, *Ibsen og Brandes: studier i et forhold* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2006); Reinecke-Wilkendorff, 'Våbenbrødre? Om Georg Brandes Forhold Til Og Opfattelse Af Henrik Ibsen.', *Danske Studier*, 99 (2004), 61–105; Erik M. Christensen, 'Why Should Brandes Sabotage Ibsen in Germany', *Contemporary Approaches to Ibsen*, vol 5 1983/1984; Jørgen Knudsen, *Georg Brandes: i modsigelsernes tegn Berlin 1877-1883* (København: Gyldendal, 1988); Christer Westling, *Idealismens Estetik: Nordisk Litteraturkritik Vid 1800-Talets Mitt Mot Bakgrund Av Den Tyska Filosofin Från Kant till Hegel* (Stockholm: Nyströms Tryckeri, 1985).

1872 to Ibsen's death in 1906.[10] The research has investigated the controversy from various perspectives, though it most often has been interpreted from the perspective of the introduction of modern artistic drama into a wholly commercialised theatrical market, largely framed as aesthetically backwards.[11] A substantial literature has investigated the people that partook in the introduction of Ibsen's plays, most notably Thomas Postlewait's *Prophet of the New Drama: William Archer and the Ibsen Campaign* (1986), but less central promoters have been studied as well.[12] The British Ibsen research has largely been centred on the productions as well as the opposition to these. An important and original contribution to Ibsen research, however, has been made by Tore Rem, who has both pioneered a perspective from book history on the publication of Ibsen's dramas, as well as investigated the reception from the perspective of the provincialism with which the plays were initially often charged.[13]

Within the field of research, there are a very limited number of studies that adopt either transnational or comparative approaches and thereby go beyond a national framing by introducing more countries. The best example of a comparative approach is Kirsten Shepherd-Barr's *Ibsen and the Early Modernist Theatre* (1997) which offers a British and French comparison of early theatrical productions between 1890 to 1900. Another comparison of the British-French appropriation, though very brief, can be found in Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* (2004). Casanova's comparison appears widely to be based on Shepherd-Barr's work, but is significant because it places it in the greater context of global circulation and valorisation of literature. For this reason, Casanova's book is highly relevant and I investigate her theoretical framework in detail below. A single instance of a transnational (regional) approach can be found in Benedickts Kalnacs short article on 'Ibsen in Baltic Culture'. In recent years, there has been a growing interest in what has been termed 'the global Ibsen', featuring studies of the reception and staging history from a large range of countries outside of Europe.[14] These are valuable contributions to the study of the reception of Ibsen's

[10] Michael Egan, *Henrik Ibsen : The Critical Heritage* (London, New York: Routledge, 1997); Tore Rem, *Henry Gibson/Henrik Ibsen: den provinsielle verdensdikteren : mottakelsen i Storbritannia 1872-1906* (Oslo: Cappelen, 2006).

[11] For example: Katherine E. Kelly, 'Pandemic and Performance: Ibsen and the Outbreak of Modernism', *South Central Review*, 25 (1) (2008); Tracy C. Davis, 'The Independent Theatre Society's Revolutionary Scheme for an Uncommercial Theater', *Theatre Journal*, 42:4 (1990); Sara Jan, 'Naturalism in the Theatre: Ibsen's Ghosts in 1890s England', in *Anglo-Scandinavian Cross-Currents* (Oslo: Norvik Press, 1999).

[12] For example: Bernard F. Dukore, 'Karl Marx's Youngest Daughter and "A Doll's House"', *Theatre Journal*, 42 (3) (1990); Sally Ledger, 'Eleanor Marx and Henrik Ibsen', in *Eleanor Marx: Life, Work Contacts* (London: Ashgate, 2000); Olav Lausund, 'Edmund Gosse: Ibsen's First Prophet to English Readers', in *Anglo-Scandinavian Cross-Currents* (Oslo: Norvik Press, 1999); N.H.G. Schoonderwoerd, *J.T. Grein: Ambassador of the Theater 1862-1935* (Nijmegen: Van Gorcum & Comp., 1963).

[13] For example: Tore Rem, 'Ibsen as Book: Another British Ibsen', in *International Ibsen Conference*, Acta Ibseniana (Oslo: Alvheim & Eide, 2001); Tore Rem, 'Hot Property: Reading Ibsen in Britain`s Fin de Siècle', *All About Ibsen*, 2006; Tore Rem, '"The Provincial of Provincials": Ibsen's Strangeness and the Process of Canonisation', *Ibsen Studies*, 4 (2) (2004).

[14] Frode. Helland and others, *The Living Ibsen: Proceedings - the 11th International Ibsen Conference* (Oslo: Centre for Ibsen Studies, Univ., 2007); Knut Brynhildsvoll, Lech. Sokól and Benedikts. Kalnačs, *Ibsen Reception in Poland and the Baltic Countries* (Oslo: Centre for Ibsen Studies, Univ. of Oslo, 2006); Erika. Fischer-Lichte,

plays not least as they shed light on the reception in countries which have often previously been disregarded by the international research community. Unfortunately, however, they reinforce the tendency to focus on the reception in individual countries, which from the outset has dominated the research on the European countries.

As a field of research, Ibsen studies may largely be claimed to still be structured by methodological nationalism. By methodological nationalism I mean the approach of taking the nation state as the a priori starting point for investigation, either in the form of doing research solely within the nation state, thereby cutting off all external, or so to say 'foreign', influences or doing a comparison between two nation states without reflecting on the appropriateness of the category.[15] The methodological nationalism that prevails in the field of Ibsen research is problematic for a number of reasons, not least as the appropriateness of national categories are never called in to question. I will discuss the question of methodological nationalism in detail below, but at present it may be sufficient to point out that the consequence of methodological nationalism is that it supports specific types of interpretations. As part of the recent global orientation of the field, for instance, individual studies are often loosely placed in relation to a notion of Ibsen's plays as world literature, or 'the worlding of Ibsen', and involves a narrative in which Ibsen's plays have long since reached all parts (countries) of the globe. Very frequently, this narrative is combined with the notion that Ibsen's plays were expressions of a more advanced culture in relation to that of the receiving nation, something which gave rise to an initial rejection of them, but which eventual acceptance helped to advance them in the receiving culture.[16] This narrative has been applied in a number of different contexts ranging from Britain to China.[17]

Seen from the perspective of cultural transfers, the most rewarding development in Ibsen studies comes from a strand in the research that emphasise the strong historical contextualisation of Ibsen's path to become a major international playwright. This development may be seen as a departure from of the approaches that rely on narrow aesthetic contexts when explaining the success of Ibsen's dramas. In his introduction to the publication of Ibsen's letters in *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter* (2005-2010), Narve Fulsås has partly written in collaboration with Ståle Dingstad and together with Tore Rem, who has published extensively on Ibsen in Britain, they

Barbara. Gronau and Christel. Weiler, *Global Ibsen: Performing Multiple Modernities* (New York: Routledge, 2011).

[15] Silke Neunsinger, 'Cross-over! Om Komparationer, Transferanalyser, Histoire Crosée Och Den Metodologiska Nationalismens Problem', *Historisk Tidskrift*, 130 (1) (2010).

[16] This takes many forms, often Ibsen's plays are perceived as an 'influence' which prompts renewal, not infrequently framed as modernising: Kwok-Kan Tam, for example, sees Ibsen as a 'visionary […] of a modern self that departs from traditional cultural frameworks' (Tam, p. xiii), and sums up a number of articles from the anthology, which he introduces by claiming: 'In Europe, North America and Asia the rise of feminism and individualism since the beginning of the twentieth century can be attributed to Ibsen's influence in forging new identities of the female self' (Tam, p. xx). Kwok-kan Tam, 'Introduction', in *Ibsen and the Modern Self*, Acta Ibseniana (Hong Kong: Open University of Hong Kong Press, 2010).

[17] Wang Ning, 'Reconstructing Ibsen as an Artist: A Theoretical Reflection on the Reception of Ibsen in China', *Ibsen Studies*, 2003, 71–85.

have paved the way for this approach, by situating Ibsen's life and work in thickly described historical contexts. Inspired by Bourdieu, Fulsås outlines Ibsen's rise to international fame partly through outlining the simultaneous emergence of an autonomous artistic field in Norway and by showing how Ibsen strove to acquire artistic and financial capital both at home and abroad. Besides his valuable work on Ibsen's British reception, Rem has pointed to the interdependence between Ibsen's drama as book and as theatre, a perspective of great importance for framing a proper understanding of the diffusion.[18] Fulsås has pointed to other important dynamics which conditioned the international circulation of Ibsen's plays, such as the crucial role played by copyrights which points to the importance of the intermediaries. Following the completion of *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter*, Fulsås has published a comprehensive catalogue with short biographies of the persons mentioned in Ibsen's correspondence based on the comments already supplied in *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter*.[19] Needless to say, this is a very valuable contribution of original research to the field, and I have found it a tremendous fountain of knowledge to draw on in connection with the present investigation.

An important contribution to the field of Ibsen research is the database of Ibsen productions hosted by the Norwegian National Library (ibsen.nb.no).[20] The database registers information about all known Ibsen productions ranging from the first productions to the present day. Just as keeping the database up to date is an on-going project, so is tracking and collecting the data of historical productions a work in progress. The database has been one of the most important tools in my work with tracing the transfer of Ibsen's plays, and its overview of the theatrical dissemination has provided a framework for the qualitative analysis of the transfer. Tracing the historical Ibsen productions is a daunting task, and even for the countries where the field is well researched (which is the case with Denmark, Germany and Britain) new productions may yet be discovered. Given the available sources, the information available in the database differs from production to production: in some instances only the date and the venue is known, where as in others the cast and the numbers of performances is known as well. Working with this data, one is therefore faced with the fact that they are incomplete and that the discovery of new productions may change the outline of the way in which we perceive the dissemination. The database, however, provides the best overview of the dissemination currently available, and I have found the database an indispensable tool in outlining the general dissemination, and thereby providing a context for the individual productions. At the end of the thesis, I have included lists of the recorded productions for Denmark, Germany and Britain as appendixes as a help to the reader, and throughout the thesis I refer to these when it comes referencing the time and place of productions. For all additional information available in the database, I refer directly to the online catalogue.

[18] Rem, 'Ibsen as Book: Another British Ibsen'.
[19] Narve Fulsås, Ståle Dingstad and Aina Nøding, *Biografisk leksikon til Ibsens brev: med tidstavle* (Oslo: Senter for Ibsen-studier, 2013). I have made use of the biographies as they appeared in HIS, which is evident from the references.
[20] Last accessed 30 March 2015.

Provincial Ibsen

As already mentioned at the outset, the fact that Ibsen was from Norway brought with it the notion of the provincial. In the following, I investigate how this trope also frames current Ibsen research when it comes to understanding Ibsen's path to his position in world literature. The trope of 'provincial Ibsen' is difficult to approach, due to its popularity and due to the fact that the trope is employed in a number of ways. Analytically it is possible to distinguish between some of the ways in which provincialism is framed, yet often the usages of different perspectives are overlapping, and often the notion of Ibsen as provincial is not thematised. 'Provincial Ibsen' is often an implicit claim that drives analysis and works its strong logic partly because it is unaddressed as a specific perspective. The research that relies on the dichotomy of centre and periphery, directly or indirectly, spans a number of approaches, and the use cannot be claimed to be specific to one position in the field of research. Some of the instances, in which attention is paid to the perceived provincialism of Norway as a cultural periphery, are reactions against decontextualized Ibsen research, in which the plays' Norwegian context has been entirely suppressed, yet these often take over the dichotomy despite their aim to revise a presupposed negative view of provincial Norway.

For the purpose of the analysis of the trope, I distinguish between three usages: first, the use of provincialism as a way of framing Ibsen's biography, describing his rise from a humble provincial origin to a celebrated international author. Secondly, provincialism as a trope in the international reception of Ibsen's plays during his own lifetime, and thirdly, the theoretical use of 'provincial', in which the concept of periphery together with that of 'centre' or 'centres' is made to refer to a more coherent notion of literary or cultural geography. Of particular interest to the present thesis is the last usage of provincial, the theoretical use, which has strongly emerged in the historiography over the last decade. Below, I analyse how the concept has been used in the recent historiography. It should of course be stressed that it is not necessarily wrong to frame Ibsen as a provincial writer, or Ibsen's Norway as a cultural periphery. Provincialism is, nevertheless, a concept with strong normative connotations, such as backwardness and narrow-mindedness, and one should therefore be cautious to employ the concept in the generalising ways that it is often applied.

The use of Ibsen's origin in a provincial Norwegian town as a way to frame the narrative of his career is nothing new, and can be traced back to his first biographies.[21] The very fact that Ibsen, given his later world literary status, originated in a peripheral context seems part of the power of fascination which Ibsen's personal story holds. It is exactly this notion that Ivo de Figueiredo, one of his most recent biographers, relies on and turns into the enthralling image of: '…the poor son of merchant in the peripheral country Norway, who became a celebrated European poet'.[22] What makes Ibsen's story so compelling is that it is the narrative of one who succeeded against

[21] Henrik Jæger, *Henrik Ibsen Og Hans Værker* (Kristiania: Cammermeyer, 1892).
[22] Ivo Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen: Mennesket* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2006), p. 19.

all odds. In Brian Johnston's aforementioned article, 'The Ibsen Phenomenon', it was Ibsen's 'genius' which saved him ('broke the barrier of language') from provincial Norway, and enabled him to break with the constraint it placed on him. Yet, often it is not only the language that is framed as marginalised, but also cultural life in Norway, which is dismissed as wanting or backwards. One example is Toril Moi, who characterises Norway in the middle of the nineteenth century as 'partly colonial, partly post-colonial', a place devoid of cultural institutions apart from the university in Christiania.[23] Theatrical life, Moi claims, was 'underdeveloped', and that outside Christiania, which had its own theatre, 'people *still* had to rely on traveling companies from Denmark…'.[24] In her account, Norway is portrayed as (a step in relation to merely being presupposed to be) both subjugated and backwards. Moi does not elaborate on how we are to understand the Norwegian backwardness, but I return to the connection which is often made between provincialism and backwardness below.

The framing of Norway as the peripheral works well with another long-lived trope in Ibsen biographies, namely that Ibsen was not appreciated in his country of origin:

> Although continually rejected and assailed by the public, reduced to poverty, in exile, he doggedly worked upon the debased condition of the theatre until he forged a modern drama for his own revolutionary artistic purpose.[25]

This notion can also be found in Moi's account of Ibsen's early career, and here it is the exile which is claimed to have had the liberating effect on Ibsen: 'Freeing him from the oppressively provincial atmosphere of Norway, Ibsen's voluntary exile turned him into a great writer'[26]

Resent research, however, has started to challenge the straightforward narrative about provincial Norway and the way in which it has been seen to hold back Ibsen's artistic career. An important strand in the research has taken up the question about Norwegian cultural resources during the early part of Ibsen's career, when he still lived in Norway. Thus, it has been stressed that Norway had more cultural resources than it is otherwise generally assumed. In relation to theatre, Anette Storli Andersen stresses that Ibsen did not appear 'out of the blue', but built on long local traditions.[27] It has also been pointed out that during his time in Norway Ibsen neither fared better nor worse than what could be expected in a cultural field which in the 1860s was still relatively small, though not non-existent.[28] Ståle Dingstad has revealed how Ibsen's early career in Norway was constructed as a tale of adversity by his early biographers, and how negative elements emphasised in these narratives were taken over in subsequent

[23] Toril Moi, *Henrik Ibsen and the Birth of Modernism: Art, Theater, Philosophy* (Oxford; New York: Oxford University Press, 2006), pp. 39–40.
[24] Moi, p. 41. (My italics)
[25] Johnston, p. 7.
[26] Moi, p. 66.
[27] Anette Storli Andersen, 'In the Right Place at the Right Time: Why Ibsen Worked 13 Years in the Theatre and Then Left It for Good', *Ibsen Studies*, 11 (2).
[28] Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen: Mennesket*, pp. 263–270.

biographies.[29] Narve Fulsås, one of the forerunners of this turn in the research, has posed the question of why Ibsen research has traditionally downplayed Ibsen's 'local context'.[30] Part of the answer he finds to be the outcome of the self-fashioning of the Scandinavian authors of the so-called 'modern breakthrough', and the way in which they associated themselves with the notion of a progressive Europe rather than their home countries, which they chastised as provincial and backwards. Another part of the explanation Fulsås traces back to the international canonisation of Ibsen, in which the aspects of the plays that referred to contemporary local affairs were perceived to be increasingly irrelevant, as time and cultural distance made them difficult to decode. Besides these explanations, Fulsås points to the myth of the author as a 'self-sufficient source of literature', which, he claims, in Ibsen's case has been particularly strong.[31] In this connection, it should be mentioned that I see my own investigation of the transfer of Ibsen's plays as a continuation of this turn in the research sharing with it its strong focus on historical contextualisation. One difference, however, is that I stress the context into which Ibsen's plays were imported to a larger degree, rather than the context from which they emerged.

In a different but related usage of provincialism as a trope it has played a role in a number of studies which have investigated the reception of Ibsen abroad. The difference between the way in which the concept of provincialism is treated in these studies and provincialism as it is used in the aforementioned body of literature, is that in the reception studies provincialism is framed as a trope in the contemporary reception and (most often) not taken over as the perspective on Ibsen's Norwegian origin. In this way, a number of studies investigate how Ibsen's perceived provincialism proved an obstacle in the process of achieving first literary recognition and later canonisation. The best explored context in this respect is the British one in which Tore Rem has pioneered this perspective together with investigations of the agency involved in bringing the plays into English literature.[32] In this way, provincial and provincialism moves from being a way of framing Ibsen's biography or an analytical category, which I explore below, to an object of investigation., and thereby undergoes a much needed historicization.

Parallel and partly overlapping with the abovementioned uses of periphery, a recent trend in the research on Ibsen has been to use the term periphery as an analytical category. This usage is often found in the literature which deals with the notion of a 'global Ibsen' and Ibsen's plays as 'world literature'. Not infrequently, the theoretical inspiration has come from Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters*, which features an outline of a world system for valorisation and circulation of literature, and offers a theoretical framework for the use of the

[29] Ståle Dingstad, 'Myterne Etableres', in *Den Biografiske Ibsen*, Acta Ibseniana (Oslo: Senter for Ibsen-studier, 2010), pp. 79–103.
[30] Narve Fulsås, 'Ibsen Misrepresented: Canonization, Oblivion, and the Need for History', *Ibsen Studies*, 2011, 3–20 (p. 12ff).
[31] Fulsås, 'Ibsen Misrepresented', p. 13.
[32] Rem, *Henry Gibson/Henrik Ibsen*; Rem, '"The Provincial of Provincials".'

categories centre and periphery.[33] In her book, Casanova pays special attention to the writers from the periphery, and amongst these Ibsen, as she investigates how their works are taken over by the cultural centres. Casanova's account of Ibsen has been contested, and the overall narrative that she constructs in *The World Republic of Letters*, in which Paris is the world centre of literary consecration, has been pointed out not to apply to Ibsen. The way in which she frames literature in terms of 'centre and periphery' has, however, to a large extent either been taken over or is symptomatic of the way in which the 'global Ibsen' is framed by current research.[34] A closer analysis of *The World Republic of Letters* may therefore serve as a useful starting point before my own formulation of Ibsen research as transfer history, both in terms of inspiration and as a way of identifying some of the theoretical problems which confront the field.[35]

The World Republic of Letters

In the book, *The World Republic of Letters*, Pascale Casanova sets herself the daunting task of giving an account of the world literary space and the circulation and valorisation of literature. Her focus is on the inequality that dominates this space and the difficulty that writers from what she characterises as small, impoverished, or peripheral literatures experience in achieving international recognition. One of the things that makes Casanova's book highly relevant in connection with the topic of the present thesis is that she emphasises the inequality of this system, which advances the authors from cultural centres and hinders authors from impoverished literary spaces. The true heroes of her narrative, so to speak, are the authors from the periphery who against all odds manage to break through at the centre and, thus, experience their works transformed into world literature. Casanova investigates a number of these exceptional authors, and one of them is Henrik Ibsen.

Casanova's research, however, is not only relevant due to her analysis of Ibsen's international breakthrough. As already mentioned the true importance of her book lies in the widely used model she proposes for the valorisation and circulation of literature, which is employed as an analytical tool for further transnational literature studies. From a theoretical point of view, it is relevant to investigate the model she proposes as to a large extent she poses the same questions and to some extent makes use of some of the concepts that are found in literature on cultural

[33] Johnston; Martin Puchner, 'Goethe, Marx, Ibsen and the Creation of a World Literature', *Ibsen Studies*, 13 (1) (2013); Hans Hauge, 'Norsk Litteratur Som Post-Kolonial?', *Passage*, 2008, 19–32; Giuliano D'Amico, *Domesticating Ibsen for Italy* (University of Oslo, 2011).

[34] For criticism of Casanova's account of Ibsen in London and Paris see Fulsås, 'Ibsen Misrepresented'.

[35] Since finishing the introduction and the historiography of the thesis, Giuliano D'Amico has published an article on the current state of Ibsen research, in which he points, as I do, to the lack of comparative approaches. This leads him to argue that new research should adopt a comparative approach in the study of the reception of Ibsen's plays. In this context it is telling, however, that D'Amico choose to base his outlines for future Ibsen research on Pascale Casanova's theories of the international world of literature. D'Amico is, however, quite specific in outlining the new areas of research and this some extent helps him avoid many of the problems in Casanovas theory outlined in the pages below. (Giuliano D'Amico, 'Six Points for a Comparative Ibsen Reception History', *Ibsen Studies*, 14 (1) (2014).)

transfers. Yet, Casanova's model differs from what I consider transfer history to the extent that in a number of ways it fails to account for the processes involved in the circulation. What further seems problematic from the perspective of transfer history is the way in which literature in the analytical framework remains tied to the nation and is evaluated according to a teleological concept of time through the notion of 'progress'. For Casanova, an unintentional side effect of failing to avoid these pitfalls is that she retains notions that serve to legitimise the very system which supresses the authors from marginalised spaces that she sets out to help in the first place. Despite the problems inherent in Casanova's approach, however, she manages to raise some highly relevant questions about apparent inequality, which dominate the world literary space. In the following pages, I analyse Casanova's model of the world of letters, and in particular some of the premises she provides on the path to the model of the unequal world of literature.

The point of departure of Casanova's model for the circulation of literature is to place authors in their national contexts. Although she historicizes the emergence of the national literatures, this insight does not lead to historicization of the national categories of literature and these are ultimately carried over into the analytical framework:

> National literary and linguistic patrimony supplies a sort of a priori definition of the writer, one that he will transform (if need be, by rejecting it or, as in the case of Beckett, by conceiving himself in opposition to it) throughout his career. In other words, the writer stands in a particular relation to world literary space by virtue of the place occupied in it by the national space into which he has been born.[36]

As indicated by her reference to Beckett, Casanova's account offers a way in which a few exceptional writers manage to escape the constraints of national literature and acquire a second existence as what she terms 'international writers'. The fact that a few authors manage to escape the national category unfortunately does not change the fact that national origin is retained as the primary way of understanding authors. That the authors themselves, as Casanova points out, may reject the national affiliation does very little to alter the matter. In the book's conclusion she reaffirms that even for the authors who manage to escape the national space and have an international reception, the national context retains a privileged position in relation to interpreting their works.

Following her cementation of the national origin of the author, Casanova situates the writer in an international literary world, where competition and rivalry between literatures is the driving force. Though she uses Bourdieu's concept of 'field', the main contenders in the game for literary hegemony are national literatures, and the individual author is viewed as an extension of his or her national tradition. Although Casanova stresses that the national literature is not an isolated project, but that it is shaped in the competition with that of other nations, the nation still serves as the foundation of her conception of literature. Seen from this perspective, individual authors contribute to the stock of national literature, and thus bolsters it in the

[36] Pascale Casanova, *The World Republic of Letters* (Cambridge Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2004), p. 41.

competition with other national literatures. In this international competition, one of Casanova's chief points is that just as political and economic resources are distributed unequally amongst nations so are literary resources:

> Literary resources, which are always stamped with the seal of the nation, are therefore unequal as well, and unequally distributed among nations. Because the effects of this structure weigh on all national literatures and on all writers, the practices and traditions, the forms and aesthetics that have currency in a given national space can be properly understood only if they are related to the precise position of this space in the world system.[37]

Although Casanova points to a crucial dynamic in the field of literature, the essence of this seems to be that it does not matter if a given writer is reckoned a major author in a national space, as far as the national literature to which the writer belongs is impoverished, the author in question remains a minor author. This, in my view, raises the question, who is able to give the 'precise position' of a given author in the world system? From the way in which Casanova presents it, it seems to be the perspective of the centre that decides, or, alternatively, that of the literary historian. The effect of this dynamic, Casanova claims, is that the national perspective is destined to misjudge the true value of an author; only in the national context of deprived nations is it possible that something, which really is underdeveloped, may seem advanced.

The question about authors' affiliation with the nation and the relationship between various national literatures are highly relevant for the study of the transfer of Ibsen's drama, as this to a very large extent was the unchallenged assumption in late nineteenth century Europe. Yet, it is problematic to carry this notion over into the analytical framework as both nation and literature were, and still are, highly contested categories. A second problem relates to the question of perspective involved in determining the 'currency' of national literary practices, which either seems to suggest that everything is evaluated according to the standards of that which is deemed the centre or according to the perspective of the historian. Both approaches are unsatisfactory and the only solution available is, as I will argue below, the utilisation of multiple perspectives.

Given the notion of the authors' national affiliation, it is perhaps not very surprising that the countries that are presented as 'richly endowed' with literary resources are those with long literary traditions.[38] This conventional hierarchization, which favours western literary tradition, is given a new theoretical underpinning that hinges on the notion that each author contributes to the literary prestige of his or her own country. This line of thought is expanded for the purpose of the theory through extending the economical metaphor to encompass the notion that nations are capable of hoarding literary assets. This is achieved through recourse to language, as the

[37] Ibid., p. 39.

[38] Casanova, p. 82ff. On Casanova's somewhat selective use of 'literature', see for example: Christopher Pendergast, 'The World Republic of Letters', in *Debating World Literature*, ed. by Christopher Pendergast (London, 2004). p.21ff

carrier of literary value, and the languages themselves, which are clearly framed as national languages, become in this way literary to a larger or smaller degree.[39]

> Certain languages, by virtue of the prestige of the texts written in them, are reputed to be more literary than others. Indeed, literature is so closely linked to language that there is a tendency to identify the "language of literature" – the "language of Racine" or the "language of Shakespeare" – with literature itself. For a language to acquire a high degree of literariness [a term that on the previous page has been defined to cover "linguistic and literary capital"] it has to have a long tradition, one that each generation refines, modifies, and enlarges the gamut of the formal and aesthetic possibilities of the language, establishing, guaranteeing, and calling attention to what is written in it. This tradition functions, in effect, as a certificate of literary value.[40]

This notion that literary value is connected to language is later expanded in connection with the translation of works written in un-prestigious languages into major languages, and the literary status of the language turned into the analytical categories. Seen from the perspective of transfer history, the way in which literary prestige is claimed to be intrinsic to language is highly problematic as it in effect hides many of the processes that go into creating and perpetuating literary value. Processes involved in publishing, and the commercial appropriation of literature, as well as processes of criticism and valuation, not to speak of the construction of literary histories are all hidden under the guise of being functions of language. What in the quotation above started out as certain languages being reputed to be more literary than others is over the course of the book turned into an analytical framework in which languages may be categorised as more or less literary.

I have so far only given a description of the national level in Casanovas account of the world of letters; yet, the national level is mirrored by an international level. The idea being that at some point in history, more specifically during the latter part of the nineteenth century, some of the oldest cultural centres managed to become autonomous, that is to say move beyond national political control. The first place to do this was Paris, which consequently became the world capital of literature. As Paris was the most endowed of the cultural centres it had the greatest power to consecrate literature, and as it was now autonomous, it had the power not only to consecrate French authors but authors from all over the world. This meant that authors from deprived nations now had a chance to escape their national space by having their works consecrated by the literary authorities in Paris. Unfortunately, Casanova is vague about the process of consecration. She generally talks of 'literary authorities', which seems predominantly, or maybe exclusively, to mean autonomous critics, and at some point she identifies that their judgments take the form of 'translations, critical studies and commentaries'. What is regrettable from a transfer perspective, in which we are concerned with the process of transfer, is that she generally opts for a metaphorical description – the prevailing metaphor being that 'almost magical metamorphosis of an ordinary material into "gold", into absolute literary value'.[41] For authors from the periphery who write in an 'un-prestigious' or 'non-

[39] On language and political power: Casanova, p. 115.
[40] Casanova, pp. 17–18.
[41] Ibid., p. 126.

literary language' as Casanova calls them, being translated is not only a means to gain wider recognition, but to achieve the status of literary texts.

Notwithstanding the objections one may have to the way in which she gets there, Casanova ends up with a model of the world of literature which highlights the way in which national literatures may be seen in competition with one another. Here centre and periphery are seen as the way in which 'richly endowed literatures' dominate the 'impoverished' or 'emerging' literatures. The fact alone that the model highlights the inequality that dominates literary space is very useful in relation to the transfer of Ibsen's drama. From the point of view of the model, Ibsen may be seen as a textbook example of transfer from a country with a comparatively weak cultural infrastructure to cultural centres with strong 'native' literary productions.

Translation as paradigm

As a means to tie together the literary world and account for the circulation of literature, Casanova introduces an elaborate concept of translation to fill this important function. The specific function of translation, Casanova claims, depends of whether one considers translation of literature from the centre or literature from the periphery. In the case of translation from a rich language into a literary impoverished language, 'translation is a way of gathering literary resources, of acquiring universal texts and thereby enriching an underfunded literature…'[42] It is a shame that Casanova does not develop this idea further as it would have strengthened her point about the literary connectedness of places based on an international field and it would point to the existence of a potentially vast translated literature in what she otherwise considers deprived countries. Such a claim would find support in Franco Moretti's *Altas of the European Novel*. In his empirical studies of the dissemination of novels in the nineteenth century, Moretti has shown that countries with a relatively low national production were capable of having substantial import of translated literature.[43] Yet, from Casanova's account of translation from a deprived language to a rich language, it is clear that whether or not a country is to be considered deprived does not depend on the actual resources which were available at a given time, but whether or not the language itself is recognised as a literary language at the centre.

Translation from peripheral languages to major languages, on the other hand, is a process with far greater consequences for the author, claims Casanova, for them the translation is equivalent with what she terms *littérisation*, which is what provides literary visibility and existence.

> To define the translation of dominated authors as littérisation, which is to say as an actual metamorphosis, a change of literary being, makes it possible to resolve a whole series of problems generated by the belief in the equality– or, better, the symmetry – of different types of translations, uniformly conceived as simple transfers of meaning from one language into another. Literary transmutation is achieved by crossing a magic frontier that allows a text composed in an

[42] Ibid., p. 134.
[43] Franco Moretti, *Atlas of the European Novel, 1800-1900* (London: Verso, 1999), p. 171.

> unprestigious language – or even a nonliterary language, which is to say one that either does not exist or is unrecognised in the verbal marketplace – to pass into a literary language.[44]

Here we are again faced with the abovementioned problem of reducing the complex processes of cultural transfer to functions of language, in this case of substituting one language for another. Knowing the way in which Ibsen's plays often failed to be noticed in the literary field of the target language, especially early translations, it is evident that translation alone is not enough to account for the successful transition from one cultural context into another. The process of consecration, as Casanova would have it, not only takes place through translation, but also through the intermediary of critics, publishers, booksellers and other people active in the field. Translation and consecration does not necessarily walk hand in hand, though translation may be seen as a prerequisite for a wider cultural dissemination and international consecration, such as in Ibsen's case. All of these practices cannot be properly understood through the concept of translation alone. Even to the extent that 'translation' may be argued to be intended as a metaphor for a range of processes, it becomes problematic when one never moves beyond the metaphorical level. Furthermore, in the cases in which the success or failure does not hinge on the actual translation, but rather on one of the many other processes which are covered by this extended notion of translation, it becomes impossible to explain either. A crucial omission in Casanova's description of the circulation of literature is the level of commercial markets and how they motivate and condition the translation of literature. By leaving out financial motivations for the translation, we are led to believe that all translation of literature is driven by the desire to consecrate foreign works, which is evidently not always true in a commercialised book market as the story of the transfer of Ibsen's drama repeatedly shows.

Aesthetic time

The basic outline of the world of letters at the end of the nineteenth century, as Casanova sees it, features a level of national rivalry and an international level where authors, despite their national origin, may have their works consecrated in the autonomous centres of literature. What then follows in Casanova's account is, I think, of chief importance to her conception of 'centre and periphery', because she then introduces what she calls 'aesthetic time'. This is done through coining the term 'the Greenwich meridian of literature', which serves as a way of establishing an absolute time reference for measuring time in the world of letters. Perhaps not surprisingly, at the end of the nineteenth century and for some time to come this line is claimed to pass through Paris:

[44] Casanova, p. 136.

> There is a time specific to literature, measured with reference to what I have called the literary Greenwich meridian, in terms of which it becomes possible to draw an aesthetic map of the world, the positions of each national space being determined by its temporal distance from the centre.[45]

The fact that Casanova singles out Paris as the 'centre of centres' has been controversial, and she herself enters into a discussion of whether in the latter part of the twentieth century it is not London or New York that is the new world centre.[46] It is, however, not the place of the centre (or the question if there are not more centres or semi-centres, which is another question of controversy) that is the problem, but the entire concept of time which is deeply problematic:

> The continually redefined present of literary life constitutes a universal artistic clock by which writers must regulate their work if they wish to attain legitimacy. If modernity is the sole present moment of literature, which is to say what makes it possible to institute a measure of time, the Greenwich meridian makes it possible to evaluate and recognize the quality of a work or, to the contrary, to dismiss a work as an anachronism or label it "provincial."[47]

In the quotation, Casanova makes explicit the notion so often implied in the thinking about centre and periphery, namely that the periphery is lagging behind the centre, which is seen as the source of progress. What is problematic is that it rests on a teleological conception of time. We are presented with a notion of literary history in which all literatures eventually travel the path already trodden by the authors consecrated at the centre. In relation to the dynamic of centre and periphery, it carries with it a notion of 'influence', in which the 'modernity' of the centre is gradually disseminated to the periphery. This is of prime importance in the connection made between time and artistic legitimacy. Writers from peripheral literatures are not only backwards but also artistically less legitimate, something that becomes evident in her ensuing analysis of the dissemination of what is termed 'French naturalism'. The analysis aims to show how other countries adopt and localise forms that have already been developed at the centre that is make less legitimate variants of naturalism. The point, which the example is meant to illustrate, is that as naturalism was being taken up abroad, it was already losing its artistic legitimacy at the centre due to the development of new aesthetic practices. It should also be pointed out that the mode of ascribing literary value, which Casanova describes, rests on the fact that pre-eminence is given to what might be called aesthetic 'form' rather than 'content'. Only by stressing 'form' (French naturalism, for example) can one dismiss all the following works that are categorised as belonging to the same school as derived copies, and consequently artistically less valuable. Yet, it is important to remember that categories can be constructed differently, and the pre-eminence given to form and the notion of influence, which Casanova promotes, ultimately serves to legitimise the rejection of literature from spaces outside the centre.

[45] Ibid., p. 351.
[46] Peter France, 'The World Republic of Letters (review)', *Comparative and Critical Studies*, 3 (3) (2006); Mads Thomsen, *Mapping World Literature* (New York: Continuum, 2008), p. 36; Pendergast, p. 8.
[47] Casanova, p. 90.

Ethnocentrism of literary centres

The problems that provincial writers face when being taken up at the centre is one that concerns Casanova. According to her, the price that authors from small literatures pay in order to be taken up at the centres is that their works are stripped of their 'original context' and their reception reduced to fit the categories of perception currently in vogue.[48] The example that she gives to illustrate this point is the reception of Ibsen's plays in London and Paris, claiming that in the British capital he was received as a 'realist' and in the French as a 'symbolist', in each place according to the local fashion. In this process of imposing its own norms, the centre, Casanova points out, understands its own ethnocentrism as 'universalism'. Although Casanova here points to a crucial point about cultural centres' appropriation of literature, it seems to me that there are other modes to receive and interpret foreign material than through reverting to a notion of universalism. Based on the transfer of Ibsen's plays, two other ways spring to mind: first, an appropriation based on a notion of cultural kinship. In the German import of Ibsen's plays during the 1870s and 1880s the idea of a common origin for the German and Scandinavian peoples played a role in the appropriation of the texts as the concept of a common past was a way of overcoming what was perceived as the foreignness of the texts. Secondly, exoticism may also account for the fact that a work is being taken up at the centre. In the case of exoticism, it is possible that what is perceived to be universal aspects of the work would be stressed when it came to artistic canonisation.[49] What is important is that there are other ways of appropriating cultural products than through recourse to the notion of universalism, and the specific way deserves close analysis based on the actual multifaceted reception, as I show with Ibsen's dramas in my analysis throughout the thesis.

Casanova's point about the ethnocentrism of the centre offers, however, an important insight when it comes to understanding the dynamics that govern the selection process of world literature in what she calls richly endowed countries. Yet, I do find the consequence which she draws from it to be problematic, when she claims that the centre perpetually misinterprets the works it annexes, by applying its own standards: 'As a result the history of literary celebration amounts to a long series of misunderstandings and misinterpretations …'[50] The notion is problematic because it essentialises understanding. It locates the 'right' interpretation in the original context, and when this notion is embedded in a framework where national literatures are the basic building blocks, this quite soon leads to a system in which the interpretation made within a certain language or national tradition ends up in a privileged position. In Casanova's

[48] Ibid., p. 154 ff.
[49] Tore Rem has described the process of canonisation of Ibsen's plays in Britain as movement in the reception from exoticism towards universalism. Rem, '"The Provincial of Provincials".'
[50] Casanova, p. 154.

analysis it is only through an understanding of the local (national) conditions that one is truly able to understand an author's project and thereby 'the true principle of its universal appeal'.[51]

In my analysis of Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters*, I have identified a number of problems which relate to the way she frames the concepts of centre and periphery: the first was the methodological nationalism, which prevails in her account of the international exchange of literature. The second was the teleological conception of time, which places the periphery at a lower level of development. A third is the notion of 'influence' that prevails in her account of the dissemination of French naturalism and which categorises provincial productions as copies of an already established blueprint developed at the centre. All of which may, as mentioned, be found in the literature on the 'worlding' of Ibsen's dramas. As I see it, the way in which Casanova develops her theoretical framework does in fact run contrary to the stated aim of the book. Despite the fact that the book focuses on a handful of peripheral authors, who against all odds experienced an international breakthrough, it does very little to challenge the hegemony of the 'great' (western) literatures, but rather frames the authors as exceptional cases who emerged from genuinely impoverished provincial fields. The book helps to sustain the hegemony of the so-called richly endowed literatures, as the very notions that serve to legitimise their superiority are reutilised in the creation of the analytical categories, such as centre and periphery.

Transfer history as an approach to the diffusion of Ibsen's dramas

Transfer and comparison

There are many approaches to the study of cultural transfers. Since the late 1990s, there has been an on-going discussion about what has been termed transfer history. This discussion, which has primarily involved German and French scholars, has been carried on with some tenacity between adherers of comparative history and scholars engaged in various forms of transfer history.[52] In relation to my investigation of the transfer of Ibsen's plays, these discussions are important as they relate to how best to overcome the national paradigm, a problem which haunts present Ibsen research.

In the debate on transfer and comparison, the two approaches have at times been presented as two opposites. In a narrow sense, comparison is understood as the methodical opposition of two or more cases in order to analyse and catalogue the similarities and differences between them.[53]

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[51] Ibid., p. 354.

[52] Matthias Middell, 'Kulturtransfer Und Transnationale Geschichte', in *Dimensionen Der Kultur- Und Gesellschaftsgeschichte : Festschrift Für Hannes Siegrist Zum 60. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: Leipziger Univ.-Verl., 2007); Hartmut Kaelble, 'Die Interdiziplinären Debatten Über Vergleich Und Transfer', in *Vergleich Und Transfer : Komparatistik in Den Sozial-, Geschichts- Und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt ; New York: Campus, 2003).

[53] For example: Jürgen kocka and Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, 'Comparison and Beyond', in *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (Berghahn Books, 2010).

If comparison is conceived in this rather strict sense, any point of contact (transfer) among the individual cases must be seen as sources of error. A number of objections have, however, been raised to this conception of comparison. First, it has been argued that it is problematic to treat the units of comparison as isolated if there are in fact connections between them. Secondly, that the comparison is usually made between units of comparison that have been defined a priori. This objection has been raised particularly regarding the use of the nation state as the basic unit of comparison, whereby it has been claimed comparative history is in danger of reinforcing the notion of isolated national histories, which it originally sought to overcome. Thirdly, as both Matthias Middell and Michel Espagne have argued, the comparative approach has a tendency to obscure the grey zones that inevitably exist between the units of comparison in history.[54]

The study of cultural transfers is fundamentally in opposition to the comparative method, as it investigates the flow of norms and ideas and cultural products from one culture to another. In this respect, it has been pointed out that the transfer approach is more open to the investigation of historical change than the comparative approach. The analysis of transfer must always be diachronic as it implies a change over time. This is not the case with comparative studies, Espagne argues, which by default are synchronically organised and to which, he argues, a diachronic aspect must be added. It is finally argued that the transfer analysis highlights the constructed character of categories of the comparative units, and makes the historian ask if the categories are appropriate. Within a transfer approach 'nation', which is often the base unit of the comparison, soon becomes problematic as it is continuously being challenged through impulses from abroad, some of which are absorbed into what is considered national culture. The view, however, that most scholars in one way or another have adopted following the controversy is that a combination of transfer and comparative approaches is preferable.[55] One may argue, as Christiane Eisenberg has done, that it is hardly possible to conceive of a transfer approach that does not contain some elements of comparison.[56] It has also been pointed out that comparative and transfer studies face the same problems when it comes to the problem of the construction of categories. The transfer approach is just as prone to the construction of simplified categories as the comparative approach, as the transfer approach is always based on

[54] Comparison may, of course, be conceived of in broader terms that take into account the relation between cultures. Hannes Siegrist has for instance stressed the importance of taking the intercultural relations into account. ‚Interkulturalität sollte der zweite Leitbegriff der vergleichenden Geschichtswissenschaft sein. Interkulturalität meint die Beziehung, Interaktion und Komunikation zwischen "Kulturen," die – mehr oder weniger – räumlich oder territorial verankert oder indentifizierbar sind. Hier geht es um die Vermittlung zwischen kollektiven Sinnordnungen und kulturellen Gedächtnissen durch den Vergleich und durch die Analyse von Austauch-, Einfiuss- und Rezeptionsprozessen'. (Siegrist 2003, p. 334)

[55] Michel Espagne, 'Transferanalyse Statt Vergleich Interkulturalität in Der Säschischen Regionalgeschichte', in *Vergleich Und Transfer: Komparatistik in Den Sozial-, Geschichts- Und Kulturwissenschaffen.*, 2003; Matthias Middell, *Dimensionen Der Kultur- Und Gesellschaftsgeschichte : Festschrift Für Hannes Siegrist Zum 60. Geburtstag* (Leipzig: Leipziger Univ.-Verl., 2007); Hannes Siegrist, 'Perspektiven Der Vergleichenden Geschichtswissenschaft. Gesellschaft, Kultur Und Raum', in *Vergleich Und Transfer : Komparatistik in Den Sozial-, Geschichts- Und Kulturwissenschaften* (Frankfurt a.M.: Campus, 2003).

[56] Christiane Eisenberg, 'Kulturtransfer Als Historischer Prozess. Ein Beitrag Zur Komparatistik.', in *Vergleich Und Transfer: Komparatistik in Den Sozial-, Geschichts- Und Kulturwissenschaffen.* (Frankfurt; New York: Campus Verlag, 2003).

a priori notions of the cultures, values and norms of the places involved in the transfer.[57] The question is, therefore, not whether a comparative aspect should be incorporated in the study of transfer, but how?

In an attempt to overcome the problems that transfer histories also faces, Michael Werner and Bénédicte Zimmermann have launched an ambitious project under the heading 'Histoire Croisée'. They have argued that transfer should not narrowly be considered a movement between two poles, such as a point of departure and a point of reception, but that the process is always more complicated. The transformation, which the object of transfer undergoes in the process, must be taken into account as well as the sending and the receiving contexts. Furthermore, they have advanced a viewpoint central to this thesis by stating the need to incorporate a plurality of historical perspectives in the study of what they term 'cultural intercorssings'.[58] The latter point is central in order to investigate how cultural transfers were contested, advanced, rejected and appropriated in various ways, without giving pre-eminence to one of the perspectives, and avoiding perceiving the transfer process from a presentist perspective. Histoire Croisée thereby, as well as the discussion of the limitations of traditional transfer and comparative history, offers valuable perspectives to be taken into account when developing the methodology for my investigation of the transfer of Ibsen's dramas.

Investigating the transfer of Ibsen's plays

Based on the overview of the field of Ibsen research and the methodological problems in Pascale Casanova's account of the world of letters, it is time to map out an approach to the dissemination of Ibsen's plays which incorporates the perspective offered by transfer history. There are numerous approaches to the study of cultural transfers and I have drawn inspiration from a number of these. However, all approaches to cultural transfers need to be worked out in close relation to the specific case. According to Matthias Middell, one of the forerunners in the field, there are three things which one should focus on in the study of cultural transfers: the objects of transfer, the process of transfer and the agents involved in that process, and, finally, the markets of cultural goods.[59] I have found that Middell's three points serve as a good starting point for sketching my approach to the investigation; they point to central elements in the investigation of the transfer, yet are so broadly framed they necessarily require to be defined more narrowly in relation to the specific case. Given the historiographical overview, I have added a fourth point which must be taken into consideration, namely the notions of centre and periphery, nation and national literature, and the way in which these notions conditioned the transfer.

[57] Neunsinger, p. 16.
[58] Bénédicte Zimmermann and Michael Werner, 'Beyond Comparison: Histoire Croisée and the Challenge of Reflexivity', *History and Theory*, 45 (1) (2006), p. 49.
[59] Matthias Middell, 'European History and Cultural Transfer', *Diogenes*, 189 (2000).

The objects of transfer

In my investigation of the transfer of Ibsen's drama, the objects of transfer are evidently the individual plays. Yet, it is, however, important to note that the plays are not stable entities. As texts, they were translated, sometimes deliberately modified and printed; as a commodity that was sold and bought in various formats. They were again adapted for the various productions as they were played in theatres by different actors. At each step they were read and interpreted, something that led to diverging opinions and claims being made about them, which is not least evident from the many varied reviews they generated. In analysing the transfer, it is tempting to essentialise the properties of the plays, thus seeing them as carriers of a specific ideational content, something which could give an idea of why they were being transferred and be used to judge the success of the export. The plays, however, did not have one but many meanings. They may be seen as hyper-complex utterances, the meanings of which may be actualised in a plurality of ways, which they indeed were as their long and rich 'history of effects', borrowing a term from Hans-Georg Gadamer, plainly shows. In the same way, they were being transferred for many different reasons. In transfer history, this realisation had led to a methodological shift in perspective from that of the originator or 'the original context' to that of the receiving context and the people behind the appropriation. In this thesis, I draw on the reversal of the perspective stressing production of meaning in the new contest. By giving up the notion of an original meaning, the focus moves from the text, as an object with more or less specific properties, to its application. In this thesis, I use the term 'appropriation' to describe the act of transferring the plays to a new context, which results in the new productions of meaning. I do this in order to stress the specific use of the texts with regard to time and place. In the way that I use the concept it covers a range of activities such as publication (with or without Ibsen's consent), the purpose of general commercial circulation, and specific theatrical productions in which specific plays were intended as specific aesthetic and political messages. In all of these situations, the appropriation may be seen as an action undertaken to fill a specific need.

In my investigation of the transfer, I have attempted to consider the various aspects of the process as separately as possible and relate the individual processes to the agents and institutions involved in specific activities. To a large extent, I consider the transfer of the plays from a material perspective, stressing the importance of the fact that they were transferred in particular mediums, in print and as theatre, and that each medium had implications for the transfer. In publishing, for instance, the emergence of cheap edition series in Britain and Germany enabled Ibsen's plays to reach readers who would otherwise not have read his plays. Adopting this perspective has many implications and I return to the more specific implications below in connection with the overview of the markets of cultural goods.

During the timespan that this thesis covers, Ibsen's authorship underwent considerable changes. In order to give a sense of how the plays developed in terms of content and style and how it

related to other literary productions at the time, I have found it helpful (and necessary) to refer to the rough categorisation of Ibsen's plays widely in use. Ibsen's early plays were historical dramas with their topics drawn from medieval Norwegian history or the Icelandic sagas.[60] These were followed by what has been called his 'dramas of ideas', *Brand* (1866) and *Peer Gynt* (1867), which were intended to be read rather than performed in theatres.[61] The same was the case with the monumental double-drama *Emperor* and *Galilean*, which was his last historical play and was published after Ibsen had otherwise given up the historical drama. In the period before *Emperor* and *Galilean* Ibsen also wrote comedy and poetry. The period 1877 to 1882 covers Ibsen's realistic 'problem plays' which include *Pillars of Society* (1877), *A Doll's House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881) and *An Enemy of the People* (1882).[62] Beginning with *The Wild Duck* (1884), these plays were followed by plays in which realism was mingled with symbolism, something which has been interpreted as a new turn in Ibsen's work. The categorisation of the individual plays is, of course, open to debate, and I only make use of it in order to sketch general changes in Ibsen's work, such as moving from historical to contemporary topics.

The agents of transfer

In my investigation of the transfer of Ibsen's plays, I focus on the agents who in various ways were involved in shaping the transfer processes. The agents were not only the people who were directly involved in the transfer, such as publishers, translators, theatre managers and actors, but also people who were engaged in the promotion of the plays as was the case with many critics, academics and fellow authors who wrote in support of Ibsen's play. In writing the story of the transfer of Ibsen's plays, an important aspect is investigating the agency involved in the opposition with which the plays at times were met. As cultural products, the plays went through a number of selection and evaluation processes and at times these gave rise to controversies and heated public debates. Seen from this perspective, a large range of the people who shaped the transfer did so through their opposition to the plays; either by rejecting them, which was what a large number of censors did with the play *Ghosts*, or by passing them over as theatre managers and publishers at times did. More noticeable was, of course, the opposition that originated as part of the evaluation process in the public press, in which critics and other opinion shapers at times voiced their concerns.

A significant agent in the transfer was Ibsen himself. By considering Ibsen as an agent in the transfer of his own plays, I perceive him not in his function as the originator of his work, but as

[60] Asbjørn Aarseth, 'Ibsen's Dramatic Apprenticeship', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 8.
[61] John Northam, 'Dramatic and Non-Dramatic Poetry', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 28.
[62] Bjørn Hemmer, 'Ibsen and the Realistic Problem Drama', in *The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), p. 71.

its overseer, as his own promoter and manager. This involved both taking care of his works as a commodity in relation to theatres and publishers, and positioning himself in the field of literature. Ibsen's possibility to control his own work, however, was limited, and marketing his plays to theatres and publishers often involved negotiations over fees and adaptations. A major impediment to his ability to control the fate of his plays internationally was the lack of copyright agreements, which meant that outside Scandinavia anybody could translate, publish and stage his plays without his consent and without paying him royalties. In terms of the wider dissemination of his plays, this meant that Ibsen was just one out of a number of agents which engaged in the transfer. Moreover, Ibsen was limited to act in places in which he spoke the language and possessed knowledge of the local field. This limited him to the Scandinavian countries and some German speaking areas. As for the rest, he was forced to rely on cooperation with middlemen, who often acted more or less independently.

In investigating the transfer of Ibsen's plays, I have found the concept of 'field' an important tool in the investigation of the social interaction of not only literary production, but also the transfer of literature.[63] Through a notion of field, it is possible to account for the mechanisms of diffusion and legitimation of literature, by reconstructing the collective processes through which they were produced. In this perspective, transfer of literature involves, like that of the production, adopting social strategies particular to the field: the use of networks, the forging of alliances of various forms, and the use of cultural institutions, formal or informal. What makes the notion of field such a useful tool in connection with the investigation of cultural transfers is the emphasis that it places on the importance of the competition between the agents. Each agent may be seen to pursue his or her own conception of literature and seeks to promote it in the field. My usage of the concept varies from Bourdieu's to the extent that where Bourdieu in *The Rules of Art* sees the strategies adopted by the agents as dependent on their habitus, I use the concept of position taking to cover conscious strategies.[64] In my use of the concept of field, I primarily focus on the way in which the transfer of Ibsen's plays were appropriated by agents in the local field and how transfer related to already established positions.

Markets of cultural goods

Transfer history pays attention to the materiality and processes involved in the transferral of cultural products. In this respect, it is critical of the notion found in what may be called 'influence studies' in which cultural ideas are seen as spread due to their assumed superiority and more or less of their own accord.[65] Being attentive to the materiality involved in the transferral means primarily to be aware of the medium of the transfer and how it conditioned

[63] For 'field' as a tool and the danger of naturalising the concept, see: Anna Boschetti, 'How Field Theory Can Contribute to Knowledge of World Literary Space', *Paragraph*, 35.1 (2012), p. 20 ff.
[64] Pierre Bourdieu, *The Rules of Art* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1996), pp. 214–215 and 231–234.
[65] An example of this is the aforementioned account of the spread of naturalism in Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters*.

the dissemination and consumption of the particular product. A crucial part of circulation of almost all cultural products, though it is often an unmentioned explanatory factor, is the cultural markets, which are governed by the pursuit of financial gain. The contextual turn in recent Ibsen research has, as mentioned above, lately brought back the cultural markets as a vital factor in understanding Ibsen's path to becoming an internationally recognised author. Especially Tore Rem and Narve Fulsås have stressed the importance of distinguishing between the theatrical and the book market, as two different markets that partly followed different dynamics.[66] This realisation, that Ibsen's plays led two different lives as theatre and as book has been one of the guiding principles for my investigation of the plays, and is reflected in the structure and the scope of the thesis. Thus, I partly treat the transfer of Ibsen's plays as books and as theatrical performances separately, though, as it will be clear, they were intrinsically entangled.

Between the book and the theatrical market there are differences which must be taken into consideration when investigating the transfer. The most important is that they relate to geographical space in different ways. Books are circulated and theatre, from the perspective of consumption, is bound to a specific place. It is significant in connection to the markets and their relation to geographical space that they each in their own way resisted the nation state as an adequate unit of analysis. The book markets, here conceived as linguistically defined markets, always extended beyond the political units of the nation states: the Dano-Norwegian edition of Ibsen's works were sold in all of Scandinavia and to Scandinavian emigrants, the German translations all over central Europe and German speaking emigrants, and the English to the entire Anglophone world, not least the big North American market. Contrary to the book markets that due to their high level of development in the latter part of the nineteenth century may be understood through a notion of general circulation, the theatrical markets were from a consumer perspective tied to its specific geographical spaces. Thus, theatrical markets may be seen as local markets in which consumers were limited to the plays that were taken up by local theatres. Each city may be seen as having its own hierarchy, in which the positions of the various theatres were defined in relation to each other, something that was reflected in the plays which they staged and the patrons they attracted. In this respect, the cities as cultural spaces may be viewed in respect to the particular configuration of their theatrical markets. In terms of investigating the transfer, it is telling at what theatres Ibsen's plays were performed as it is indicative of the audience they attracted, their relative status and their progress into the stock of consecrated drama. Obviously, the theatrical markets of the cities were part of a much larger market in which theatrical agencies marketed plays and travelling troupes connected the various cities, on a European level, with their performances. The international market for theatre was an important factor in the circulation of Ibsen's plays as well, and played a key role in the transfer of plays between the individual theatres.

[66] Rem, 'Ibsen as Book: Another British Ibsen'; Narve Fulsås, 'Introduktion (HIS 14k)', in *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2009), pp. 11–91 (p. 38 ff.).

Notions of centre and periphery, nation, and national literature

An important question in relation to cultural transfer is what analytical categories should be used in the analysis? In the following I return to the use of centre and periphery and the way in which it was connected to a teleological conception of time as well as the problem of methodological nationalism, which I showed appeared in both Ibsen research in general and Pascale Casanova's *The World Republic of Letters* in particular.

Unfortunately, these methodological problems are not limited to comparative literature or Casanova's account of the circulation of literature and may easily be reproduced in transfer history if one takes the sending and receiving context for granted, without realising that these are themselves continuously negotiated and subject to historical change. In connection with the transfer of Ibsen's plays, the realisation that there is nothing self-evident about these categories is luckily helped along the way by the historical particularities of the transfer, which, for example, continuously undermine any attempt to establish a stable context of origin. Thus, Ibsen's twenty-seven-year long voluntary exile that covered the period during which he rose to a position of international fame, and the fact that his plays were published in Denmark, to a large extent undermines the notion that Norway was the 'natural' context of origin of the transfer. The same is the case with the international reception, which, although it was mostly framed in national terms, was at times hampered by the fact that Ibsen was claimed to be Swedish. Besides, in many of the reviews outside Scandinavia, particularly in Britain, the reviewers often demonstrated, and not infrequently admitted to, a profound lack of knowledge of Norwegian affairs. Examples such as these help to break down the notion of stable cultural references and especially challenges the notion of national cultures.

The solution to this problem is, I think, to move the concepts of nation, national literatures and the more general notions of centre and periphery from their usual status as analytical categories to a position as objects of investigation in their own right, thus making them part of what the analysis of the transfer covers. What makes this difficult, however, is that the cultural transfers during the latter half of the nineteenth century to a large degree were framed according to national categories and notions of provincialism and backwardness. Yet, what will have to be taken into account is that these notions were dependent on perspective and subject to historical change. The categories such as 'nation' and 'peripheral cultures' and concepts such as, for example, national literature, were always contested, and were very frequently negotiated in connection with cultural transfers. In the same way as the object of transfer was contested, the cultural notions framing the transfer were contested as well. In the thesis, I therefore, among other things, investigate how notions of nation and national literature were negotiated locally as part of the appropriation of Ibsen's plays.

Although I do not adopt a teleological approach to time in the analysis, this way of framing time as progress is indispensable when it comes to understanding prevailing notions of centre and periphery historically held. The connection made between provincialism and backwardness must, therefore, be investigated in the same way that the various notions of nation and national literature are, which is to say, as claims made by specific persons who were engaged in a specific context. Claims about the relative backwardness or provincialism of something must be seen in relation to what is at stake in the context in which the statement was made. I have found that statements about the provincial or backwards nature of foreign products usually served as a prelude for rejection, whereas the same claims made about the cultural products dominating the native cultural field served as way to advocate for change and the introduction of something which has qualities claimed to be absent. The transfer history of Ibsen's plays is rich in examples of various modes of framing the plays in terms of nation, centre and periphery, and time in order to promote or reject them.

Unfortunately, a teleological conception of time is deeply ingrained in most literary histories. That change is interpreted as progress is an outcome of the fact that the winning side in the big cultural controversies, which seems to lead to paradigmatic changes, was always quick to monopolise the interpretation of past events. In literary history, this has had the effect that the opposing viewpoints are presented as out-dated, ridiculous, incomprehensible or simply repressed. In histories sharing the teleological underpinning, interpretations are often taken wholesale from the promoters of the new paradigm. An example of this is the historiography of the British battle over Ibsen's plays in the late 1880s and early 1890s in which the losing side has become ridiculed because they failed to 'realise' Ibsen's greatness. The fact that what may be termed conservative critics wished for a different theatre than that of the promoters of Ibsen seems largely to be forgotten, and their rejection of Ibsen is framed as a lack of comprehension. The victors of these cultural struggles are often, literally, the very persons that write the histories of the conflict, in which they cement their interpretation of events, and it is usually this version which, uncritically, is taken up by later literary historians. This is unfortunate because in the accounts written by the participants, one often sees a scramble to increase their own importance in the narrative usually by pushing back the date when they first discovered Ibsen's plays. An example of this is Otto Brahm's retrospective account of how he immediately realised Ibsen's greatness when he first watched Ibsen's *Pillars of Society* in 1878, an account which was clearly moulded to be in accordance with Ibsen's later importance.

Scope, sources, and transcending national fields of research

The Scope of the thesis

In light of the problems of methodological nationalism, the nationally framed geographical scope of my investigation of the transfer is a pragmatic one and must be seen with reference to

my previous discussion of how the cultural markets for books and theatre each in their own way eluded national categories. My investigation of the transfer to the three countries is therefore based on how Ibsen's plays were appropriated for cultural markets. In publishing, as I have already pointed out, markets and thereby the circulation of books always transcended the individual nation states, and theatrical markets may be seen as networks of individual theatres, in which the cities formed hubs interconnected by lines of import and export, but where consumption was defined in relation to a local market.

Given the way in which the transfer differed, the focus of each of the three case studies is slightly different in respect to the agents I investigate and the sources on which I draw. This has the advantage of presenting different processes related to cultural transfer. In the first part of the thesis that covers the transfer to Denmark, Ibsen's own role in the process is central to the investigation as his agency during this time was more pronounced than it was during later transfers. The part therefore allows for a closer investigation of his personal attempts to position himself in the field of literature. The scope of the first part is correspondingly narrowed down to the theatrical market of Copenhagen, because Ibsen's own aim was primarily to have his plays produced at the Danish Royal Theatre. Limiting the scope to the Danish capital also yields some important insights into the city's internal workings as a theatrical market in its own right as well as making it possible to investigate in detail the institutional framework of the Royal Theatre in relation to the transfer. The insight gained into the workings of a major endowed theatre may serve as a backdrop for the investigation of the transfer to German theatres, where a number of the major court theatres were similar to the Danish Royal Theatre to the extent that they were partly independent of commercial interests and external censorship.

The transfer to Germany requires a wider scope than the transfer to Denmark, as it both covered a longer period of time before Ibsen had the breakthrough that resulted in his later fame and it involved a large number of agents in the translation, publishing and staging of his plays. In contrast to Denmark, the theatrical transfer to Germany cannot be accounted for by focusing on a single city, but requires that one takes the polycentric structure of the German cultural market into account. For my investigation, this necessitated a focus on the larger formations in the transfer, such as the shared agency of groups of people, the long-term strategies of publishing houses and the way in which shifts in structural conditions of the book and theatrical markets influenced the transfer. The second part of the thesis, which covers the transfer to Germany, therefore operates with a larger scope than the other two parts. In Britain, the Ibsen productions leading to the breakthrough of the plays were all staged in London by a relatively limited number of people. This again makes it possible to narrow the scope of the investigation and focus more on the individual agents and their precise function in relation to the productions. The transfer to Britain, however, stood out due to the fierce resistance with which Ibsen's dramas were met following the first professional productions, as unlike in Denmark and Germany these were some of Ibsen's more controversial plays. As the controversy that Ibsen's

plays generated was an important feature of the reception, it has a central place in the investigation of the transfer.

The notion of 'breakthrough' is central to defining the scope of the thesis in terms of the period of time that it covers. It is important to note that the first translations and the breakthrough occurred at different moments in time in each of the three countries. This was due to various factors such as the delay in translation and adaptation for the theatres, and initial reluctance and rejection, which the plays were met with at various points in the transfer process. In praxis, this gives the investigation a progression in chronology between each of the three case studies in which the investigation of the transfer to Denmark covers the period of the 1860s to 1870s, Germany from the late 1860s to the end of the 1880s and in Britain from the early 1870s to the mid-1890s. A good deal of pragmatism, however, has to go into defining the concept and thereby the temporal delimitation. The reason for choosing the breakthroughs as the end of the investigation is due to an interest in the pioneering transfer processes, that is to say the time before they became established practices and each new play was translated, printed and staged as a matter of course due to Ibsen's status. To this end, I define the breakthrough in each of the three case studies as the point in time after which a continuous interest in Ibsen's plays was shown both in terms of publication and theatrical productions, and Ibsen was widely recognised as a major author. This way of framing the end of the investigation is determined by the fact that after a certain point Ibsen's fame only continued to grow, and that the initial promotion of his work in each of the three contexts turned into the process of canonisation. In this way, the time that followed the initial transfer covered by the thesis to Ibsen's status as a 'great' dramatist was increasingly undisputed, and in Denmark, Germany and Britain collected editions of his works begin to emerge and plays hitherto disregarded by the theatres were staged, something which marked the cementation of his status.

Sources

In my investigation of the transfer of Ibsen's dramas, I rely on a number of different sources as well as compilations of quantitative data on theatrical production and publication numbers of the plays. The main sources for investigating the transfer is the correspondence between the various agents who participated in the process, reviews of plays and other published material from contemporary newspapers, periodicals, and books. The two groups of sources serve, as I show below, to reveal different aspects of the transfer. As already mentioned, the data on the theatrical productions of Ibsen's plays has been collected and made available by the Norwegian National Library. With regard to the data on publication of plays, some discrepancy exists: for Ibsen's Danish publisher, Gyldendal, a complete set of data is available on the size of print runs

of the published plays in Ibsen's lifetime, though this data is unpublished.[67] For Germany, some data has been published on one of Ibsen's German publishers, Reclam Verlag, by Aldo Keel.[68] On the publication in Britain, all data from the publisher Heinemann, who took over the publications in 1893, has been lost, but Ibsen's intermediary, William Archer, has provided a meticulous account of British publications before that date.[69] Much of the existing data, including information on Ibsen's personal finances, has been made available in the introductions to each volume of *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter* (2005-2010).

The correspondence used as sources in the thesis consists of private letters, which may be used to gain insight into the working of the cultural field on various levels. On a social level, we learn of the agents' private relationships and the way in which they interacted with one another. Personal relationships were an important part of the way in which the field worked, and the personal sympathy or antipathy between various agents would at times determine their relative position in the field. The enmity between Ibsen and the Norwegian author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, which broke out around the time of Ibsen's first success in the Danish market, is an example of how personal feelings influenced position taking. Another important part of the correspondence is Ibsen's business letters, which for instance he sent to his Danish publisher. In these letters, we gain insight into the financial aspects of the transfer of his plays, although they only reveal the part that concerned his private economy. Very often, however, the genres were mixed, and business and social inquiries walked hand in hand. This is characteristic of many of Ibsen's letters sent to many of the people who were involved in the transfer of his plays abroad. Very often only Ibsen's part of the correspondence remains, as many of the letters Ibsen received throughout his life were destroyed after his death.[70] One exception is his correspondence with Frederik Hegel, the manager of Gyldendal, whose letters to Ibsen have all survived in the form of letter drafts, which he kept for his own archive of his correspondence. These concepts have made it possible to follow Ibsen and Hegel's entire correspondence from 1865 until Hegel's death in 1887.

The other major category of sources is the reviews of the plays in print or of the staged production. My use of reviews is aimed at investigating how and according to which criteria Ibsen's plays were assessed in various contexts. The questions that I seek to answer through the use of reviews is, to what extent the plays stood out in relation to the critics' expectations based on cultural products already available in the field, by what features they characterised the plays and how they justified their judgements. An important factor in my analysis of the reviews is to expose the reviewers' own stake in the cultural field and how this conditioned the individual reviews in terms of overall strategies of positioning. Not infrequently, the people who were

[67] Poul Helbøll, 'Liste over Henrik Ibsens indtægter, udarbejdet på grundlag af Gyldendals arkiv [unpublished].' (Det Kongelige Bibliotek, 1956).
[68] Aldo Keel, 'Reclam und der Norden: Autoren, Titel, Auflagen 1869-1943', in *Reclam 125 Jahre Universal-Bibliothek, 1867-1992 : Verlags- und kulturgeschichtliche Aufsätze*, by Dietrich Bode (Stuttgart: P. Reclam, 1992).
[69] William Archer, 'The Mausoleum of Ibsen', *Fortnightly Review*, July 1893, pp. 77–91.
[70] Narve Fulsås, 'Innledning (HIS 15k)', in *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2010), pp. 11–56 (p. 13).

active in the promotion of Ibsen's plays, played a double role as they were both involved in the production in one way or another and reviewed or wrote about them. It was not, however, only Ibsen's promoters which pursued a specific agenda with their reviews. In the cases in which Ibsen's plays were perceived as controversial or became part of larger cultural controversies, the opposition to his plays was to a large extent equally predisposed in their reception of the plays. An example of this is the reactions to Ibsen's play *Ghosts*, which right from the Scandinavian publication acquired a reputation as an immoral play, and was consequently fiercely opposed.

Transfer history as a transnational and interdisciplinary approach

Due to my approach to the transfer of Ibsen's dramas as transfer history, my research is both transnational and interdisciplinary and it stretches across a number of well-established fields of research, which are often nationally organised. This has been a great advantage as it has allowed new questions to be raised with regard to traditional fields, and to make comparisons between national cases and show their interconnectedness. Yet, the approach has also brought with it a great number of challenges. Often my approach has raised comparative questions that are related to the thesis' research question, yet which it is beyond the scope of the thesis to answer and which has not been treated in the existing historiography. This has to some extent been the case as in my investigation I follow Ibsen's plays through their gradual dissemination to the various cultural markets. Despite the fact that these markets to a large extent were transnational much of the research on publishing history and theatre history covering the period of the thesis has retained a national scope.

In theatre studies and theatre history, I have been able to draw on a few theatre histories with a European scope. An impressive attempt to write a common European theatre history is Erika Fischer-Lichte's *History of European Drama and Theatre* (2002). Here Ibsen's plays are placed in the larger European framework of avant-garde theatre which gradually emerged from the 1880s as a reaction against the commercial theatre of the time.[71] Where the great strength of the work lies is in the transnational perspective, it offers a very normative account of theatre history in which the authors canonised by modernism emerge as the heroes of the narrative, which overcome the empty entertainment of commercial theatre. Another work that offers a European outlook on theatre history is the multi-volume *Die Welt als Bühne* (1999), though in this case the development of theatre is divided according to nation.[72] In *History of Scandinavian Theatre* (1996) Denmark, Sweden and Norway are treated as a single region, in which the developments in the individual countries has parallels in the other two.[73] Despite the national orientation, these

[71] Erika Fischer-Lichte, *History of European drama and theatre* (London: Routledge, 2002), p. 246 ff.
[72] Manfred Brauneck, *Die Welt als Bühne*, vol. 3 (Stuttgart; Weimar: Metzler, 1999).
[73] Frederick J Marker and Lise-Lone Marker, *A History of Scandinavian Theatre* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996).

works make it possible to trace parallel changes across borders, a parallelism which transfer history helps to explain.

Of purely national histories of theatre, I have relied on *Dansk Teaterhistoie* vol. 1-2 (1992), *The Cambridge History of British Theatre* vol. 2-3 (2004), Michael Booth's *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (1991) and *The Cambridge Companion to Victorian and Edwardian Theatre* (2004). Due to the high interest in Ibsen and the comparatively low number of productions during Ibsen's lifetime all known British productions are well documented. *Die Welt als Bühne* offers both a thorough and geographically diversified account of theatrical life in the German Empire, but especially in the case of theatres in Berlin, and in that of the court theatre in Meiningen I have drawn on additional specialised literature.[74] As Ibsen productions in Copenhagen became centred at the Royal Theatre I have relied on the literature available on that theatre; the older histories have proved especially useful as they adopt an agent based approach such as Thomas Overskov's *Den danske skueplads* vol. 1-7 (1854-1874) and Robert Neiiendam's *Det kongelige theaters historie 1872-1922* vol. 1-5 (1921-1930).

Publishing history is another research field that has been crucial to the investigation. Though, as Robert Darnton has already pointed out in 'What is the History of the Book' (1982), book history needs to be international, I have found the histories which deal with the timeframe that this thesis covers largely abide by national borders.[75] This, however, does not change the fact that the field in general is concerned with the international circulation of books, or that the circulation of Ibsen's plays in print crossed national borders. In my investigation of publishing, however, I have focused on the processes which led to the publication of the plays and the relative position of the various publishing houses in the market. The question that has directed the analysis is why publishers found it attractive to import Ibsen's plays? In a Danish context, publishing history or history of the book covering the latter part of the nineteenth century is a notoriously neglected subject. Despite the fact that it is research of an older date, the authoritative work on the great influx of Norwegian authors to Danish publishers in the latter half of the nineteenth century continues to be Harald Tveterås' second volume of his history of the Norwegian book trade.[76] German publishing history covering the period is well researched, both in terms of the general overview of the trade and the developments in the market and for the major publishers of Ibsen's plays.[77] The inclusion of Scandinavian authors in the cheap edition series Reclam Universalbibliothek has also been investigated in a number of articles,

[74] Karl Grube, *Die Meininger*, Das Theater, vol. 9 (Berlin und Leipzig: Schuster & Loeffler, 1905); Gerhard Wahnrau, *Berlin: Stadt Der Theater* (Berlin: Henschelverlag, 1957); Ruth Freydank, *Theater in Berlin: von den Anfängen bis 1945* (Berlin: Argon, 1988).
[75] Robert Darnton, 'What Is the History of Books?', *Daedalus*, 111(3) (1982), p. 81.
[76] Harald Tveterås, *Den Norske Bokhandels Historie Vol. 2* (Oslo: Norsk bokhandler-medhjelper-forening, 1964).
[77] *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert Bd. 1 Teil 3.*, ed. by Georg Jäger (Berlin [u.a.: de Gruyter, 2010); Reinhard Wittmann, 'Geschichte Des Deutschen Buchhandels', in *Geschichte Des Deutschen Buchwesens : Mit 2000 Abbildungen*, by Mark Lehmstedt, [Elektronische Ressource]. (Berlin: Directmedia Publ., 2004); Reinhard. Wittmann, *Buchmarkt und Lektüre im 18. und 19. Jahrhundert: Beiträge zum literarischen Leben 1750-1880* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1982).

which also shed light on Ibsen's inclusion in the book series.[78] The emergence of S. Fischer Verlag has been extensively documented in the general literature on German publishing already referenced, but Peter De Mendelssohn's Samuel Fischer biography deserves a special mention as amongst other things it closely investigates the background of the Berlin publisher's discovery of Ibsen's plays.[79] On publishing in Britain I have, for a contextualisation of the already mentioned specialist literature, relied on Peter McDonald's *British Literary Culture and Publishing Practice 1880-1914* (1997), which besides offering an insight into the publishing business at the time ties it closely to practices in the cultural field, and Alexis Weedon's *Victorian Publishing* (2003).

The national orientation of research fields such as theatre history and publishing history has remained a challenge. In these cases, I have only attempted to make a comparison between the ways in which Ibsen's plays were appropriated by different markets, and generally not attempted larger comparisons on a structural level because it would expand the scope of the thesis unduly. There are, however, exceptions which require mentioning: one example is the obvious structural difference between British theatre, which was wholly commercial, and the markets in Denmark and Germany, which had a large number of subsidised theatres. Another example is the comparatively well-developed book market in Denmark which allowed for comparatively large print runs of literature compared to Germany and Britain, considering the small population. Apart from these, I have strived to stress the interconnectedness of markets and avoid narratives of national exceptionalism.

[78] Leopold Magon, 'Wegbereiter nordischer Dichtung in Deutschland', in *100 Jahre Reclams Universalbibliothek, 1867-1967 : Beiträge zur Verlagsgeschichte*, by Hans Marquardt (Leipzig: Philipp Reclam jun., 1967), pp. 204–52; Keel.
[79] Peter De Mendelssohn, *S. Fischer und sein Verlag.* (Frankfurt am Main: S. Fischer, 1970).

Part One: Ibsen and Denmark

Introduction to Part One

This part consists of four chapters, in which I investigate the transfer of Ibsen's plays to Denmark and his breakthrough onto the Danish book market with the play *Brand*, his integration into the Danish cultural field, and the path his plays took before they became part of the repertoire of the Danish Royal Theatre.

In Chapter One, I investigate the relationship between the Danish and the Norwegian book markets in the period before Ibsen's plays were first published in Denmark in 1866. More specifically, I consider the ways in which Danish nationalism and Norwegian nation building conditioned the shared book market and the conditions, which it offered the Norwegian authors of both Ibsen's generation and the generation before him. From there the chapter follows Ibsen's path from his engagement with various Norwegian publishers to the pan-Scandinavian breakthrough, which followed after he transferred to the Danish publisher Gyldendal.

In the second chapter, I follow the integration of Ibsen's plays in the Danish cultural field. Here I focus on Ibsen's attempt to obtain the patronage of the Danish critic Clemens Petersen, who at the time was working on creating a new aesthetic position in opposition to the dominating position of aesthetical idealism. Petersen's attempt was made together with the Norwegian author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, who was a friend of Ibsen, and to Ibsen their new aesthetical position in the Danish field of culture made up a highly attractive platform for his own work.

In the third chapter, the point of investigation is the production of Ibsen's plays in Copenhagen. Based on an analysis of the sequence of production and the theatres that produced the plays, I focus is on the Royal Theatre which was the dominant force in the production of Ibsen's plays in Denmark. Within the Royal Theatre I investigate the structures and the agency which led first to rejection and then to acceptance of the plays. Finally, I investigate how the financial arrangements with the Royal Theatre led Ibsen to prioritise publishing over theatre in the long-run.

The fourth chapter takes a departure from the investigation of Ibsen's initial breakthrough in Denmark and investigates the change of agency which followed as a result of the scandal which was created by Ibsen's play *Ghosts*. The scandal which *Ghosts* created in Denmark, and all of Scandinavia, is interesting as a point of comparison as it mirrored the scandal which the plays were to cause in other European countries. In Denmark the scandal did, however, mean a change of agency, in terms of the people involved in the production of Ibsen's work. This change of agency proved possible because that play was rejected for production by the Royal Theatre, and an alternative set of agents thus had the chance of engaging with Ibsen's plays.

Chapter 1: Norwegian authors and Danish cultural hegemony

Setting the stage: Ibsen's first visit to Denmark

In 1852 Ibsen travelled to Denmark for the first time. He was 24 years old and had recently been employed at the newly opened Norwegian Theatre in Bergen to conduct the stage direction and, more importantly, to supply the theatre with new Norwegian drama.[80] Ibsen's early career was part of a growing Norwegian cultural consciousness, which aimed at creating an independent national theatre culture.[81] The journey was to be a grand tour for the young Ibsen, and it was planned to take him first to Copenhagen and later to Dresden. The objective was to gather experience from the continent to be applied back home at the theatre in Bergen. In many ways Ibsen's grand tour was symptomatic not only of the ambitions of the newly opened theatre in Bergen, but for Norwegian theatre in general. The aspirations was to create an independent Norwegian stage that did not rely on imported Danish theatre, which had hitherto been the case. Yet as the destination of the first stop on Ibsen's grand tour shows the debt to the former cultural centre, Copenhagen, was not to be denied. To Norwegians, Copenhagen was still the place of high culture and the gateway to Europe, and to Ibsen it was the place to which he turned when it came to learning the ropes of how to organize a modern professional theatre.

Ibsen's visit to Copenhagen was not least interesting as he there met with Johan Ludvig Heiberg (1791-1860) who was the current manager of the Royal Theatre. To Ibsen, who hailed from provincial Norway, the meeting with Heiberg must have been an audience with culture incarnate. Heiberg had held a dominant position in the Danish cultural field since the 1820s and at the middle of the century he was possibly the single most important cultural figure in Denmark. In his time, Heiberg had had not only experienced enormous success with his vaudevilles, but also assumed the position as the leading theatre critic. His aesthetic was based on Georg Wilhelm Frederich Hegel's aesthetic teachings, a position that may be called 'aesthetic idealism', according to which the world was to be idealised through the artist's sensibility to taste.[82] To Heiberg this placed the vaudeville, his own genre of choice, as the most important amongst the dramatic arts, and thus Heiberg himself, as critic and dramatist, embodied a perfect unity of theory and practice. He became the manager of the Royal Theatre and from there he conducted his cultural mission to educate the taste of the audience and to preserve his own legacy. Heiberg's dominion of the field outlasted his own lifetime, and when he died in 1860 the aesthetic which he had championed in Denmark continued to hold sway, not least at the Royal Theatre, which in Denmark was the epitome of culture. But the cultural fields in both countries were about to change, and the relationship between Denmark and Norway was changing as well. In Norway, the young generation of authors wanted cultural change, and though they still looked to Denmark for inspiration, the ambition was now the

[80] Ewbank, p. 59ff.
[81] Andersen, p. 91.
[82] Westling, p. 211ff.

creation of a national culture. In Denmark, Heiberg's generation was aging and there was a sense that the very fruitful cultural production which the country had seen in the first part of the century was very slowly making itself known.

Norwegian literature in Denmark before Ibsen

In order to appreciate the significance of the transfer of Ibsen's plays to Denmark one must have a sense of the relationship between the book markets in the two countries and the relative status of their cultural products which depended on the nationalism of both countries. Essentially, the relationship may be understood in terms of centre and periphery. Until 1814, Norway had been a province of Denmark, after which there was a short period of independence at the very end of the Napoleonic Wars before it became part of Sweden. Though in the period 1814-1905 it was part of Sweden, albeit with extensive home rule, Norway remained culturally oriented towards Denmark. One of the evident consequences of this was that the Danish book trade, which had dominated the Danish-Norwegian book market in the period before 1814, continued to dominate the markets in both countries. This was possible due to the shared written language. During the time of the personal union Danish, written as well as spoken, had been the language of the administrative elite in both countries, but in Norway the spoken language differed somewhat due to the highly diverse Norwegian dialects that were spoken by the common people. The two languages were, however, no more dissimilar than Danish, with specific Norwegian expressions, could continue as the written language of Norway after 1814. The shared written language made the continual Danish domination of the common book market a possibility, and was thus a cultural factor, which outweighed the fact that Norway was now politically joined to Sweden.

Though Norwegian publishing gradually increased its production, the Norwegian book market continued to depend on Danish publishers/publishing throughout the entire nineteenth century, especially when it came to *belles-lettres*. In *Den Norske Bokhandels Historie (History of the Norwegian Book Trade),* which has remained the authoritative work on the subject, Harald Tveterås points out that the value of books imported from Denmark to Norway throughout the period surpassed the value of the entire Norwegian book production. He states that in the period from 1814 to the middle of the century there was even an increased Norwegian reliance on imported books from Denmark. As more and more people acquired the financial means to read and the overall demand for books grew, Norwegian home production was too low to meet the demand. Tveterås estimates that by around 1814 only approximately fifty new titles were published yearly in Norway, a number which by the middle of the century had risen to approximately one hundred and fifty.[83] Out of this very limited number of published titles each year, titles of fiction, poetry and drama were marginalised. Faced with a very small and poorly developed home market, Norwegian publishers chose to publish in genres, which they knew were certain to be in demand. This meant a focus on schoolbooks, religious texts, and texts on

[83] Tveterås, p. 12ff.

various scientific disciplines, which in financial terms proved more reliable than fiction. There reliability was to be found in the high likelihood that they could be reprinted, as they catered for a continual demand. As far as they held general interest, the most successful of these titles had the possibility of being sold in Denmark, but the odds were generally against this as there was a preference of books published by Danish publishers in the Danish market. Literature, in the narrow sense, held none of the promises of the safer titles: generally, it could neither be reprinted nor sold in Denmark, which left Norwegian publishers who ventured into the business of publishing literature with a very slim chance of any financial gain.

Tveterås highlights a further difficultly which faced Norwegian literature in Denmark, and which illustrates the marginalised character of Norwegian authors and publication, namely, that Norwegian publications almost universally failed to attract attention in Denmark. This is something to which the fate of the great Norwegian poets of the 1830s and 1840s can testify. The problem was not only a matter of finding readers, but also a matter of being reviewed in Danish newspapers and magazines. As Tveterås points out, Norwegian books were very rarely reviewed in Danish newspapers before the 1840s and 1850s, and the Norwegian literature in the sense of *belles-lettres* was almost never reviewed at all.[84] A few exceptions did, however, exist: the poet J.S. Welhaven's (1807-1873) poem *Norges Dæmring (Norway's Dawn)* was one of the few works that did receive some attention. The fact that it was a work by Welhaven, which managed to attract some attention in Denmark, is not surprising. Welhaven was known to be culturally pro-Danish, which was important at a time when the relationship with Denmark was beginning to be questioned. In the 1830s he headed the pro-Danish side in a big Norwegian controversy about the country's cultural relationship with Denmark. The other faction in the controversy, 'the patriots', was led by H. Wergeland (1808-1845) who in his home country was a poet of equal renown. Though the controversy was a purely internal Norwegian affair, some of it leaked into the Danish newspapers, which meant that Wergeland was completely shut out by the Danish press.[85] Despite the goodwill he had gained from his pro-Danish stand, Welhaven's poems did not manage to sell well in Denmark. The precise sales numbers for *Norway's Dawn* are unknown, but Tveterås estimates that Welhaven's following collections of poems *Digte (Poems)* (1839) and *Nyere Digte (Newer Poems)* (1845) were respectively sold in 150 and 160 copies in Copenhagen over the duration of a couple of years.[86] As we shall see later, the low numbers which Tveterås mentions for the authors of the generation prior to that of Ibsen stand in stark contrast to sales figures achieved by first Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson and later Ibsen from the beginning of the 1860s, when they began to be published by a Danish publisher.

The Danish-Norwegian book market can be described as a shared market at the same time as it consisted of two national markets. In the early part of the nineteenth century, the market was, however, only shared to the extent that Danish books had full access to the Norwegian market,

[84] Ibid., p. 13.
[85] Ibid., p. 15.
[86] Ibid., p. 22.

whereas Norwegian books only in theory had access to the Danish market. Though Danish bookshops were willing to take Norwegian books on commission, the Norwegian books had very little chance of ever being sold. Tveterås points to several reasons for this discrepancy, the most important being, of course, the historical dependence on books from Denmark. This meant that upcoming Norwegian publishers had to compete with already established Danish publishers, who could rely on the Danish market as well as the Norwegian one.[87] Another and very much related reason for the difficulties of the Norwegian book trade was that the Norwegian market, besides being small to begin with, was poorly developed, even as late as the 1860s. Finally, Tveterås claims that the print quality offered by the Norwegian publishers quite simply was lower than that of their Danish competitors. Based on these features of the Dano-Norwegian market, we may conclude that the Danish publishers in effect had access to a much bigger market and were endowed with a prestige, in which the much smaller Norwegian publishers had no share. Taken as a dynamic between centre and periphery, Copenhagen was indisputably the cultural centre, with Norway in the role of periphery. From a Danish perspective, Norway merely made up part of the market to which the cultural goods could be sold, without having a significant export of its own. It was not until Ibsen's generation of authors that signs of a reversal could be seen, but at that time it was only of a transfer of authors and their works, and not of books, as we shall see in the following section.

Norwegian authors in Denmark

Welhaven and Wergaland both belonged to the generation prior to Ibsen, and with the authors of his generation and the relation between Norwegian authors and the Danish book market was about to change dramatically. From the early 1850s a long range of those who came to be the most popular Norwegian authors had their works published in Copenhagen and of these nearly all came out at the publishing house Gyldendal. The significance of Gyldendal in this movement can hardly be overestimated. As a publishing house, it came to play a key role in the transfer of Norwegian authors as it provided a gateway to Copenhagen from where it disseminated their books not only to the Danish booksellers, but to bookshops in all of Scandinavia. It is in light of the central role which Gyldendal played that the question of how Ibsen found his entry at the publishing house achieves its significance. Yet it must be noted that though he was amongst the first Norwegian authors to be published by Gyldendal, he was not the first. The transfer of Norwegian authors to Denmark can be said to begin with Camilla Collett (1813-1895). In 1860 she had the second edition of her novel *Amtmandens Døttre* (*The Bailiff's Daughters*) published by Gyldendal. A first edition had already been published in Norway, which may be said to make the significance of the publication less conspicuous. Though Collett was the first in the wide range of Norwegian authors to be published by Gyldendal her affiliation with the publisher was not a lasting one, and, perhaps, as a consequence it did not lead to any Danish or Scandinavian breakthrough. After the publication of *Amtmandens Døttre*, Collett had her books published by Norwegian publishers only to return to Gyldendal years later, in 1867, with the novel *Sidste*

[87] Ibid., p. 357-383.

Blade (*Last Leaves*).[88] With the author Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, it was, however, a different matter. In the following pages, I investigate Bjørnson's transfer to Gyldendal as it was he who introduced Ibsen at Gyldendal and many more Norwegian authors besides him.

Like Ibsen, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson (1832-1910) became one of the big Norwegian writers of his time and experienced an international breakthrough, which reached far outside Scandinavia. As an author he wrote in many genres. In the early part of his career he had success with his peasant stories and his historical plays, a genre which he, together with Ibsen, pioneered in Norway. In the period before he acquired the financial means to work solely as an author, Bjørnson, like Ibsen, worked in theatre, where, among other things, he took over Ibsen's former position as artistic director at Bergen Norwegian Theatre. Besides his theatrical work, Bjørnson worked as a journalist and published his own magazine *Norsk Folkeblad* [Norwegian People's Magazine]. Throughout his life he actively engaged in politics, and in his youth he was a stout supporter of Scandinavianism.

The overall trajectory of Bjørnson's career as a dramatist was in many ways similar to that of Ibsen, and their careers on many occasions ran on parallel tracks. Bjørnson's career, however, developed more rapidly, and though he was four years Ibsen's junior, it was Ibsen who followed Bjørnson abroad. Thus, Bjørnson experienced success in Denmark with his series of peasant stories almost ten years before Ibsen became known to Danish readers in general, and he was the first of the two to achieve the feat of having his plays staged at the Danish Royal Theatre. It is also noticeable that Bjørnson gave up the historical play and turned to contemporary topics before Ibsen did. His first contemporary play was *The Newly Married* (1865), which dealt with the problems of marriage, and was later followed by plays which dealt with social issues, such as *The Editor* (1875) and *The Bankruptcy* (1875). Bjørnson was not only first to conquer Denmark, his works also preceded Ibsen's in Germany, both in print and on the stage. In terms of the transfer of their works, it became Ibsen's lot to follow in the footsteps of Bjørnson. This meant that as an author Ibsen was often compared with Bjørnson, and not always favourably so. As the story of Ibsen's transfer abroad shows, different effects may be attributed to the fact that he followed in Bjørnson's footsteps. On the one hand, it meant that Ibsen's access to the foreign cultural market was made easier as Bjørnson had already paved the way. On the other hand, Ibsen and his productions continuously ran the risk of being overshadowed.

On a personal level, Ibsen and Bjørnson's relationship was troubled. In their youth they were friends, but fell out, and were only gradually reconciled in their old age. Part of the explanation of the difficult relationship may be found in the fact that they, as authors, were competitors to some extent. As I show in what follows, their personal relationship influenced the positions they adopted in the artistic field, in some instances acting as allies, in some as competitors. From the perspective of the transfer, Bjørnson's most important contribution was to put Ibsen in contact with the Danish publisher Frederik Hegel, the director of Gyldendal, something

[88] Ibid., p. 91.

which proved to be a crucial turn in Ibsen's career. Ibsen was, however, not the only Norwegian author whom Bjørnson introduced to the Danish publisher. In 1870 he introduced Jacob Lie (1833-1908) and in 1878 Alexander L. Kielland (1848-1906), two major Norwegian authors of the time.[89] The fact that Bjørnson mediated between Norwegian authors and Frederik Hegel placed him in a crucial position when it came to the transfer of their works, as Gyldendal proved to be the gateway to Danish readers. It is therefore of interest to investigate how Bjørnson's own connection with Hegel was established, and thus how the process of transfer began.

In the autumn of 1856 Bjørnson, by then already a young poet, made a trip to Copenhagen, where he stayed until the early summer 1857. While in Copenhagen, he met the up-and-coming Danish critic Clemens Petersen (1834-1918), with whom he developed a very close friendship. This friendship was not least to be of great professional importance to both of them. Petersen, as a critic, found in Bjørnson's writings a literature that he believed to be truly laudable, and the good reviews that Bjørnson received in return, especially from a critic of Petersen's reputation, helped him reach more readers. Thus Petersen reviewed Bjørnson's first book, *Synøve Solbakke* (1857), when it came out in Norway. Petersen's very positive review was printed in the Danish paper *Fædrelandet* and was reprinted in the Norwegian paper *Morgenbladet*.[90] Based on Tveterås' account of the absence of a reception of Norwegian authors in Danish newspapers in the previous generation, Bjørnson's friendship with Petersen assumes increased significance as it became a way for Danish readers to become acquainted with Norwegian authors, even though it was primarily Bjørnson with whom Petersen was concerned.

Bjørnson's friendship with Petersen led, however, to more than good reviews, as Petersen was the very person who directed Bjørnson to Gyldendal. In a long letter to Bjørnson dated April 1860, Petersen sought to convince him to move to Denmark and have his works published at Gyldendal. This correspondence between Petersen and Bjørnson is not least interesting as it reveals similar conditions to when Ibsen was later persuaded by Bjørnson to join Hegel's publishing house. Petersen's appeal followed an unsuccessful attempt by Bjørnson to have his latest novel published simultaneously in three Scandinavian papers, one in each country.[91] In Denmark the idea had been rejected by Carl Plough the editor of *Fædrelandet*, the newspaper for which Petersen wrote.[92] Plough was ready to print the novel, but he was not inclined to share it with other Scandinavian newspapers, and left it to Petersen to convince Bjørnson to publish in Denmark alone.

> Come down here! We should shelter you and let no harsh cries reach you: We should build you a house with kind hands and let you lurk quietly within until you have finished [your book]. I do not intend to make a Dane of you, for as far as your love for your fatherland and its future, and your

[89] Lauritz Nielsen, *Gyldendal gennem 175 aar* (Gyldendal, 1945), p. 88ff.
[90] Tveterås, p. 79.
[91] Letter: Bjørnson to Plough 14 March 1860 in Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, *Bjørnstjerne Bjørnsons Brevveksling Med Danske 1854-1874, Vol. I*, ed. by Øyvind Anker (København and Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1972), pp. 66–67.
[92] Tveterås, p. 82.

> profound connection with that which is your [people's] own character, it is something of the most beautiful that I have seen in you [...]
> You must realise that your book could hardly be printed both in a Norwegian magazine and in *Fædrelandet* and you must consent to what Plough has offered, for it is fair. He has told me that he might even increase the payment for the book. Book trader Gyldendal has promised to publish it and will pay you a large fee. Come and stay with me and write it.[93]

Besides being very affectionate, Petersen's letter reveals that the national sentiments were at stake when it came to the choice of publishing abroad. Petersen's promise, not to attempt to transform Bjørnson into a Dane, must be read as an attempt to pre-empt a rejection based on Bjørnson's patriotism. For an author who, as Bjørnson, was very actively engaged in nation building, it is not surprising that Petersen may have envisioned the possibility of such rejection. Petersen's letter did, however, also touch on another theme, the sheltering from 'harsh cries', which, not least in hindsight, may be interpreted as a promise of the autonomy which followed from being removed from the often heated debates of the national field in which Bjørnson participated. In spite of Petersen's belief that he would decline, Bjørnson answered that he was prepared to leave:

> Oh, how good to receive your letter, both my wife and I were moved to tears. Yes, I will come: the departure from Kristiania is today... Tell Gyldendal that in two-three weeks he will receive *The First Kiss* a story by B.B. Oh, it is the neatest little story, which I have often told in public, but never yet written down... [But now,] listen well; for this is business. You must go to Gyldendal on my behalf and tell him that I have [already] sought to sell myself, that is to say a single one of my poems, to Norwegian booksellers; it is possible that they are all upstanding people, but I will have to starve to death if I do not get more than what they offer.[94]

Bjørnson's reply, that if he was not paid more than what the Norwegian publishers offered he would have to starve to death, may be read as an example of how material concerns triumphed over national sentiments, but neither the claim nor the interpretation are necessarily true. Bjørnson's transition to a Danish publisher would, in national terms, have been eased by the ideology of Scandinavianism to some extent. The fact alone that he planned pan-Scandinavian publication shows that he had a Scandinavian rather than merely a Norwegian reading public in mind for his works. Bjørnson's claim, that he would have to 'starve to death', laid bare a dilemma which faced the Norwegian writers, namely that they lived off their other jobs as the Norwegian book market could hardly support independent authors of the kind which Bjørnson and Ibsen aspired to be. This proved to be Gyldendal's big opportunity, for in contrast to Norwegian publishers it had the necessary financial capacity to fund authors like Bjørnson, something which initially meant paying them advances while they wrote their works, something which the Norwegian publishers could rarely afford.

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[93] Letter: Clemens Petersen to Bjørnson 2-6 May 1860 in Bjørnson, *Bjørnstjerne Bjørnsons Brevveksling Med Danske 1854-1874, Vol. I*, pp. 73–75.

[94] Letter: Bjørnson to Petersen: [unknown date] April 1860 in Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, *Gro-Tid Vol. I*, ed. by Halvdan Koht, 1, 2 vols. (Kristiania og København: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1912), pp. 106–109.

For Bjørnson, as for Ibsen later, the transferral to Gyldendal became an event which changed his career. He published his first book, the play *King Sverre* (*King Sverre*), with Gyldendal in 1861, and published two more plays, *Sigurd Slembe* (*Sigurd the Bad*) (1863) and *De Nygifte* (*The Newly Married*) (1866) before Ibsen had his first play published in Denmark, all of which proved successful in Denmark and in Norway. That Bjørnson's plays achieved success on the Danish book market can be said to have paved the way for Ibsen's plays at they showed that there was a market for Norwegian literature in Denmark.

Ibsen and the Norwegian publishers

In order to understand why Ibsen switched form the various Norwegian publishers to Gyldendal one must look at the general conditions which he had faced as an author in Norway, and not least the financial difficulties which to some extent haunted him throughout the early part of his career. Ibsen's financial problems may in part be ascribed to the fact that he belonged to the first generation of Norwegian authors who sought to live off their writings. These general conditions may form the backdrop for understanding Ibsen's particular situation when he left Norway in 1864, and under which circumstances he decided to switch to the Danish publisher.

The hardship which Ibsen faced in Norway in the early part of his career has been a recurring theme not only in the Ibsen research but also in the biographical material published in Ibsen's own lifetime. It has often been attributed to an unresponsive, not to say downright hostile, public reception and lack of local support. Ibsen himself at times encourage these narratives of adversity, in what must be taken to be an attempt to fortify his avant-garde position. In recent years, however, the picture of Ibsen as a particularly marginalised author has been challenged, and has been replaced by numerous accounts which offer a more nuanced picture.[95] These accounts tend to focus more on the fact that the size of the Norwegian cultural field imposed limitations on the possibility to develop artistic positions which were financially autonomous, which was the position that Ibsen sought to establish. Narve Fuldsås has argued that an independent literary field was only just emerging in Norway.

> In the latter part of the nineteenth century, literature emerged as an independent field in Norway, which means a sphere with its own institutions, values and hierarchies, dominated by the producers of literature's own norms. Earlier on, authors had to support themselves through more or less academic state positions: Wergeland as state archivist, Welhaven as professor of philosophy. Andreas Munch's position as docent without teaching obligations (1860) represented a transitional form as did the emergence of a Norwegian theatre institution in the 1850s. The breakthrough was, however, the national author's salary, the emergence of a sufficiently big book market and the control over the income from this market through the assertion of copyrights. Hereby, a number of authors were capable to live off their writings alone and to write what they pleased.[96]

[95] Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen*, p. 263ff.; Narve Fulsås, 'Innledning (HIS 12k)', in *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2005), pp. 9–65 (p. 27).
[96] Fulsås, 'Innledning (HIS 12k)', p. 26.

From Fuldsås' description we can conclude that Ibsen's financial problems, prior to his departure from Norway in 1864, did not so much originate due to a marginalised position, but from the fact that he wrote his plays in a country where an independent literary field was only gradually emerging. This meant that in the early part of his career Ibsen's primary income was derived from the work he did at theatres as artistic director, as the publication of plays was not profitable enough to provide a livelihood. It was not until he switched to Gyldendal that Ibsen's income from his writings became sufficient to sustain him.

Ibsen had already had a long history with Norwegian publishers before transferring to the Danish publisher. Thus, he had had six works published already before Gyldendal published the play *Brand*. His first play *Catilina* was published as early as 1850. A friend of Ibsen's brought the play with him from Grimstad, where Ibsen still worked as an apothecary's apprentice, to Christiania to have it published.[97] He could, however, find no publisher willing to take it, and in the end he himself lent Ibsen the money to have the play printed. The play came out in 300-400 copies of which only a very few were sold. Later the same year, the publisher of *Catilina* agreed to publish Ibsen's next play, *The Burial Mound,* and for which he was offered a small fee, but the publication was cancelled after Ibsen submitted the draft for proofreading. After these initial and not very successful attempts, Ibsen did not have any books published before *The Feast at Solhoug* came out in 1856. Ibsen's last play to be printed in Norway before he went to Gyldendal was *The Pretenders,* which was issued by the publisher Johan Dahl in 1863. Besides the plays which he succeeded in having published as books, Ibsen had three of his plays published in the magazine *Illustreret Nyhedsblad*. Thus, the play *Lady Inger of Östråt* was serialised between May and August 1857 and *Vikings at Helgeland* the year after. In 1862 the play *Love's Comedy* was published as a 'new year's present' to the readers.

The path to Gyldendal

In March 1866 Ibsen's latest play *Brand* appeared in Copenhagen published by the major Danish publishing house Gyldendal. The publication of *Brand*, and not least his association with Gyldendal was to be a decisive moment in Ibsen's career, and with one stroke he was transformed from a purely Norwegian dramatist to one whose latest work was the talk of all of Scandinavia. Moreover, his newfound success combined with the economic capacity of Gyldendal meant that in effect Ibsen's financial troubles were over, and his quest for economic autonomy had come to an end. The road to his first success was, however, not an easy one.

In 1864, Ibsen had left Norway and travelled to Rome where he intended to stay for an indefinite period together with his wife and son. The means for the trip were provided by a recently awarded government stipend and funds from a private collection organised by Bjørnson. The problem with Ibsen's stay in Rome was that he had no source of income besides the stipend and

[97] Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen: Masken*, pp. 72–74.

the collection, and eventually his money started to run out. In this precarious situation, Ibsen turned to Bjørnson for help as it was Bjørnson who had organised the collection before the departure. In his letter of 19 January 1864 Bjørnson urged Ibsen to put his trust in Frederik Hegel the director of Gyldendal:

> As you no longer talk of returning home etc., then I will not mention it, the longing will make itself known in due time. But I think that you should keep it up down there as long as possible, and move to Neaple [sic] and Sorrento as soon as possible after Easter. But in order to do that, you must not only rely on Trondhjem [a grant from the Society of sciences] (where you of course will have your due) but on *Hegel*. Let me enrol you with Hegel! Then you will have a kind-hearted advance, when I vouch for you.[98]

Ibsen's reply to Bjørnson is lost, but it is evident that he accepted the offer for Bjørnson promised in his next letter, dated 19 April 1865, that he would at once write to Hegel. Ibsen, however, had no manuscript which he could send at the time, and consequently his financial situation did not improve. In Bjørnson's next letter, he explained to Ibsen that his sources for his collection had dried out and he had now sought to squeeze money from all his acquaintances.[99] The problem was, however, that Ibsen was in immediate need of money, and Bjørnson consequently pointed to the only solution left: if only Ibsen could begin to send his manuscript for publication then he could ask for an advance from Gyldendal.

On 25 October 1865, Ibsen could finally write his first letter to his new publisher and thanked him for the advance for his new book. Enclosed were the first hundred pages of his new play *Brand*, along with instructions for the proofreading, and with the hopeful wish that the play could be published in time for the Christmas sales. In his reply of 7 November Hegel acknowledged that he received the first part of the manuscript and offered a print run of 1,250 copies. Hegel had, however, proposed the terms before he read Ibsen's draft. Already in his next letter, which he sent only a few days later, Hegel had realised that the play was not a historical play, which Bjørnson must have been led to believe. This made Hegel fear that this new play 'would not be understood by the vast majority [of readers]'.[100] From the polite urgency of the letter it is evident that Hegel must have regretted that he ever accepted the play, yet he felt obliged to publish it. He therefore now sought Ibsen's permission to reduce the print run to half the size, and offered to leave the print plates in case a second print run was needed.[101]

What happened next was that Ibsen's reply was lost in the mail, which gave rise to one of the very few disagreements between Ibsen and Hegel. In his reply to Hegel on 2 December, Ibsen accepted the new terms, and authorised Hegel to act on his behalf as he saw fit, yet the new terms never reached Hegel. On 7 December Hegel wrote to tell Ibsen that he had been waiting

[98] Letter: Bjørnson to Ibsen, 19 January 1865 in Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, *Gro-Tid Vol. II*, ed. by Halvdan Koht, 2, 2 vols. (Kristiania og København: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1912), pp. 149–152.
[99] Letter: Bjørnson-Ibsen 25 July 1865 in Bjørnson, *Gro-Tid Vol. II*, pp. 166–169.
[100] Draft letter: Hegel 23 November 1865.
[101] Draft Letter: Hegel to Ibsen 23 November 1865. It was custom not to leave the plates after the printing, but to reuse the types. This had the advantage that the block would not take up storage space, but the obvious disadvantage that blocks would have to be set again if a new print run was ever needed.

for a reply for the past week and stated that it was now too late for his book to be ready for Christmas. Instead he suggested a publication in February or March which he saw as a favourable time for new publications. Ibsen did not respond to this letter, as he explained later when the misunderstanding was cleared up, because he assumed that his own letter of 2 December would have reached Hegel in the meantime with the necessary permissions to go ahead with the printing.

For the following three months nothing happened by way of correspondence between Ibsen and Hegel, and Hegel did nothing to publish the play. Then, independently of one another, Hegel and Ibsen each wrote a letter: Ibsen describing how he had been waiting for the publication of his book, Hegel apologising if he had offended Ibsen with his proposal to reduce the print run, but as he no longer wanted to delay the printing of the book he now intended to print it on the original conditions. Finally, on 16 March, the day of the publication of *Brand,* Ibsen replied to Hegel's letter, now having realised the misunderstanding that arose due to the missing letter. *Brand* was reprinted three times same year, and we know from Hegel that it generally received good reviews in the Danish press: in his letter of 12 May 1866 Hegel informed Ibsen:

> I am heartily pleased to inform you that your latest poetic work has been well received here as well as in Norway, and the fact that it has been mentioned – and enthusiastically so in as good as all the major newspapers - has greatly helped the sale and there is all possibility that the entire print run will be sold.[102]

Given the book's good prospects, Hegel could inform Ibsen in his letter that he intended to issue a second print run of 500 copies. The decision to print only 500 copies was rather conservative, and it shows how careful Hegel was when it came to the risk of printing too many copies. Over the next four decades, Gyldendal would issue *Brand* in fifteen impressions and eventually publish 21,000 copies.[103]

Gyldendal: Norwegian authors' gateway to Danish readers

Having seen what made it attractive for Norwegian authors to leave Norway and have their writings published in Denmark, it is time to investigate the transfer from a Danish perspective and ask the question what made it attractive for a publisher such as Gyldendal to engage with Norwegian authors in the first place? In order to answer the question it is necessary to understand the position that Gyldendal held in the Danish field of publishing, and not least the changes that the field underwent in the time of the initial transfer of the Norwegian authors. In the following, I analyse the position of the publishing house in the Danish market and look at the career of the manager of the time, Frederik Hegel, who played a central role in the transfer of Ibsen's plays to Denmark. From there, I turn to the question of the development of Ibsen's

[102] Draft Letter: Hegel to Ibsen12 May 1866.
[103] Helbøll, p. 'Bogførte honorarbeløb' p.1–2 .

dissemination in Denmark from a publishing perspective, and investigate the ways in which Hegel as a publisher sought to manage Ibsen's work.

By the middle of the nineteenth century, Gyldendal was already an old and well-established publishing house.[104] It had been founded in 1770 by Søren Gyldendal (1742-1802) who specialised in scientific literature, and in 1809 it had passed to his son-in-law Jacob Deichmann (1788-1853).[105] Overall, Deichmann had expanded the business, but under him the publication of fiction, which had previously formed part of Gyldendal's offer, was gradually discontinued. Deichmann, however, had a talent for organising the business and setting up trade networks. He initiated a direct trade with the book fair in Leipzig, later adding direct trade with Paris and London, and in this way greatly increased the trade in imported books.[106] In Copenhagen he added a trade in paper to the existing book trade. Søren Gyldendal already had strong ties to Norway, where he had had several booksellers as his commissioners, but Deichmann brought the networks of bookshops to a new level: not only did he ensure efficient cooperation between Danish bookshops with the initiation of a trade organisation for Danish book traders (Boghandlerforeningen) in 1837, but he engaged in a more regular cooperation with booksellers in Sweden and Norway.[107] It was this network that Fredrik Hegel was later to build on and which in time ensured that his publishing house became not only the largest in Denmark, but was to be the biggest and most influential in all of Scandinavia.

The story of the transfer of the Norwegian authors was, however, not only related to the publishing house, it was also narrowly related to Frederik Hegel who was the third manager of Gyldendal. Hegel's personal story is the uncommon story of a poor boy who through luck and hard work managed to rise from a humble background and to become the most important publisher of his generation. Hegel was born a natural son of a young medical student in 1817. The name Hegel, he took from his stepfather a German cabinetmaker whom his mother had married.[108] At the age of twelve, Hegel, through the intermediation of his biological father, was sent to Copenhagen to attend school. From 1832, he was an apprentice at Gyldendal under Deichmann who, having no children himself, swiftly took to the boy and became like a second father to him.[109] In 1846, Deichmann passed on the responsibility for the book and paper shop that was part of the Gyldendal enterprise to Hegel, and in 1850 at the age of thirty-three Hegel

[104] Aleks Frøland, *Bøger, Bogsalg, Boghandlere, Omkring 1875* (København: Forening for Boghaandværk, 1969), p. 109ff.
[105] DBL, 'Søren Gyldendal'.
[106] DBL, 'Jacob Deichmann'.
[107] C. Nyrup, 'Deichmann, Jacob', *Dansk Biografisk Lexikon*, iv (København: Gyldendalske Boghandels Forlag (F. Hegel & Søn)), 240–41.
[108] L Nielsen, *Frederik V. Hegel: Hans Forgængere Og Slægt, Vol I* (København: Fr. Bagges Bogtrykkeri, 1909), p. 165.
[109] Ibid., p. 172.

took over the entire publishing house.[110] After Deichmann's death in 1853, Hegel sold off the paper business and concentrated on the bookshop and especially publishing.

Since the time of Deichmann the bookshop had specialised in the import of foreign books that were then distributed across Scandinavia, but this was a trade in decline as more and more booksellers in Denmark, Norway and Sweden traded directly with the foreign book markets.[111] Consequently, it proved to be a sound strategy when Hegel focused increasingly on the publishing side of the business from the mid-1850s, first in collaboration with other Danish publishers, but towards the end of the decade he operated increasingly on his own. The late 1850s was a time of change in the Danish publishing business. The influential Danish publisher C.A. Reitzel (1789-1853), who had published all the major Danish authors of the first part of the century, died and his business had stagnated under the management of his heirs.[112] From the time that Hegel took over Gyldendal, the house increasingly succeeded in the field of *belles-lettres*, which had previously secured Reitzel's leading position.[113] To Gyldendal under the management of Hegel it was not only Norwegian authors like Ibsen, Bjørnson, Lie and Kielland who provided the basis for the expansion, but also many of the new Danish authors who became associated with Georg Brandes' 'modern breakthrough' in the period after 1870 and who chose Hegel as their publisher.[114]

Why would Hegel publish Ibsen?

Despite the fact that Ibsen's plays proved to be a success, at the outset it was by no means certain that it should turn out in that way. The question is why Hegel, who was known to be a very cautious publisher, was inclined to take a chance on Ibsen's *Brand* in the first place? That Hegel should choose to take on Ibsen's play, and not least without reading it, must first of all be seen in the light of the good experiences he had had with publishing Bjørnson's plays and peasant stories, which had proved successful in Denmark. That Hegel, however, was a cautious publisher can be seen from the fact that he did not publish Bjørnson without first being well acquainted with the sales possibilities of the young Norwegian author. Thus, Bjørnson was not only directed to Hegel through the mediation of Petersen, Hegel had also had Bjørnson's novel *Synøve Solbakke* in commission in his bookshop when it was first published by a Norwegian publisher in 1857. Only then, after careful testing, did he decide to accept to publish Bjørnson himself.[115] With Ibsen, however, it must also be remembered that as an author he was no longer completely green. When he was first put in contact with Hegel he had already experienced a fair share of success, even though it had not yet made him widely known outside his home

[110] Ibid., p. 180.
[111] Tveterås p. 366.
[112] DBL: 'C.A. Reitzel'; Frøland, p. 114.
[113] Tveterås p. 367.
[114] DBL: 'F.V. Hegel'.
[115] Tveterås, p. 39.

country. Especially the play which preceded *Brand*, *The Pretenders* (1863), had been granted a fair share of success in Norway, and it was undoubtedly a play like that which Hegel hoped for when he accepted to publish Ibsen's next play. In the aforementioned letter in which he discovered that *Brand* was not the historical play for which he hoped, it is evident form the draft of the letter that Hegel struggled with the exact phrasing. In the draft he initially wrote that he was led to believe that the play concerned 'Norway's older h[istory],' but changed it to the more general 'a far remote era'.[116] Hegel's initial phrasing undoubtedly expressed the topic which he desired for, but he must have changed it once he realised that the information that he had been given had been inaccurate.

The fact that Hegel wished for a historical drama is revealing of his motivation for publishing Ibsen. As a genre, the historical drama was nothing if not well tested. Hegel may even have had something like Ibsen's early play *The Feast at Solhough* (1856) in mind when he offered to publish his next drama. *The Feast at Solhough* was at the time the only one of Ibsen's plays that had yet been performed in Denmark. In the Danish press the play was claimed to be modelled on a play by the Danish author Henrik Hertz (1797-1870), a dramatist of the former generation, which shows not only the aesthetically backward-looking connotations of Ibsen's plays, but that of the genre in general. Hegel's wish for a historical play must therefore be seen as a preference for a conservative genre, something which would counterbalance the risk that he had to run by publishing a Norwegian author. The import of Ibsen's play was, from the publishing point of view, not conceived of with an adventurous enterprise or to attempt something aesthetically new. Rather, it must be seen as Hegel's attempt to import something safe, something which he thought would merge seamlessly with the governing Danish taste. That *Brand* turned out to be something other than what he had wished for may have been Hegel's luck, yet it did not change Hegel's initial motivation for transferring Ibsen's plays.

As Ibsen's middleman in Denmark Hegel was without doubt the most important to him. Hegel was not only Ibsen's publisher from the time his first play came out in Denmark, he also functioned as Ibsen's banker, taking care of financial transactions and investments and occasionally helping him negotiate with Danish theatres (see Chapter 3). From their initial contact in 1865 until Hegel's death in 1887, when his son Jacob took over the company, there was a constant correspondence between Ibsen and his publisher. As they did not meet in person until the summer of 1870, when Ibsen visited Copenhagen, the first time since he had passed through the city on his way to Rome in 1864, the correspondence became the vital link between them, and it gives a fascinating insight into the business that was Ibsen's playwriting.[117] For Ibsen, however, the correspondence was more than a mere exchange of business information; it was one of the ways in which he was informed of matters in Copenhagen, and Hegel would for instance send him the latest reviews of his plays. The correspondence with Hegel was also a stepping stone for Ibsen, a way to establish connections in Copenhagen, and, thus, Ibsen used

[116] Draft letter: Hegel to Ibsen 23 November 1865.
[117] Ivo Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen: Masken* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2007), p. 56.

correspondence to seek the acquaintance of Danes he wished to know. This was the case, for instance,with the Danish critic Georg Brandes. He would also send greetings, through Hegel, to people whose goodwill he hoped to attain, like the influential Danish critic of the 1860s Clemens Petersen, as we shall see in the next chapter.

A publishing success

The success that Ibsen experienced as an author in Scandinavia can perhaps best be grasped through the development in the publication numbers of his plays from Gyldendal. If one looks at the print runs for the individual plays in the year following the publication one sees clearly how Ibsen's plays gained an ever increasing number of readers as his career progressed, until the first print runs following *Pillars of Society* stabilised around 10,000 copies. Many of the earlier plays, which were published in smaller editions, required multiple print runs already in the first year. Initially, both *Brand* (1866) and *Peer Gynt* (1867) were published in 1,250 copies, but *Brand* required three more editions in the first year alone, bringing it to 3,000 copies.[118] By the *League of Youth* (1869) the initial print run had reached 2,000 copies, followed immediately by a second run of 1,500, and by the early 1870s both Ibsen's *Poems* (1871) and *Emperor and Galilean* (1873) had first editions of 4,000 copies.[119] With the emergence of the so-called problem plays, the publication numbers began to increase rapidly. *Pillars of Society* (1877) was published in two editions of 10,000 the first year, *A Doll's House* in 13,500 in three impressions in 1879-1880 and *Ghosts* (1881) came out in an unprecedented first edition of 10,000 copies.[120] As we shall see later, the scandal which followed in the wake of *Ghosts* ensured that much of the large print run was left un-sold, yet it did not hamper the sale of Ibsen's plays in the long-run. From the publication of *Ghosts* to Ibsen's last play, *When We Dead Awaken* (1899), all plays came in first editions of between 8,000 and 12,000 copies.[121]

Yet, Ibsen's success cannot solely be measured on the basis of the size of the print run of his latest plays. Ibsen's earlier plays continued to be a valuable asset both to Ibsen and his publishers, and most of them were reprinted many times. In order to stimulate the public interest in Ibsen's earlier work, Hegel devised a principle according to which each publication of a new play was to be followed by the publication of one of Ibsen's former plays.[122] In this way, after five years with Hegel Ibsen had no less than thirteen editions published even though he had only published four new works. The thirteen new editions were therefore publications of the

[118] Helbøll, p. 'Bogførte honorarbeløb' p. 1.
[119] Ibid. p. 2.
[120] Ibid. p.2-3.
[121] Ibid. p. 2-3.
[122] Letter: Ibsen to J.H. Thoresen 10 November 1873.

four new plays, the re-publication of these and two of Ibsen's earlier plays that had been published in Norway and to which Hegel had managed to obtain the copyrights.[123]

A crucial part of the continuation of the strategy which involved bringing Ibsen's entire work under Gyldendal's control was to obtain the copyright to Ibsen's early plays. At times this proved difficult, as it was unclear who owned the rights of the early plays, which had been published under various conditions. Often Ibsen had often merely made a spoken agreement with the publishers and had been paid a lump sum when a play was published. It was highly unusual that plays were re-published and, thus, the agreements Ibsen had made did not extend to a mutual understanding of who had the rights to the play in the event of a second print run. As Ibsen's plays proved successful in Denmark, and he hoped to have his older works published at Gyldendal, conflict with some Norwegian publishers threatened to emerge as the sense of the value of Ibsen's early plays became evident. In most cases the matter was settled peacefully, usually through Hegel's acquisition of what remained in stock of the original print run, and only in one instance did it lead to a legal case. This was in the case of the republishing of the plays *The Vikings of Helgeland* and *Lady Inger*, which had originally appeared in *Illustreret Nyhedsblad* and turned into a long legal process, which Ibsen eventually won.[124] He had by then, however, revised the two plays and re-released them himself with Gyldendal.[125]

[123] Tveterås, p. 194 ff.
[124] Narve Fulsås and Ståle Dingstad, 'Innledning (HIS 13k)', in *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter* (Oslo: Aschehoug, 2005), pp. 11–112 (pp. 93–101).
[125] Fulsås and Dingstad, p. 95.

Chapter 2: Positioning in the cultural field

Ibsen had his Scandinavian breakthrough with the play *Brand*. The play came out at what was a critical time in his career, when he had given up practical theatre work and had left Norway to live in Rome. The importance of *Brand* to Ibsen's career should not be underestimated, as to a large extent it was this play that first made his name known to Scandinavian readers.

In this chapter I pose the question, how Ibsen's first work was placed in the Danish cultural field? In order to understand the transfer of Ibsen's plays to Denmark, it helps to have an understanding of how *Brand* is placed in relation to the history of Danish literature. At a glance, the importance of *Brand* is easily overlooked as it is overshadowed by the success of Ibsen's later works. What further complicates the attempt to gauge the importance of the drama is the fact that the dominant aesthetical ideals of the time became overshadowed as well, by the advent of the huge realist/naturalist movement known as the 'modern breakthrough', which emerged in Scandinavia shortly after. Yet, the argument that I wish to advance is that *Brand* played a crucial role not only in the transfer of Ibsen's works to Denmark, but in Ibsen's career in general, as it was with *Brand* and his association with the Danish publishing house Gyldendal that Ibsen achieved the financial independence to work as an autonomous author. The aim of this chapter is therefore to investigate the transfer of *Brand* based on how it was initially placed in the Danish field of literature, and thereby to stress the import of this early transfer, even though the field was about to undergo a dramatic change. I investigate the placing in the field from the perspective of agency, rather than to place the work in relation to other works at the time. Thus, my focus is on the actions that Ibsen actively undertook in the attempt to secure a position in the field.

Though one may speak of the transfer in strictly aesthetical terms, there was a strand in the reception and thereby in the integration in the field of literature which dealt with the issue of the literature's national affiliation. The transfer of Ibsen's plays and that of other Norwegian authors at the time, most notably Bjørnson, from a Danish perspective was seen as an import into a deeply nationalised field, namely that of the national literature. The fact that the literature was thought of in national terms represented an obstacle to the transfer, which demanded some kind of processing to overcome. As a cultural space, Denmark was not foreign to the concept of cultural import. Franco Moretti's study on the European novel has shown that Denmark was a very open cultural field when it came to the import of foreign cultural products.[126] Yet, the transfer of the Norwegian authors to Denmark did present a special case due to the close historical and linguistic ties. The Norwegian authors, it seems, entered into direct competition with the Danish authors in a way that imported and translated literature did not. Thus, one may see the various framings of literature, depending on the different imagined communities, as ways of mediating or softening the boundaries between the national literatures proper. In Scandinavia, Scandinavianism proved a way of mediating culturally between the Scandinavian

[126] Moretti.

countries, and as such, it was a notion which made the obstacle associated with national boundaries easier to overcome.

Placing Brand in the field of literature: a historiographical problem

One of the problems which face an investigation of *Brand*'s integration in the cultural field is to come to terms with the aesthetical ideals which governed the field at the time. Partly, this is a historiographical problem. The reason is that in the history of literature the period 1850-1860, at least in a Danish/Scandinavian context, has been placed between what have become two very distinct periods, each of which have been seen to feature individual characteristic aesthetical ideals; namely romanticism and naturalism. There is a tendency of literary history to consider the middle of the century, the period where the heyday of romanticism was long gone and naturalism had not yet emerged, to have been dominated by a kind of watered-down romanticism.[127] The problem of describing the time in that manner is, however, that it is anachronistic to the extent that it is determined by what preceded it and what came after, in other words, what it failed to be, and in that way overlooks the innovation and the power of attraction that the art of the time exerted in the eye of contemporaries.

This problem has in various ways been brought to attention in resent research. In *Henrik Ibsen the Birth of Modernism*, Toril Moi points out that the middle of the nineteenth century had its own aesthetical current, namely, what she choose to call 'aesthetical idealism'.[128] Aesthetical idealism, Moi claims, has been overlooked in the Ibsen research. While this may be true for the Anglophone literature, it is not a just assessment of Scandinavian Ibsen research. An important contribution to understanding the aesthetical basis for the initial Ibsen reception can already be found in Christer Westling's *Idealismens Estetik* [The Aesthetics of Idealism], in which Westling conducts a thorough investigation of what Moi claims to discover. Notwithstanding their differences, the two studies point to the same problem facing the research. Westling explains in his study how it was initially supposed to investigate the Scandinavian reviews of Ibsen's *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, but how he became aware of the intricate yet inexplicit conceptual framework, which governed critics' reception.

> In order to understand the Nordic critic's responses to Henrik Ibsen's verse drama correctly one must know that at the time when these were first published there existed a rather specific understanding of aesthetical matters, an art doctrine that, though it was not practiced by all critics, never had its core values called into question. Just a few years later this consensus had been utterly forgotten.[129]

[127] The latest multi-volume standard work on Danish literary history claims: 'The years between the defeat in 1864 and Georg Brandes lecture on the main currents [of European literature] in 1871 makes up a vacuum in Danish literary history.' in Klaus Mortensen, *Dansk Litteraturs Historie, Vol II, 1800-1870*. (København: Gyldendal, 2008), p. 594.
[128] Moi.
[129] Westling, p. 12.

Westling relates how this discovery made him change the scope of his research to an investigation of the origin of the conceptual framework which governed the reviews. In the study, he traces the origin of the framework, or the 'art doctrine', back to German idealism, but shows at the same time how some of the concepts changed in the process. In this way he shows that one cannot return to the texts of German idealism and assume that the concepts have retained their original significance. Though Westling approaches the subject from a different perspective than the present thesis, he nevertheless points to some of the problems connected with the task at hand. One of the problems is the unfamiliarity of the conceptual framework to modern readers. Some of the conflicts sprang from what with modern eyes may seem trivial causes, but viewed from the perspective of the framework became of first importance. Most noteworthy, as we shall see later in the case of Ibsen, was the question what qualified as a 'poem' or 'poetic' (digt), which was the key term used for written art proper, and consequently who qualified to be a 'poet' (digter). Though the concept itself was rarely debated as such the instances in which it could be applied was often highly contested. This in turn led to the abovementioned change that the central concepts underwent, and to the related problem that not all critics subscribed to the idealist aesthetics in the same way. Westling does, however, stress that the idealistic framework made up a common foundation despite individual differences.

> The aesthetical aesthetic was at the middle of the century hardly a school in the sense that it competed with other distinct schools. A competitor worthy of the name did not exist, and to the extent that disagreement arose between critics the Germanic university tradition worked more like a higher institution lifted above the everyday disagreements. People like Monrad, Petersen and Brandes [Danish critics] could, therefore, think of themselves as enemies in spite of the fact that they occupied a common ground.[130]

Though Westling may be right when he claims that the critics all occupied a common ground when it came to the ideational background of their aesthetics, one must remember that most critics nonetheless sought to differentiate their positions in the cultural field. Their internal differences were, therefore, in no way cancelled out by a common theoretical background, as Westling's claim seems to suggest, rather, the disagreements moved to other areas where position taking was possible. Thus, I think that it is of prime importance to note that although Clemens Petersen ultimately may have relied on the aesthetics developed by Heiberg, it did not stop him from creating his own position in opposition to Heiberg by insisting on the infusion of the ethical dimension into the aesthetics of the Danish authority.

Norwegian authors: filling the void of Danish literature?

In the cultural transfer literature, which favours the vantage point of the receiving culture, one finds the notion that the origin of transfer stems from an experience of 'a lack', as the basis of

[130] Ibid., p. 202.

the openness which gave rise to an active effort to import and appropriate foreign material. It is, however, not only in the transfer theory that such a notion of a lack exists, and one can find voices that expressed the exact same idea in Denmark, at the time when Ibsen and the other Norwegian authors' works were first published. In the case of the Norwegian authors in Denmark, the notion originated from what was perceived to be a general decline in Danish literature, which followed what was perceived as a particularly pregnant period at the beginning of the century. The decline, they claimed, left a vacuum which created the openness that led to the import of Norwegian literature. As we shall see in the following pages, one of the contemporary critics even explained this in terms which closely resemble those found in the various theories of cultural transfer.

One of the places one finds the question of the import of Norwegian literature raised was in the first major article on Ibsen published in January 1867 in the Danish magazine *Illustreret Tidende*. The prominent article, which took up the entire front page and featured Ibsen's portrait, was written by Adolf Falkman (1837-1903) one of the less influential critics of the time.[131] The article was not only an affirmation of Ibsen's new found success in Denmark, but is particularly interesting because it sought to explain it, by pointing to what it claimed was the general decline of Danish literature. The article was written after Ibsen's breakthrough with *Brand*, but as the article considered the general transfer of Norwegian authors it must also be read in light of the considerable success which Bjørnson had experienced since his first introduction in Denmark. Notwithstanding Bjørnson's earlier success, it is surprising to see the rapidity with which the recent success of Ibsen, added to that of Bjørnson, was turned into a manifest concept of a 'wave of Norwegian literature'. That the literary field was indeed a very national field can be seen from the need to explain the recent influx of Norwegian authors. Yet, it should be noted that the article at the same time operated with a notion of a common Danish-Norwegian cultural sphere. Though it was never mentioned directly in the article, the underlying premise was that the principal authors in the literary field by default were Danes. Thus, the article and its notion of transfer must be read from this perspective as an attempt to explain why Norwegian authors made their entry into the Danish literary field.

In his article, Falkman used the concept 'horor vacui' to explain the transfer of the Norwegians. For 'horror vacui' was, he claimed, a concept which not only applied to physics, but which applied to literature as well.

> There exists also in other fields besides that of nature a similar 'fear of the empty', or if one prefers: an urge to seek and a desire to seek replacement for that, which is in decline, or the lack of which one starts to feel.[132]

[131] John Chr Jørgensen, *Det danske anmelderis historie: den litterære anmeldelses opståen og udvikling 1720-1906* (København: Fisker & Schou, 1994), p. 225.
[132] Adolf Falkman, 'Henrik Ibsen', *Illustreret Tidende*, 27 January 1867, p. 139.

Given the concept of 'horror vacui' Falkman set about explaining why Danish literature was in a void:

> There was a time not long ago when we Danes in the field of aesthetic writing experienced a more lively flourishing than perhaps any country, so narrowly confined in space, has ever experienced before in such a short time – Greece excepted. But it was unlikely that Denmark in the second part of the century could continue to yield such lustrous crops, and so it came to be that the old [authors] were aging and passed away, and that the new [authors] could not fully replace them.[133]

The narrative that Falkman constructed was, in other words, one of general decline. The great artists of the previous generation had grown old and the younger generation had not managed to fill the void. Though a somewhat controversial statement with regard to the contemporary generation of Danish authors, whom he dismissed *en bloc*, Falkman was more concerned with explaining why one could no longer be content with reading the authors of the previous generation: 'Even the most perfectly beautiful fails to give pleasure when one forever returns to it', he argued. The phrase the 'perfectly beautiful' may have been read as a synonym for the pinnacle of literary production, it is, however, just as likely that it was a blow aimed at the beauty-seeking aesthetic formalism practiced by the former generation. Although, by stressing that literature was bound to its time, Falkman was in fact in perfect accordance with Heiberg, who had himself stressed that art was bound to its own time.[134]

Falkman's article was, however, not merely a description of how the Danish field of literature was in decline, it was also a confirmation of a beginning reorientation of the field. The Norwegian authors represented 'something new', Falkman claimed, and as such were a breach with the earlier Danish literature.

> And yet it was something different which now emerged, [more] than just a continuation of that which was disappearing, it was more than a coincidence that the works of poetry in the common Danish-Norwegian language came from Norway; the [Danish] literature took truly with them a new step, and that step, that it was in due time and place to make.[135]

The step, as Falkman saw it, was a departure from the ideals of the paragons of literature, especially Johan Ludvig Heiberg, whose aesthetic formalism insisted on arts idealisation of the world focused on beauty (the perfectly beautiful), and towards a more ethical oriented literature. It was in taking this step that the new Norwegian authors played their part in the common literature, by supplying that something of which Danish literature had been in need:

> It was generally necessary to introduce more realism into life, and in life's perfect mirror: art and poetry; the one-sided advance of the maxim of beauty, which leads to weakness and unfitness, needed to join company with the concept of morality.[136]

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[133] Ibid.
[134] Frederik Schyberg, *Dansk Teaterkritik Indtil 1914.* (København: Gyldendalske boghandel nordisk forlag, 1937), p. 164.
[135] Falkman, 'Henrik Ibsen', p. 140.
[136] Ibid.

The overall argument that Falkman presented was therefore not only concerned with Norwegian authors replacing the former generation of Danish authors, but that they facilitated a much needed reorientation of the aesthetic field, by parting with the aesthetic formalism of Heiberg's generation, and working towards a more ethical oriented literature. Falkman's description of the new step in Danish literature was, however, not his own invention, but was in perfect accordance with the criticism Petersen had levelled at the former generation, as we shall see in the following.

Ibsen and the critics: finding literary patronage

Finding a 'patron' was to Ibsen a question of finding somebody who could help him to create a name in the Danish field of letters. Ibsen's attempt to find patronage was not only an attempt to find somebody who could provide his plays with good reviews but was, ultimately, a matter of securing a position in the field. This chapter focuses on Ibsen's two attempts to find a patron in the Danish cultural field. The first was Ibsen's attempt to secure Clemens Petersen's patronage, an attempt which failed. The second was Ibsen's generally more successful, yet not wholly uncomplicated, alliance with Georg Brandes, the scholar and critic, who more than anybody came to be Ibsen's spokesman in Denmark. As a Norwegian author in Denmark, Ibsen followed in the footsteps of Bjørnson. Some of Bjørnson's easy transition to Denmark may well be ascribed to the support that he received through his friendship with the Danish critic Clemens Petersen. When Ibsen attempted to emulate Bjørnson by appealing to Petersen it ultimately failed. The break which subsequently followed led not only to the loss of the support which Petersen could have offered, but it also spelled the end of Ibsen and Bjørnson's friendship, and the tentative alliance that they had formed in the field of culture.

Ibsen's attempt to obtain Petersen's patronage was, of course, a matter of securing a position in the Danish world of letters, something for which he must have strived for at least since he submitted his first play to the Royal Theatre. Securing Petersen's goodwill, however, would not only have ensured easy access to the Danish market. Due to the already described relationship between the Danish and Norwegian book markets, and their literary fields in general, Petersen's influence as a critic extended to the Norwegian field of culture as well as the Danish one. Ibsen's attempt at success in Denmark would, therefore, also increase his prestige at home. Ibsen's efforts to secure Petersen's patronage should, therefore, be seen as an attempt to gain the prestige which followed from Petersen's approval in Denmark as well as Norway. Yet, another factor could be that Ibsen longed for recognition by what he thought was a more receptive critic than those that wrote in the Norwegian papers.

In order to understand the positions available in the field when Ibsen attempted to find literary patronage, one must suspend any knowledge of the modern breakthrough the occurrence of which was to recast the positions of the cultural field anew only a few years later. Above, we

saw that Falkman claimed that Danish literature was in decline and urged that a new literature was needed. The position that he sketched as the emerging paradigm was that of an ethical literature, represented by the Norwegian authors. That was in January 1867. In the period leading up to the publication of *Brand*, the certainty of the Norwegian position was not yet a fact. At that time, only one emerging position existed, namely that of Bjørnson, who, assisted by Petersen, was the main force in the clamour for a new ethical literature. Bjørnson, and even more so Petersen, may be said to have aimed at creating the new dominant position in the field, something which meant overthrowing the hegemony of the Heibergian aesthetic idealism. It is in this light that one must see Ibsen's angling for Petersen's patronage, as Ibsen would have been aware of Petersen's increasing power in the field.

Clemens Petersen

Clemens Petersen's career as a critic was exceptional. It began in 1856 when he was only 22 years old and within two years he had climbed to be the chief critic at *Fædrelandet*, the leading cultural newspaper of the time. At the height of his career, Petersen was perhaps the most influential critic in Denmark. Known to be severe in his reviews, he was hated and feared as few Danish critics before him.[137] Yet, despite his startling ascend in the cultural hierarchy and the position he achieved as the nation's chief critic, his career ended abruptly. In 1869, he was caught up in a homosexual scandal involving some of the students at the school where he worked, and from there, his downfall was complete. Following the scandal, Petersen fled the country and never again worked as a critic in Denmark. Soon every memory of the once great critic was repressed. Georg Brandes, who to some extent took over Petersen's position in cultural life, never mentioned him, and when, many years later, he referred to him in his autobiography, it was in passing and without name, only as the critic of *Fædrelandet*.[138] In 1904, when Petersen returned to Denmark, having spent the last twenty-seven years in America, he had long been forgotten.

Petersen owed his position in the cultural field to his work as a critic at *Fædrelandet*, where he worked in the period 1856-1869. The paper had been one of the main forces clamouring for a democratic constitution in the 1840s, and in the fifties and sixties rose to be the chief paper for the political and cultural elite.[139] As a critic Petersen was very productive, during the sixties he wrote more than one hundred and fifty reviews of literature and two hundred of theatrical performances.[140] His prominent position at the newspaper, and the emphasis that was placed on cultural matters, was reflected by the fact that his longer reviews were printed as the main feature on the front page. Furthermore, Petersen was one of the first Danish critics who, rather

[137] Schyberg, p. 218.
[138] Ibid., p. 217.
[139] Jørgensen, p. 190.
[140] Ibid.

than to write anonymous reviews, habitually signed his work and thereby took personal responsibility for his often controversial points of view. This praxis undoubtedly helped in creating his personal position within the cultural field, but it also earned him a number of enemies.

In his youth, Petersen had aspired to become an actor and his ambition brought him as far as the stage of the Royal Theatre, but after an unfortunate start he gave up his ambition. His time at the theatre was not wasted, however, as it opened the eye of Johan Ludvig Heiberg to his potential as a theatre critic. Thus, Heiberg encouraged Petersen early on to continue his work with theatre, but as a critic, and it was Petersen who was later to attack the very aesthetical position which Heiberg stood for. After his failed attempt to become an actor, Petersen returned to study aesthetics at the University of Copenhagen. Here he attended lectures by Carsten Hauch (1790-1872) who held the only chair in aesthetics. Hauch was to replace Heiberg as censor at the Royal Theatre and was one of the most fervent adherents of Heiberg's aesthetics. After Clemens graduated in 1857, he started as a critic at *Fædrelandet* and in 1859 began to write for the new magazine *Illustreret Tidende*. During the first years of his work as a critic, Petersen was associated with Heiberg's school of aesthetics, but soon established his own position in opposition to Heiberg's. After Heiberg's death in 1860, Petersen was increasingly critical of the emphasis that the aesthetical formalists placed on the rules governing the aesthetical production, the aesthetic form and the emblematic representation. Thus, in his own reviews, he placed a greater emphasis on the subject of the artistic production and on the ethical dimension. To Petersen, formalism had turned the dramatic arts into elegant showpieces, and in that way separated art from life in what he considered to be a dishonest fashion that excluded the ethical dimension.[141]

It was significant for Petersen's legacy that he did not manage to create an aesthetic school in the same way as Heiberg had before him and as Brandes would do after his fall. One of the reasons why he did not succeed in this respect could be because he never produced any major texts that could work as points of reference, nor did he attempt any theoretical presentation of his standpoint. Thus, Petersen's influence in the field of letters was closely connected to his reviews in *Fædrelandet* and to his personal engagement in the field, and when he left Denmark this influence was dispelled. By the time that he left, he had only published two books: a collection of reviews (1860), and a study on Danish poet Adam Oehlenschläger (1867). At the time of his departure, however, Petersen was involved in a project which might have further fortified his position. Together with the Danish philosopher Rasmus Nielsen (1809-1884) he was about to launch the magazine *For Ide og Virkelighed* [For Idea and Reality], but Petersen's departure put an end to his participation in the project, and Bjørnson was rushed in to take over his position on the editorial board.[142]

[141] Schyberg, p. 231ff.
[142] Ibid., p. 225.

Seen in the context of his oeuvre, one must remember that at the time when Ibsen sought to win Petersen's favour, Petersen was at the height of his career, and there was nothing which indicated his immediate downfall. To Ibsen, the standpoint which Petersen occupied in the field must have seemed attractive, not least as they both had an interest in the ethically oriented literature at the time *Brand* that was published. Besides, it also seems only natural that Ibsen should seek Petersen's support, as Petersen was the main alternative to the Heibergian school of aesthetics, to which many, if not all, of the conservative critics could be said to subscribe. That Ibsen could await no support from the conservatively oriented critics was plain, something to which the continual rejection of his plays at the Royal Theatre bore witness. Heiberg had himself been the theatre's censor, and his unfavourable censorship report on Ibsen's *The Vikings at Hegleland* had been included in the collection of Heiberg's *Prosaic Writings* that came out after his death, and which enabled readers to read the authority's rejection of the play.[143] Another major reason why Ibsen must have felt attracted to Petersen's project was that he would have seen what Bjørnson's friendship with Petersen had meant for his career as an author. This may, not least on a personal level, account for the importance which Ibsen in the late 1860s attributed to Petersen's opinion.

Ibsen, Bjørnson, and Petersen

Why Petersen must be regarded as one of the central people in the early transfer of Ibsen's plays is not only due to the role he played in connection with the transfer of Bjørnson's work, which can be said to have paved the way for Ibsen, but also because Ibsen himself singled Petersen out as the critic whose favour he was most intent on winning. That Ibsen attached a special significance to Petersen is, among other things, evident from Ibsen's letters to Hegel. As Ibsen's contact in Copenhagen, Ibsen would often include greetings in his letters, which he would ask Hegel to pass on, and in the period 1866-1867 Ibsen's letters to Hegel were filled with greetings to Petersen, despite Ibsen barely knowing him. But as we have seen, Ibsen sought Petersen's favour with good reason. In the 1860s, when Petersen was at the height of his career, he represented a new beginning in Danish literature, an emerging project within which Ibsen must have been able to see his own work.

Ibsen and Petersen's personal relationship can at best be described as peripheral. They met only once, in the Spring of 1864, when Ibsen passed through Copenhagen on his way to Rome, and the meeting, it seems, did not lead to any real understanding between them.[144] In the same way the correspondence between them amounted to no more than four letters on Ibsen's behalf. Petersen's letters to Ibsen have been lost, but it is unlikely that he even sent that many. If there nevertheless was a connection between them which exceeded the purely nominal relationship

[143] Johan Ludvig Heiberg, *Prosariske Skrifter*, 7 (København: Reitzel, 1861), p. 401.
[144] Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen: Mennesket*, p. 276.

between author and critic, it was due their mutual friendship with Bjørnson. Thus, in order to fully appreciate the relationship that nonetheless existed one must turn to Bjørnson and his correspondence with Ibsen on the one hand, and Petersen on the other. Yet, the fact that the connection between Ibsen and Petersen was mediated through Bjørnson, gave the relationship an asymmetrical dimension, as the relationship of Ibsen and Bjørnson would constantly influence the relationship between Ibsen and the critic.

Petersen had already reviewed some of Ibsen's plays before *Brand* was published in Denmark. His awareness of Ibsen's work was, of course, due to his friendship with Bjørnson, who had directed his attention to Ibsen's works in the early 1860s. When Ibsen was virtually unknown in Denmark, Petersen, therefore, had reviewed his plays, *Love's Comedy* when it came out in 1863 and *The Pretenders* the year later, when they were first published in Norway.[145] Petersen's early reviews were, however, in no way favourable, but they contained some praise, which, when it came from an authority such as Petersen, must have seemed attractive to Ibsen. Thus, Petersen's otherwise generally negative review of *Love's Comedy* ended with the statement that Ibsen was 'yet young and seemed to be richly gifted'.[146] The review of *The Pretenders* was even less of a recommendation; Petersen thoroughly disliked the play, and did not see any reason to praise Ibsen as a playwright on that occasion. Yet, despite his mixed review, Petersen did in fact recommended *Love's Comedy* to the Royal Theatre, but as we shall see later Petersen's recommendation did not carry much weight with the people in charge of the national stage.

Petersen's criticism, however, did not deter Ibsen from seeking to obtain Petersen's good opinion. Around the time of the publication of *Brand*, Ibsen seems to have been more convinced than ever of the importance of Petersen's reviews. Thus, Ibsen himself asked for Petersen's review of *Brand*, in one of his few letters to the critic.

> Your review will be crucial when it comes to my countrymen's conception of the poem and the truths that I could not withhold [...] The newspaper-writing-fingers, who do the criticism in Norway, do not understand [the play].[147] I, therefore, ask that you urgently support me both fast and strongly in the issues in which you feel that the cause and I deserve it.[148]

That Ibsen should ask Petersen for his support in this very straightforward manner, was because Bjørnson had promised him Petersen's help on previous occasions. That Petersen was inclined to help Ibsen seems to a large extent to be due to his friendship with Bjørnson. After the launch of the book, Petersen took up the question of his forthcoming review of *Brand*, in a letter to Bjørnson. The letter strongly implies that Petersen saw a positive review of Ibsen's play as a direct favour to Bjørnson. Accordingly, he presents Bjørnson with his objections to the play,

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[145] Review *Love's Comedy* in *Fædrelandet* 18 July 1863, Review *Pretenders* in *Fædrelandet* 2 April 1864
[146] Clemens Petersen: 'Review Love's Comedy' in *Fædrelandet* 18 July 1863
[147] 'Newspaper writing fingers', pars pro toto for the critics. I have made a literal translation, as the expression is unusual in Danish it was an uncommon choice of words.
[148] Letter: Ibsen to Petersen, 5 December 1865

but at the same time reassured him that he nevertheless intended to do what he could to further Ibsen's cause.

> Now that you have read Ibsen's poem, what do you think of it? I intend to review it before I leave and will exert myself to write something that can draw a wider public to his book and make it understandable to more people. Taken all in all, it is a difficult book to enjoy for besides its confused and hurried form, its content is at its core somewhat obscure.[149]

Petersen not only found the play's content obscure and difficult to comprehend, he had one further objection to *Brand*, and to all of Ibsen's previous plays: it was not poetry in the proper sense, but what he termed a 'critique', an instance of critical reflection rather than true art. According to Petersen, Ibsen was therefore not a 'poet' in the true sense of the word.

> I think, dear Bjørnson, that I am right in what I have never publicly said, but which has always been at the foundation of my reviews: he is not a poet, but a critic, his imagination gives rise to reflections, but not to plastic forms; his mind can analyse [differentiate], but cannot create ideas, his disposition is polemic, but not lucid and empathetically taken up with something. The same can be proven of *Brand*, which essentially is a critique and not poetry.[150]

Petersen reassured Bjørnson, however, that he did not intend to mention the fact that he thought that Ibsen's play was more 'critical reflexions' than poetry, and promised to publicly support Ibsen.

> You can, however, be quite easy. I shall be very gentle in my review and first and foremost I have a great respect for his quite uncommon intellect. In front of the public, I shall support him to the best of my abilities, and if you were here [Copenhagen] you would know that at present my capabilities are great. Yet, I cannot avoid writing in such a way that he himself will be furious, for he will understand what is omitted, and will know that at the core of what I write about him is a protest against it [the play] being poetry.[151]

It seems evident from Petersen's letter that he was inclined to help Ibsen, and even to set aside his aesthetic criticism in order to so. It is, however, equally evident that Petersen's help to a large extent was dependent on Ibsen's friendship with Bjørnson. Thus, the correspondence between Petersen and Bjørnson, and not least Petersen's pledge to support Ibsen in public despite his objections, reveals a strategic dimension to Petersen's reviews which had nothing to do with aesthetics.

What may have influenced Petersen's final review was the fact that Bjørnson wrote to Petersen describing in very strong words how he thoroughly loathed Ibsen's new play.[152] In Bjørnson's mind there was no doubt that '*Brand* was not poetry', and that Ibsen was 'no longer a poet'. Reading *Brand*, Bjørnson wrote, was 'sickening'; he had been unable to finish the book, and

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[149] Letter: Petersen to Bjørnson 30 March 1866 in Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, *Bjørnstjerne Bjørnsons Brevveksling Med Danske 1854-1874, Vol. II*, ed. by Øyvind Anker (København and Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 1972), pp. 107–109.

[150] Letter: Petersen to Bjørnson 30 March 1866 in Bjørnson, *Bjørnstjerne Bjørnsons Brevveksling Med Danske 1854-1874, Vol. II*, pp. 107–109.

[151] Ibid.

[152] Though written before the publication of the review, it is uncertain if he read the letter before writing the review.

only ‘leafed through to the ending’.[153] What had so greatly upset Bjørnson was what he took to be the play’s attack on religion, something which he saw strengthened in the fact that the book offered no reconciliation in the end. Bjørnson’s anger it seems was also rooted in a disappointment of the overall development in Ibsen’s latest work. ‘Had I been near Ibsen, this book could never had been [written]. And had I arrived at the time of its completion I should have said ‘this is enough, the topic is now all messed up; - but now give us the poem’ – then I am sure that he would have thrown it in the fire.’[154] In a postscript to his letter, Bjørnson, who had evidently calmed a little, now confessed that he no longer saw *Brand* as an attack on religion, yet the unsettled impression lingered as well as his discontent with the work. Despite his agitated state of mind, Bjørnson still urged Petersen to ‘...provide his [Ibsen’s] capabilities with the attention that seems to be his only goal.’[155] Bjørnson’s letter was written in the heat of the moment, yet the initial outrage and the subsequent disappointment all pointed towards underlying artistic differences. That he still urged Petersen to support Ibsen shows that the differences were still at a level where they could be put aside. Yet, as Ibsen’s success grew, and he acquired a position in the Danish field of literature, both Bjørnson and Ibsen became less prone to overlook the differences which separated them.

Petersen’s reviews

By the time Petersen’s review was finally published in *Fædrelandet* three weeks after *Brand* came out, he gave the play a somewhat tepid report. Petersen, as he had already confessed in his letter to Bjørnson, had clearly had difficulties in coming to terms with the work. Petersen’s review was not a review in the sense that he evaluated the play or poem as he called it; he only professed to try to give ‘an account of what this strange poem is all about’.[156] Though Petersen refrained from passing any conclusive judgment on the work as a whole, he here and there praised individual passages. In the review, he tried to extract the intellectual content of each act, and located the play’s main ‘idea’ in the credo of the main character, the priest Brand, after whom the play took its name. Petersen carried out this extraction of the ideas with much conviction and authority. Thus, it is Brand’s credo of ‘all or nothing’, which according to Petersen refers to man’s relationship to God, that is pivotal to the action of the play. In this way, Petersen followed the development of the idea from act to act, explaining how it all followed as a logical continuation of the prior, thus laying bare the internal machinery of the play.

That the play could be summed up in this way (as the workings of one underlying principle) was in Petersen’s opinion one of the shortcomings of the play. Towards the end of the review, Petersen, though in an indirect way, pronounced the judgement of the play, which he had

[153] Letter: Bjørnson to Petersen 30 March 1866.
[154] Ibid.
[155] Ibid.
[156] Clemens Petersen, ‘“Brand”, Et Dramatisk Digt Af Henrik Ibsen’, *Fædrelandet* (Copenhagen, 7 April 1866).

already mentioned to Bjørnson, namely that he saw it as a piece of critical reflection rather than a work of poetry. In Petersen's words the play was more 'conceptual' ('begreb') than it was 'pictorial' ('billede'), which in Petersen's vocabulary meant that the play was more akin to philosophy, with its explicit reflection, than to true art, as it lacked the crucial relationship to reality.[157] Judging from the way in which he follows the logic of the play, there can be little doubt that Petersen was fascinated with *Brand*, and we know from his confession to Bjørnson that he thought that Ibsen had an 'uncommon intellect'. The emphasis on the ideal content, and the way in which it is presented by Petersen, turned the review into an examination of a logical argument, where the ethical consequences of the 'all or nothing' was followed to its final consequence.

The conflict regarding whether or not Ibsen's plays were actually works of poetry, and which Petersen had anticipated already in his correspondence with Bjørnson, did not surface until the publication of Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*, which was Ibsen's next play. Where Ibsen had been quite content with Petersen's review of *Brand*, his review of *Peer Gynt* had the envisioned effect of disappointment.[158] Thus, the review not only ended Ibsen's aspirations to secure Petersen's patronage, but marked the beginning of the end for his friendship with Bjørnson.

Like *Brand*, Ibsen wrote *Peer Gynt* during his stay in Rome and it was published with Gyldendal on 14 November 1867. *Peer Gynt* generally received good reviews in Norway, in spite of the fact that is was widely read as a satire on Norwegian society. In Denmark, however, the reception was more tepid. To Ibsen, all of the lukewarm reviews may have been easier to swallow if it had not been for Petersen's review in *Fædrelandet* which left him furious. Ibsen's response to Petersen's review is infamous, as it is known from a letter that he wrote to Bjørnson the very same day that he read the review. What angered Ibsen was exactly as Petersen had anticipated, that in his review he suggested that *Peer Gynt* was not poetry. In his letter to Bjørnson, Ibsen objected: 'My book *is* poetry; and if it is not, then it will be. The conception of poetry in our country, in Norway, shall be made to conform to the book.'[159]

Petersen's reason for rejecting *Peer Gynt* as poetry was the same as those he had implied in his review of *Brand*, namely, that it was a product more of intellectual reflexion, than it managed to create an imagery which was vivid in its own right. The relationship between Petersen and Bjørnson was such that Ibsen could not help but to see Bjørnson as partly responsible for Petersen's review. In the letter he continued:

[157] Ibid.
[158] Letter: Ibsen to Petersen 9 March 1867.
[159] Letter: Ibsen to Bjørnson 9-10 December 1867. Translated in Henrik Ibsen, *The Correspondence of Henrik Ibsen*, ed. by Mary Morison (New York: Haskell House Publishers, 1970), p. 145.

> If I were in Copenhagen, and someone there was as great a friend of mine as Clemens Petersen is of yours, I would have thrashed the life out of him before I would have permitted him to commit such an intentional crime against truth and justice.[160]

Though Ibsen tried to assure him of the contrary, it is evident that he partly held Bjørnson responsible for Petersen's review. In Norway, Bjørnson had himself written a not unfriendly review of *Peer Gynt* in a Norwegian, but to Ibsen this was of less consequence. In his letter to Bjørnson, Ibsen hinted that Norwegian readers would also see a connection between Bjørnson and Petersen's review, in spite of Bjørnson's own review. Though Ibsen seemingly made up with Bjørnson over the course of their next few letters, his disappointment with the review in the long-run affected his friendship with Bjørnson.[161]

Although Ibsen's anger was a personal sentiment, and as such can be said to have only marginal interest to an investigation of the transfer of his plays, it nevertheless reflected his difficult situation at the level of the field of literature. The anger may be interpreted as a logical response to Petersen's rejection of his play, not least generated by the esteem in which he held Petersen as a critic, and the high expectation he had had to what his support could do for him and his career as an author. Petersen's review of *Peer Gynt* did, however, put a final end to that hope. According to Westling who has dealt with the question of Petersen's rejection of Ibsen's play from the perspective of aesthetics, Petersen had no more reason to reject Ibsen's plays than the plays of Bjørnson. Thus, he claims that the rejection of *Peer Gynt* was founded more on favouritism than on the aesthetical ideals of the time, though he stresses that the reasons Petersen used to refute Ibsen's plays, of course, were found within the conceptual framework of aesthetical idealism.[162] The claim that Ibsen's plays was not poetry is, according to Westling, not as demoting, from the perspective of aesthetic idealism, as it may seem to later readers, as the task for the idealistic critic was to judge what was poetry and what was not. Petersen defined the poetic as 'reality transformed into art', in the sense that the ideal must be expressed in the poetic work. This is the point where *Peer Gynt*, according to Westling, fell short in terms of Petersen's aesthetics. There was no 'ideal' expressed in *Peer Gynt*, and the whole work was, therefore, thought un-poetic.[163]

By pure chance, Ibsen's break with Petersen did not have any effect on Ibsen's possibilities in Denmark, as Petersen's position in the field was obliterated after his scandal, which followed in spring of 1869. Petersen wrote only one article in which he mentioned Ibsen after the break, where he continued the line present in his earlier review, namely, a promotion of Bjørnson and a relegation of the works of Ibsen to a level distinctly under those of his favorite.[164] More importantly for Ibsen, his break with Petersen forced him to reorient himself and look for other

[160] Letter: Ibsen to Bjørnson 9-10 December 1867. Translated in Ibsen, *The Correspondence of Henrik Ibsen* p. 145.
[161] Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen: Mennesket*, p. 347.
[162] Westling, p. 169.
[163] Ibid., p. 170.
[164] Ibid., pp. 182-183.

allies in the field, and it is in this light that one must see his burgeoning friendship with the young critic Georg Brandes, the very person who was to become Ibsen's chief interpreter.

Georg Brandes

While Clemens Petersen is today a relatively unknown figure in the course of Danish literary history, Georg Morris Cohen Brandes (1841-1924) has gone down in history as the initiator of the 'modern breakthrough' and the greatest Danish critic of the nineteenth century. Where Petersen only concerned himself with Danish or Scandinavian matters, Georg Brandes was a critic with a European outlook. He participated not only in Scandinavian literary debates, but also in German, French and English. Important in this regard is that Brandes' name has been closely connected to that of Ibsen. He has been seen as Ibsen's critic and as the champion of Ibsen's plays and, thus, they have traditionally been seen as brothers in arms pioneering the modern breakthrough.[165] In recent years, however, some doubt has been cast on how firm a supporter of Ibsen Brandes actually was. It has for instance been argued that Brandes did not do anything to forward the career of Ibsen in Germany, even though he was in an excellent position to do so due to his own voluntary exile in Berlin. It has even been suggested that Brandes at some point actively worked against Ibsen.[166]

Brandes followed the work of Ibsen throughout his life. His first review on Ibsen was written in 1866 and he continued, with some intervals, to publish on Ibsen and his drama until his death in 1924. In the light of the relationship of Ibsen and Brandes the intervals assume specific significance, and there were indeed periods where Brandes published nothing on Ibsen. The early part of Brandes work as a critic coincided with Ibsen's introduction to Denmark, and there can be little doubt that Brandes at that timed followed Ibsen's work with the keenest interest. Thus, Brandes reviewed all of Ibsen's works published between 1866 and 1872. Alongside the reviews and smaller texts which he published on Ibsen, Brandes wrote three major essays (so-called 'impressions'), in which he summed up his views on Ibsen. These impressions were Brandes' attempts to give a more holistic view of Ibsen as a poet, yet were written at three different times in his career. The first impression was published in 1867-1868, the second in 1882, and the third in 1898-1899. There can be little doubt that the three impressions played an important role in the Danish intellectual reception of Ibsen. Yet, Brandes' influence extended beyond the Scandinavian sphere, and especially his major essays were read by people abroad with an interest in Ibsen. Some of Brandes' writings on Ibsen were translated into German and much of the information and many of the interpretations of the drama, which Brandes gave, was often appropriated by local critics. Thus, the critic Otto Brahm, who in the 1880s promoted

[165] Asbjørn Aarseth, 'Ibsen Og Brandes: En Forskningsoversikt', in *Ibsen Og Brandes - Studier I et Forhold* (Oslo: Gyldendal, 2006), p. 63ff.
[166] I return to this question below.

Ibsen in Germany, relied explicitly on Brandes in his early writings on Ibsen.[167] Also, in Britain Brandes' writings were being relied on in the introduction of Ibsen. In 1889, at what was a decisive time for Ibsen in Britain, Edmund Gosse one of Ibsen's supporters published a landmark essay on 'Ibsen's Social Dramas', in which Brandes featured as one of the vital sources.[168]

In the time that followed Ibsen's break with Petersen and Bjørnson, Ibsen gradually showed more interest in his new acquaintance Georg Brandes. Brandes had begun his work as a critic in 1865 and had written a number of highly enthusiastic reviews of Ibsen's plays before they began corresponding with each other in 1869. I return to the connection between Ibsen and Brandes in Part II, as Ibsen had moved to Germany before their relationship developed. Yet the connection between Ibsen and Brandes was to have far-reaching consequences for both of them as they would influence one another, and Brandes readings of Ibsen's plays would prove to be groundbreaking for the interpretation of his plays.

Ibsen's attempt to find literary patronage was highly relevant for the transfer of his plays, despite it being played out in a personal social space, as it was closely entwined with the position taken it the cultural field. From the perspective of Danish literature, the influx of Norwegian literature was seen by some as an attempt to bring about change in the national literature, which was claimed to be stagnating. This was the interpretation put forward by Petersen's reviews, and the position which was neatly summed up in Falkman's article. From Ibsen's perspective, his attempt to find literary patronage must be seen as an attempt to connect innovative people in the field, who stood for aesthetic change. He therefore attempted to reach out to the leading critic of the time, Petersen, who he thought was likely to support his 'cause' and place him amongst those envisioned to revive Danish literature. As I have shown, Ibsen's attempt to obtain Petersen's patronage was unsuccessful. To Ibsen, the realisation that Petersen was not going to support him in the way he hoped for was late in coming and did not manifest itself before Petersen's review of *Peer Gynt*. The fact that Ibsen did not give up the hope of achieving Petersen's support sooner may be attributed to Bjørnson's mediation, which may have induced him to continue to hope to achieve it.

Though Petersen had helped Ibsen as far as to recommend one of his plays to the Royal Theatre, it seem evident that he was never committed to promoting Ibsen's plays in the same tenacious way as he had promoted those of Bjørnson since the beginning of the 1860s. From a strictly strategic point of view one could say that Petersen would not benefit from the championing of Ibsen's plays in the same way as he had benefited from Bjørnson's, when he himself was in the process of establishing himself as a critic, and he in Bjørnson's work found the art which he

[167] See Part II, Chapter 5 'Brandes and Brahm: Ibsen's radicalism'.
[168] Edmund Gosse, 'Ibsen's Social Dramas', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 January 1889.

was able to hold up as the new ideal. Whether *Peer Gynt* failed to meet Petersen's expectations to true poetry or whether it was sheer favouritism towards Bjørnson which led him to give a poor review, as Westling has suggested, is an open question. It is evident, however, that Petersen was fairly consistent in his evaluation of Ibsen's plays, which he was at no point very enthusiastic about. When the break finally came, it was on Ibsen's initiative. Whether it was because he finally had enough of Petersen's criticism, or that he by then had acquired a position in the Danish literary field, which enabled him to break with Petersen, is equally an open question, though Ibsen's anger points towards the former. What is important, however, is the fact that the break facilitated Ibsen's closer connection with Georg Brandes, who proved to be the rising star after Petersen had left Denmark.

Chapter 3: Ibsen and Danish theatre

In this chapter, I investigate the transfer of Ibsen's plays to Denmark. However, rather than to cover all of the Danish productions, I focus the analysis on Copenhagen. There are several reasons why this is an appropriate reduction. First of all, Denmark was, like Britain and unlike Germany, highly centralised when it came to cultural institutions, which meant that Copenhagen was the only centre. Secondly, Ibsen himself observed the distinction between Copenhagen and the remaining country when he negotiated contracts for the production of his plays. In this way, he would usually make one contract with the Royal Theatre in Copenhagen, and one or more for the rights to stage his plays in the provincial towns of Denmark.[169] Thirdly, the focus on Copenhagen also gives the possibility to closely explore the specific way in which the theatrical market was structured in Copenhagen in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

In mapping out the theatrical market of Copenhagen, it becomes necessary to closely explore the Royal Theatre due to the way in which it not only dominated the theatrical market but also due to its central role in defining cultural life. In the chapter, I therefore scrutinise the Royal Theatre from the perspective of a cultural institution and investigate its functioning as gatekeeper to what was considered high culture in the Danish cultural field. In relation to this, I analyse the agency involved in the theatre's internal working, more specifically the role which the theatre's censors played in relation to accepting and rejecting Ibsen's plays. As I will show below, the Royal Theatre's relation to Ibsen's plays was a key factor in bringing his plays to production in the Danish capital. The chapter therefore covers Ibsen's attempts to have a play accepted at the national theatre, from the time he first submitted a play in 1858, through the multiple rejections by the theatre's various censors, to first acceptance of *The League of Youth* in 1870. In relation to the censors' verdicts, I analyse the reasons given for rejecting the plays, and what brought about the final recognition, which led to a general acceptance of Ibsen's plays.

A final perspective of this chapter relates to the period after the acceptance of Ibsen's plays at the Royal Theatre, and how Ibsen managed his work in relation to the sometimes conflicting requirements of the theatrical and the book market. In relation to this, I analyse the financial terms which the Royal Theatre offered Ibsen and other Norwegian playwrights. Throughout the 1870s, an unresolved question of the theatre's remuneration of Norwegian playwrights gave rise to tension between the playwrights and the management. The conflict influenced Ibsen's relationship with the theatre and the way in which he positioned his work, also aesthetically, between publishing and theatrical productions.

[169] One of the people touring the Danish provincial towns with Ibsen's plays was August Rasmussen (1838-1922). From his correspondence with Ibsen it is evident that Ibsen sold the right to produce a given play to all provincial towns *en bloc*. See for example: Letter: Ibsen to Rasmussen 12 November 1877; 1 December 1879.

Preconditions and the developments in the theatrical market of Copenhagen

During the time in which Ibsen made his name in Copenhagen, the city's theatrical market was in rapid development. Due to increased urbanisation, Copenhagen underwent great changes in the latter part of the nineteenth century. In 1856, the old fortifications that had hitherto confined the growth of the city within its narrow limits were cancelled and the city could finally sprawl unhindered. In the following decades, this meant the rapid construction of new quarters for both living and industry for the new inhabitants who were drawn to the city in search of work. The growth of the city, however, not only meant an increase in the population, it also meant an overall increase in the demand for entertainment and thereby also in the demand for theatre, and as a consequence more new theatres were constructed. The increase in the number of theatres provided a greater capacity for theatre goers, but it also meant increased segregation, which was reflected both in terms of repertoire and audience.

In the latter part of the nineteenth century Copenhagen had four major theatres, all of which staged plays by Ibsen. These were the Royal Theatre, which was subsidised by the state, and three wholly commercial theatres: Casino, Folketeatret and Dagmartheatret. Yet, for reasons which had to do with the specific way in which the theatrical market was organised, Ibsen's plays were primarily produced at the Royal Theatre. Some contextualisation is therefore required in order to explain in what way the Royal Theatre was special and how organisation of the theatrical market conditioned the import of Ibsen's dramas.

By the late nineteenth century, the Royal Theatre was the Danish national theatre. It had been established in 1748, and for the next century it had been the king's own theatre. It was also the only theatre within the ramparts of the city, save for the court theatre. In 1849, the jurisdiction of the Royal Theatre was moved from the crown to the state, as a consequence of the first Danish attempt of a parliamentary constitution, but the theatre continued to retain a set of privileges that it had enjoyed under the crown. In the period after 1849 new theatres were allowed in the city and in the that year the commercially run theatre, Casino, opened.[170] Casino was not only Copenhagen's second theatre it was also classified as the theatre of the 'second order'. The classification of the theatres into different 'orders' was based on the Parisian system and was a way of protecting the Royal Theatre, which was classified as a theatre of the first order. As a theatre of the second order, Casino was only allowed to perform plays from a limited repertoire of a 'lighter' character, which meant the so-called 'folk-comedy', farces, vaudevilles and similar items, and in addition nothing in these genres that had been performed at the Royal Theatre within ten years or was under preparation.[171] These genre-restrictions that were kept in place until 1889, when a new and more liberal law dictated that the private theatres could stage any play as long as it had not been performed at the royal theatre within the last ten years, was something that made the Royal Theatre routinely stage plays just to keep them from entering

[170] *Dansk Teaterhistorie*, ed. by Jytte Wiingaard, vol. II (København: Gyldendal, 1992), p. 11ff.
[171] Ibid., p. 39ff .

the repertoire of the private theatres. Yet, despite the restrictions, the private theatres did from time to time stage more 'serious' plays that had been rejected by the Royal Theatre, as we shall see in connection to Ibsen's play *Ghosts*.

Casino was followed by another two 'second' theatres. In 1856, Folketeatret opened and in 1883 Dagmarteatret followed. As the second order theatres were severely restrained in their repertoire, due to the licence under which they operated, they had to attract the public's interest with lighter pieces. For Casino and Folketeatret this restriction necessarily became a part of their image, as they had to excel in the niche that was left to them by the Royal Theatre. Consequently, they catered for an audience that was content with the 'lighter amusement' that they offered. Folketeatret became, as the name suggest, the theatre for the city's new quarters, which meant that the theatre increasingly catered for common people. This was more the case with Folketeatret than with Casino, which partly supplemented the Royal Theatre, and it seems evident that the different theatres to some extent segregated the audience according to class.[172] Dagmarteatret, which opened decidedly later than the other commercial theatres, in time became a more direct competitor to the Royal Theatre, and tried to appeal to a more educated audience. The theatre which was named after the Danish princess Dagmar, who married the Russian Tsar in 1881, unlike the two other theatres opened in a building that was designed as a theatre, and in the look of the facade and the internal splendour aimed to match the Royal Theatre. After some economically very difficult first years, from the middle of the1880s it tried to assume a position as a 'literary theatre', something which became easier in the period after 1889 when the restrictions on the repertoire were lifted. Around 1889, August Strindberg was connected to the theatre, and saw to it that some of his plays were staged at the theatre within the framework of 'Scandinavian Experimental Theatre'. The Dagmarteatret grew in the 1890s to become a serious competitor to the Royal Theatre as it partly catered to the same audience who would frequent the Royal Theatre.[173]

The overview of the theatre market and its development is important in order to place the transfer of Ibsen's plays in the context of the options available for production. Taken on a city level, the theatrical market can be viewed as a hierarchy where the positions held by the individual theatres was only understandable in relation to the other theatres of the time. In Copenhagen the hierarchy was structured around the Royal Theatre, which was protected by its monopoly on what were considered the more prestigious genres of drama and was endowed with a substantial subsidy from the state. The commercial theatres, on the other hand, were left to compete amongst themselves, not only for the audience but also for the best of plays, which were not protected by the monopoly, and would have to make do the best way they could in order to make ends meet financially. It is therefore of interest at which of the theatres Ibsen, as an upcoming foreign author, could have his plays staged. In the period when Ibsen was active as an author, Copenhagen went from having only one theatre (the Royal Theatre) to have four.

[172] Jytte Wiingaard, *Teater Og Publikum* (Borgen, 1992), p. 80.
[173] Wiingaard, *Dansk Teaterhistorie*, vol. II, p. 54ff.

Another reason to look at the theatrical market is the differentiation of the audience that followed when Copenhagen had more theatres. The question of what theatre performed Ibsen is therefore not only a question of whether the theatre was prestigious or not, but also a question of what audience the theatre attracted.

Ibsen's plays in the theatres of Copenhagen

The first of Ibsen's plays that was staged in Copenhagen was *The Feast at Solhoug*, which appeared in Casino in 1861.[174] The appearance of *The Feast at Solhoug* is outside of the pattern established by later productions. First of all, this was the only production of any of Ibsen's plays to be performed at Casino, and secondly, it was the only production of his work in Denmark for the next eight years, until the first production at the Royal Theatre. What further makes this production an anomaly is the fact that it occurred before Ibsen had had his breakthrough with *Brand*, which is to say, at a time when he was virtually unknown in Denmark. One should, therefore, not view the production at Casino as related to a specific interest in Ibsen's drama, but rather from the perspective of the Royal Theatre's monopoly on serious drama. The fact that Ibsen was not a Danish playwright, and that the play had not yet been performed at the Royal Theatre, made it possible for Casino to circumvent the restrictions placed on drama in its licence as a second theatre.

The next play to be staged was the *League of Youth*, which premiered at the Royal Theatre in 1870.[175] In the history of the transfer of Ibsen's plays, this was a decisive event and may well be considered as his theatrical breakthrough, because it initiated a series of productions on the national stage. In this way, *The League of Youth* was followed by *The Pretenders* in 1871, and *The Vikings at Helgeland* in 1875, and the reappearance of *The League of Youth* again (1876). The production of these plays may be said to make up one phase in the transfer of plays to Denmark. The beginning of this being the first performance of one of Ibsen's dramas at the Royal Theatre, the end marked by the first production of what is known as the contemporary 'problem plays': *Pillars of Society* in 1877. What defined the group of plays that marked the beginning of Ibsen's plays in Denmark is that they primarily consisted of plays written a considerable time before they appeared on stage in Denmark. This is significant in relation to the following phase in the transfer during which each newly published drama was immediately followed by a production at the Royal Theatre. One way to understand these five years is therefore as a period in which his work was established. Following the admission of Ibsen's plays to the Royal Theatre, with the newly written *The League of Youth*, it became possible to return to the earlier plays, some of which had been previously rejected, and re-evaluate them for production. If one looks at the early phase of production (1870-1875) in the larger scope of the remaining nineteenth century, it becomes evident that the early phase was the only time

[174] See Appendix I.
[175] See Appendix I.

during which the Royal Theatre staged earlier written plays besides those already incorporated into the repertoire.[176] The first five years, therefore, were crucial in establishing Ibsen as a dramatist at the theatre and the repertoire of his plays, despite the fact that they offered none of his famous later plays.

These five years have other characteristics in common. First of all, both *The League of Youth* and *The Pretenders* was directed by former star actress and widow of Johan Ludvig Heigberg, Johanne Louise Heiberg (1812-1890). In spite of the fact that Johan Ludvig Heiberg and the followers of his aesthetic school had repeatedly rejected Ibsen's plays, Johanne Ludvig Heiberg proved pivotal in the introductions of his plays, which I shall illustrate below. Secondly, *The Pretenders* and *The Vikings at Helgeland* were both historical dramas, which was also the case with the already staged *The Feast at Solhoug*. Notwithstanding the early interest in historical drama, it is noteworthy that *The League of Youth*, which was the first play to be accepted and thus paved the way for Ibsen's earlier plays, was itself not a historical play. In a sense, the plays prior to it can be seen as belonging to aesthetical currents different from the aesthetics of the problem play and Ibsen's late dramatic works. Retrospectively, *The League of Youth* may be seen as a step on the path towards naturalism, which was prevalent in Ibsen's dramas of the late 1870s and early 1880s.

It is evident that its privileges with respect to drama enabled the Royal Theatre to secure the lion's share of Ibsen's plays in Copenhagen. Yet, it is telling that the plays which did not find their way into the national theatre were taken up by the commercial theatres. Especially Dagmerteatret took up the plays left by the Royal Theatre after it opened in 1883. Thus, it staged many of Ibsen's early plays that the Royal Theatre had not produced between 1870-1875, such as *The Feast at Solhoug* in 1886, *Lady Inger to Østeråt* in 1895 and *Loves Comedy* 1898.[177] Besides, Dagmartheatret produced *Peer Gynt* in 1886 and *Brand* Act VI in 1896, plays initially intended for reading rather than production, and with which he Royal Theatre had not engaged.[178] The only one of Ibsen's plays in which the Royal Theatre had shown any interest but failed to produce was *Rosmerholm*. In the case of *Rosmersholm*, the negotiations between Ibsen and the Royal Theatre for the terms of production broke down and the theatre abandoned the idea of producing the play. The other great exception to this rule was the scandalous play *Ghosts*, which was rejected by the Royal Theatre on moral grounds. This play was not produced by any of the established theatres, but was staged by August Lindberg's Swedish troupe. I return to both of these exceptions in greater detail below.

[176] See Appendix I
[177] See Appendix I, production nr. 11, 19, 28.
[178] Appendix I, production nr. 10, 23.

Ibsen and the Royal Theatre

The Royal Theatre occupied a key position in the theatrical landscape of Copenhagen. It was the theatre for high culture in its various forms, for drama, opera and ballet, but it was the national theatre, and in this function it strove to be the pinnacle of national culture. What was staged at the Royal Theatre was of continual interest to the public. News regarding forthcoming plays and theatre criticism was given a central place in most newspapers. For all of these reasons, it was a decisive event for Ibsen to have his plays staged at the theatre. In spite of being Norwegian, the distinction which followed from having his plays produced at the theatre had been his aim since he submitted his first play for consideration in 1858. By having one of his plays at the Royal Theatre it moved him to the centre of public attention, and placed him alongside the foremost authors of national culture. Yet, as the following will show, the path which led to the stage of the Royal Theatre was trying.

As a public institution the Royal Theatre had a more elaborate structure, which was different from that of commercial theatres. At the Royal Theatre the power to accept or reject plays was not only in the hands of the manager but those of the theatre's censor as well. When a new play was sent to the theatre the censor would examine it and submit a report to the director in which he would either recommend the play for production or dissuade its production. The censor's function was not only to ensure that the content of the play was within the boundaries of public morality, but more generally to estimate whether the play submitted to the theatre were artistically sound, and if there was any likelihood it could be staged with success. The censor's function could therefore be said to overlap with that of an artistic manager, and was not merely censorship in the usual sense.[179] It is therefore worth noting that the censor's office was very influential when it came to shaping the theatre's artistic profile. Even in relation to the manager, the censor had the final say with regard to admitting new plays to the theatre's repertoire. In effect, the censor was bound by no code besides his own aesthetic and moral outlook, and could reject any play that did not live up to his standards.

The taste and the personal preferences of the manager and the censor were of importance, but what was equally important was the conception of the theatre's cultural mission, namely, to be the epitome of national culture. Johan Ludvig Heiberg, who was the first director under the democratic constitution of 1849, had increasingly moved the theatre in the direction of a place for the cultural education of the public.[180] This notion of educating the public meant specifically an education of the public 'taste' and built on the assumption that the common audience was deprived of taste, something that in Heiberg's opinion was true about a large part of the press as well.[181] Consequently, the voices of the audience and the press could largely be disregarded. This conception of the theatre's cultural mission, together with the theatre's very hierarchical structure, centralised the power to decide the repertoire with the director and the censor. Yet,

[179] Niels Friis, *Det Kongelige Teater* (København: H. Hagerup, 1943), p. 151.
[180] Wiingaard, *Teater og Publikum*, p. 49ff.
[181] Wiingaard, *Dansk Teaterhistorie*, vol. II, p. 49.

despite the very rigid structure there seems to have occasionally been room for negotiations of the repertoire between the various people who worked at the theatre. A crucial example was Mrs Heiberg's intervention on the behalf of Ibsen to have his play *The League of Youth* staged though it had been rejected both by the censor and the theatre's manager. In the end Mrs Heiberg, who was stage director, had her way and the play was finally brought to production.

Ibsen's dramas: between rejection and acceptance

The Royal Theatre had had its own censor since the democratic constitution of 1849, and besides being its manager, Johan Ludvig Heiberg, also held the position of the theatre's censor from 1849 until 1860. Yet, Heiberg's influence extended beyond his own work as manager and censor, and his aesthetical theories, formulated even before he led the theatre, may be traced in the verdicts of the other censors from the final quarter of the nineteenth century. During the latter part of the century, there were three censors besides Heiberg, each of whom evaluated Ibsen's plays for the stage. Thus, Heiberg in turn was followed by Johannes Carsten Hauch (1860–1871), Christian Knud Frederik Molbech (1871–1881) and Erik Bøgh (1881–1899).

Heiberg had an enormous influence on theatre in Denmark, and not least at the Royal Theatre where he was director and censor. His influence on Danish theatre had begun long before he was appointed director, and early in his career he had already made a name for himself both as a playwright and as a critic.[182] As a playwright, he experienced considerable success at the Royal Theatre as early as 1825 with his light and witty vaudevilles that portrayed the life of the city.[183] As a critic, he was influential as he developed criticism as a systematic practice and he constructed a system for the evaluation of art inspired by the German philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel. In Heiberg's aesthetical system, comedy, which was the genre in which he himself excelled, was given priority over tragedy as the drama of the present.[184] Heiberg's defining work was a treaty on the vaudeville written in 1826, and with this and the theatre reviews that he wrote in several magazines he launched his aesthetical system. The concept of 'taste' was central to Heiberg's aesthetical system. Taste was, according to Heiberg, the faculty by which one realised the objective qualities of art.[185] Taste was not something subjective or personal, but something objective and therefore something which could be debated. In order for art to be imbued with truth and beauty it had to follow the rules laid down by taste. Taste in art was not least to observe the inherent rules of the genres. By establishing taste in this way and connecting it to the rules of the genre, Heiberg placed the emphasis on the form rather than the content of art. As shown earlier, this was one of the points on which Petersen challenged Heiberg's aesthetics.[186] Yet, at the Royal Theatre Heiberg's aesthetics

[182] Schyberg, p. 155ff.
[183] Marker and Marker, p. 112.
[184] Schyberg, p. 167.
[185] Wiingaard, *Dansk Teaterhistorie*, vol. II, p. 16.
[186] Ibid., p. 33.

continued to dominate after his death through the equally conservative Hauch and Molbech who followed him in the position of censor.

By 1856 Heiberg had retired from the position of the Royal Theatre's manager, but he still worked as censor at the theatre when Ibsen submitted his play *The Vikings at Helgeland* to the theatre in 1858. This was Ibsen's first attempt to have one of his plays produced at the theatre. The play had been performed with success in Norway, which must have given Ibsen hope that it could be accepted in Denmark as well, but it was rejected by the Royal Theatre.[187] In his report on *The Vikings at Helgeland*, Heiberg used primarily aesthetical arguments to refute the play. The primary reason for the rejection was that Ibsen had failed to observe the restrictions which the content placed on the form, which resulted in a failed drama: as the Icelandic sagas, according to Heiberg, were essentially epic, they suffered when they were recast in a dramatic form:

> This play is, alongside several other Norwegian attempts to create a singular, national drama, founded on the Icelandic saga literature, but the path taken depends, as far as I am concerned, on a misapprehension, and is nothing but a dead end. The Icelandic sagas are of such distinct epic character that they can but suffer when appropriated dramatically.[188]

Heiberg's criticism of *The Vikings of Helgeland* strongly reflected the emphasis he put on observing the distinctions between the various genres, but a sub-current of national bigotry was also to be found in his report. Heiberg concluded his report by writing 'that it was unlikely that a Norwegian theatre would emerge as a result of these undertakings, but a Danish theatre luckily did not have to', thereby implying that Danish theatre did not have to descend to the level of the (provincial) Norwegian theatre.[189] Heiberg's closing comment has become somewhat infamous in the historiography on Ibsen, not least as he was later proved wrong. It should be noted, however, that Heiberg's rejection was published posthumously in his collected writings and, thus, for a long time was the only written monument in Denmark on Ibsen work.[190] Heiberg's comment, however, illustrates very well the relationship between Norwegian and Danish theatre. Heiberg points to the discrepancy between the attempts to create a singular Norwegian theatre and the already established Danish theatre. The discrepancy may be seen as the difference between the cultural centre and periphery. Located as he was at the supreme position of Danish theatre, Heiberg saw little need to adopt something from peripheral Norway, which was understandable, as his own works were the epitome of the Danish tradition.

Heiberg was followed by Carsten Hauch (1790-1872), who occupied the office of censor in the period 1860-1872. In this period he evaluated three of Ibsen's plays, those being *Lady Inger of Østeråt, The Pretenders* and *The League of Youth*, of which he rejected the first two and

[187] HIS 3k, p. 199.
[188]Heiberg, censorship report 5 March 1858. Reprinted in Edvard Agerholm, 'Henrik Ibsen Og Det Kgl. Teater', *Gads Danske Magasin*, 1910-1911 (1911), 276–80.
[189] Heiberg censorship report 5 March 1858.
[190] Johan Ludvig Heiberg, p. 401.

admitted the third, but only after a second round of examination and, as we shall see, external pressure.

Hauch's report on *Lady Inger of Østerår*, which had been submitted in October 1863 with the recommendation of Clemens Petersen, was relatively short compared to later evaluations. In the report, Hauch explicitly commented on the fact that Petersen had recommended the play as being 'well suited for the theatre'. Yet, Petersen's recommendation carried little weight with Hauch, who remarked that 'Petersen's recommendations were not always to be relied on, for *Lady Inger* was no good play'.[191] In spite of his disregard for Petersen's recommendation, Hauch also had some praise for the play and noted that it 'was not made without talent'. In the end, however, he found that the play was 'clumsily put together' and the story was 'difficult to follow' when one read it for the first time. Besides aesthetic objections, Hauch was concerned with the play's portrayal of the historical Danish rulers of Norway at the time of the story. He found that 'bitter sentiments' dominated the characterisation, and found that Danes were portrayed as 'tyrants of Norway and oppressors'.[192] Besides these objections, Hauch compared the play to the writings of the literary movement 'Young Germany', something he did not intend as a recommendation. He returned to the comparison with 'Young Germany' in his report on *The Pretenders*, in which he used it as a reference to writings that dealt with matters which he considered 'coarse and horrible'.[193] In 1874, *Lady Inger* was re-submitted for re-evaluation, and this time examined by Hauch's successor, Molbech, but he affirmed Hauch's initial verdict.

Only weeks after the rejection of *Lady Inger*, Ibsen sent his brand new drama *The Pretenders* to the Royal Theatre. Hauch's report on *The Pretenders* was more detailed than the report on *Lady Inger*, and so offers a better opportunity to understand on what grounds Hauch rejected Ibsen's plays. As was the case with *Lady Inger*, the story was 'confusing', and Hauch found that the major scenes were lacking in 'form': 'as if several scenes in each of them [the major scenes] had been broken up and then been thrown together at random'.[194] By levelling this kind of criticism against Ibsen's plays Hauch placed himself firmly in the tradition of Heiberg. In Heiberg's aesthetics the concept of 'form' played a central role, and the true artist was expected to create something that observed the rules of the genre, something that he found Ibsen failed to do in the *Vikings at Helgeland*. Along the same lines, Hauch thought that *The Pretenders*, with its main villain who returns from the dead, was more akin to a 'Parisian opera' than the 'calm manliness of the old Northerners'. A more grievous complaint was that he found the drama's main plot, with the aging bishop who goads the pretenders into fighting one another, 'twisted', and the portrayal of the bishop coarse and unsavoury. Despite his objections he found

[191] Hauch, censorship report 4 October 1863. Reprinted in Agerholm p. 276
[192] Ibid.
[193] Hauch, censorship report 26 October 1863. Reprinted in Agerholm p. 276.
[194] Hauch, censorship report: 19 December 1863. Gads Danske Margasin p. 276.

that '…one must acknowledge the trace of uncommon talent', yet a production at the theatre he held impossible.[195]

Ibsen's breakthrough: The League of Youth

In the end, when Ibsen's plays were admitted to the Royal Theatre, it was due to outside pressure on the censorship. It was Johanne Louise Heiberg, the widow of former director and censor Heiberg, who ultimately paved the way for Ibsen. Due to her sex, Mrs Heiberg occupied a somewhat special position in the Danish cultural field of the middle of the nineteenth century, which was generally male dominated. She was not only perhaps the most celebrated Danish actress of the nineteenth century, but, through her marriage Johan Ludvig Heiberg, she acquired a standing in cultural life which went beyond that of any other actresses of the time. This central position in cultural life remained after Heiberg's death, and when she retired from her position as the leading actress of the Royal Theatre, she joined the theatre as artistic director, a position she held from 1867 until 1875.[196] For a woman this was unprecedented and must be seen as evidence of her general influence within the field. Seen in connection to Ibsen, her time as director was important, as she was responsible for introducing Norwegian authors to the stage.

Like with the publishing industry, Bjørnson, due to his knack for establishing and maintaining personal networks, managed to secure good connections with Mrs Heiberg, and they had corresponded on a regular basis since the middle of the 1860s. It is, therefore, hardly surprising that it was one of Bjørnson's plays that was chosen for production when the Royal Theatre first opened its stage to the works of Norwegian authors. On a purely personal level, Mrs Heiberg had shown interest in Ibsen from the time of the Norwegian publication of *Love's Comedy* and *The Pretenders*, and had privately complained of the harsh reception of the latter. After the Danish publication of *Brand* she had written to Ibsen to congratulate him on his work.[197] What makes Mrs Heiberg's interest in Bjørnson and Ibsen telling is that even in her case, it was coupled with a sense of decline of Danish literary culture. This suggests that the belief of the decline, which was described in Falkman's article, was not uncommon.

The League of Youth, submitted to the theatre in June 1869, was the last of Ibsen's plays that Hauch examined in his capacity as censor, and initially he rejected this play as well. Like Ibsen's previous works he found that it showed talent in the detail, but generally it suffered from a 'fragmented character'. 'It is', Hauch wrote, 'as if a good play has sought to work itself out of a chaos, but being unable to do so, has remained stuck.'[198] Yet, the play's topic, with its contemporary political intrigue, was also contrary to Hauch's sense of taste:

[195] Hauch, censorship report 26 October 1863. Reprinted in Agerholm p. 277.
[196] DBL: Johanne Louise Heiberg.
[197] Johanne Heiberg, *Breve Fra Og Til Johanne Luise Heiberg Vol I* (København: Gyldendal, 1955), p. 279.
[198] Hauch, censorship report 7 July 1869. Reprinted in Agerholm p. 276.

> The play is generally obscure, and one must at least be acquainted with the elaborate humbug that may be conducted with false bills of exchange and the secret art of swindling, to be able to follow the story and understand it.[199]

These concerns led Hauch to 'fear that the play would not be understood by the general audience'. The final judgement was, therefore, that the play was 'not fit for the theatre'. Yet, though Hauch's report on the play should have been the final word in the case, this proved not to be the case. The intendant of the theatre, Gottlob Berner (1823-1914), privately sent Hauch's report to Mrs Heiberg in order to, as he stated in the accompanying note, know her opinion 'before any decision regarding the play was made'.[200] Mrs Heiberg, it turned out, did not agree with Hauch's verdict:

> I find the more carefully I read this play that it possesses that quality, which to all times has been the hallmark of the original farce, namely that it gives a singular image of the time in which it is written. [...] It is something new, which our dramatic literature is in need of, and I find that the manager who rejected the new breakthrough would take responsibility for something which sooner or later would be on his own head. It would truly be scandalous if the notion that the Royal Theatre applied support only to mediocre authors only. [...] If the fear of venturing into something new had prevailed in those days, then not one of Heiberg's plays would have been accepted for the stage; only Collin had the courage to introduce the vaudeville; all the others, the manager and with the censorship in front, rejected it. This resistance is now laughed of; those men are ridiculed in works that have been written on the subject in the last years, but in those times the manager and the actors agreed that Collin was wrong.[201]

Mrs Heiberg's letter convinced Berner, who consequently asked Hauch for a second evaluation of the play. In August, Hauch submitted his second report but he wrote that though he had read the play a second time, he had not reached a different conclusion than after his first reading.[202] If the intendant was of the opinion that the play, in spite of its aesthetical shortcomings, could serve as a 'political satire', he would not object to the performance of the play.'[203]

The two censorship reports from Hauch's hand are interesting documents as they give a rare insight into the negotiations between the censor and the intendant, and their relative powers with regard to the repertoire. What played out in the correspondence was in fact a struggle for the power to define the theatre's repertoire. As nothing in the play had been changed, which would justify Berner's request for a second evaluation, the request can consequently only be interpreted as a re-evaluation of the play with a different conclusion. This was direct challenge of Hauch's authority as censor. Moreover, it was a struggle that Berner very clearly won. Though Hauch retained his initial critique, he could hardly do otherwise without undermining his own position as censor, he was evidently forced to let it pass. This was achieved by way of relegating the play to the inferior, and therefore aesthetically more accommodating, genre of

[199] Hauch, censorship report 19 December 1863. Reprinted in Agerholm p. 276.
[200] Letter: G. Berner to Fru Heiberg 9 July 1869, in Johanne Heiberg, *Breve Fra Og Til Johanne Luise Heiberg Vol II* (København: Gyldendal, 1955).
[201] Letter: Fru Heiberg to G. Berner 18 July 1869 in Johanne Heiberg, *Breve Fra Og Til Johanne Luise Heiberg Vol II*, pp. 38–39.
[202] Hauch, censorship report 13 August 1869. Reprinted in Agerholm p. 278.
[203] Ibid.

'political satire'. The two censorship reports show that though the position as censor was very important when it came to defining the repertoire at the Royal Theatre, it was not all-powerful, and there was perhaps wider room for negotiation than would initially be supposed. As the Royal Theatre had its own censor, it is likely that these kinds of negotiations as often as not would be carried out face to face and that disagreements would not surface in the final report. It must also be supposed that the power relation between the censor and the intendant and manager would shift depending on the people that occupied the positions. Apart from the management of the theatre, the director, as was the case of Mrs Heiberg, would be part of the on-going negotiations over the theatre's repertoire, as well as the actors and finally the critics would influence the censor's decisions.

Censorship and the Norwegian language

The relationship between the Norwegian authors and the Royal Theatre (qua the Danish national theatre) may be reflected in the question of language, which arose in connection with the plays. Though it would seem that language did not play a decisive role in the decision to accept or reject a play, it nonetheless marked a line of demarcation and it was a point of conflict. Based on the censorship reports of both Bjørnson and Ibsen's plays of the 1860s and 1870s it is evident that the censors were reluctant to accept plays that contained too many specifically Norwegian words. In the cases in which the plays were recommended, they generally requested to have these words removed in the staged version of the play, or if the language altogether was too different from Danish they demanded a translation of the play.

In the words of the censor Hauch, from the report on *The Pretenders* dated 19 December 1863:

> The language is even madder than that of the other Norwegian-minded Norwegians, e.g. ... [list up a number of Norwegian words and expressions, the meaning of some of which, he confessed, to be ignorant of] ... these are words, supposedly gathered from different peasant-dialects, now put in use by Norwegian authors, in order with all haste to acquire a language different from Danish; with us they [the plays] cannot be staged unless in translation, especially not by a theatre whose purpose it is to guard the purity of the language.[204]

In connection to his very strong stance with regard to protecting the 'purity of the language', it is worth noting that Hauch was himself from Norway, where he had lived to the age of thirteen before he continued his education in Copenhagen.[205] Yet as with all the censors, he belonged to a different generation than Bjørnson and Ibsen. The stand on the language was continued by Molbech, who replaced Hauch as censor. In his otherwise very positive report on *Pillars of Society* in 1877 he wrote: 'Besides, I can only remark that the language does contain several 'Norwegianisms' that, of course, must be debarred from the Danish stage...'.[206] Even as late as

[204] Hauch, censorship report 19 December 1863. Reprinted in Agerholm p. 277
[205] DBL: Carsten Hauch.
[206] Molbech censorship report 18 November 1877. Reprinted in Agerholm p. 277.

1886, when the management of the theatre considered staging Ibsen's early play *Love's Comedy*, the current censor Erik Bøgh was commissioned to shorten and 'translate' the play. Yet in spite of the fact that Bøgh did the translation the play was never staged.[207]

Looking at the censorship reports from the perspective of language, it is quite clear that Norwegian as an 'artistic language' or a 'language of the stage' presented a challenge to the Royal Theatre's censors. The problem did not originate from the fact that the plays were written in a foreign language, as there were a great number of translated plays staged at the theatre. Rather, it would seem, the problem was that the two languages were so close that it would have been possible to stage the plays without translation. The general tension is particularly evident in Hauch's report on *The Pretenders* where he had not only taken the effort to list some of the foreign expressions, but explicitly stated that he saw the aim of the creation of Norwegian (we must take his meaning to be as a language of the stage) as a deliberate attempt to depart from Danish as the language of culture. Seen from the perspective of the Royal Theatre's mission to protect national culture it is evident that the Norwegian project essentially appeared subversive. Hauch's phrase 'a theatre whose purpose it is to guard the purity of the language' encapsulates very well why he and his colleagues thought that it was impossible to officially endorse this project by allowing it (untranslated) on the stage.

Ibsen was himself aware of the possible conflict that the language might lead to and that it may affect his chances of having his plays accepted at the Royal Theatre. In the letter which accompanied the submission of *The League of Youth*, he explicitly stated that the language was not to make any hindrances for the production of the play as it contained very few specifically Norwegian words. Besides, he pronounced himself prepared to have any changes made if the theatre wished it.'[208] Yet, Ibsen's willingness to accept changes must be seen as symptomatic of the exposed position which he occupied at the time, having had all his former plays rejected by the theatre.

When *The League of Youth* was performed at the Royal Theatre, the leading part of 'Stensgaard' was played by the actor Vilhelm Wiehe, who used a Norwegian accent for the role. Given the censor's very strong rejection of everything Norwegian, at first glance it seems contradictory that Wiehe was allowed to employ a Norwegian accent for the part. Looking at the reception of the play, it is evident that at some point criticism had been levelled against Wiehe's dialect, for in his review Georg Brandes rushed to defend Wiehe's accent congratulating him on his performance, which he found masterly, and especially the use of the accent.

[207] Agerholm p. 280.
[208] Letter: Ibsen to Andreas Conrad Putscher Linde 15 June 1869.

> Mr Wiehe has found a magnificent instrument in the Norwegian accent he employed. Those who attack him for the use of it are the type of people who care more for silly rules than for the freedom of talent and the right to be daring. He who so boldly dares has already half won a victory.[209]

Opinions differed when it came to Norwegian on the stage. A reason why Wiehe's Norwegian was tolerated may, of course, be that it was in fact not Norwegian but merely an accent employed by a Danish actor. Wiehe, another reviewer was able to tell his readers, had spent some time in Norway and had hence acquired the skills required to produce a Norwegian accent – and a Dane speaking in 'mock-Norwegian' seems to have been acceptable to most, though not all.[210] A further contextualisation may help to explain why Wiehe's accent was thought to be a success. As opposed to Denmark, where *The League of Youth* received very good reviews, the play had been highly controversial in Norway, where it had been staged at Christiania Theatre the year before. In Norway, the play was seen as highly political and was thought to be an open attack on the political left wing and, especially, the group around Bjørnson, with whom Ibsen at the time had openly broken with more or less. Already at the second performance, the left wing had mobilised its supporters amongst the audience to disrupt the show, and the whole affair resulted in a protracted debate in the Norwegian press.[211] In Denmark, the satire did not carry the same political connotations and consequently was less provocative. To a Danish audience the satirical element may even have been softened by Wiehe's use of the Norwegian accent. The accent must have suggested that at least the main character, Stensgaard, whose ludicrous behaviour was at the centre of the intrigue, was meant to be Norwegian. With a 'Norwegian' and therefore a 'foreign' Steengsaard, his absurdities could not be seen as a satirical reflection of Danish affairs, and the audience could therefore safely watch the absurd actions of the 'Norwegian' and wholeheartedly enjoy the merriments on stage.

Between book and theatre

As a commodity, Ibsen's plays were located in a position between the book market and the theatrical market. Each of these markets had their own demands, and at times these would be conflicting. One recurring issue, which showed the different demands of the markets, was the question of whether the book should be published before the play had been performed in the theatre. In Denmark this was a conflict between Gyldendal, which supplied the entire Scandinavian book market, and the Royal Theatre. The question of what market should be prioritised was not least an economical question. At the Royal Theatre it was thought that the novelty of the unpublished play would draw a bigger audience, whereas for the publisher it was a matter of ensuring that the play was made available to the bookshops rather than to wait for a theatrical premiere, which may be long in coming. For Gyldendal's Frederik Hegel it was

[209] Georg Brandes, 'Det Kongelige Teater - Henrik Ibsen: "De Unges Forbund"', *Illustreret Tidende*, 27 February 1870, p. 1 (p. 195).
[210] Unsigned review, 'De Unges Forbund', *Dagbladet* 19 February 1870.
[211] Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen: Masken*, p. 40ff.

always a concern that the latest play should be ready for the Christmas sales, which dictated his approach to the time of publication.

Located in the middle of these conflicting interests was Ibsen, who sought to meet the needs of both markets, preferably in a way which proved most profitable. To Ibsen, the question of which market was to benefit first from a new play was an issue that arose when he negotiated his fees with the theatre. According to the Royal Theatre's regulations, it was, however, only previously unpublished plays written in Danish that were entitled to a fee. As Ibsen's plays were not written in Danish, this put him in a weak position when it came to negotiating a potential fee as he was not strictly speaking entitled to receive one, but as Norwegian drama had previously been paid, he expected to receive something from the theatre. In Ibsen's transactions with the Royal Theatre Frederik Hegel often played the role of middleman, and negotiated with the Royal Theatre on his behalf. The conflicting interests between publishing and theatre must, therefore, be suspected to have had a bias towards the requirements of the publishing business. Yet, Hegel was very loyal to Ibsen's desires when it came to the question of which market should be prioritised, though he counselled him to be aware of the demand of the book market.

As the first two plays which Ibsen had published in Denmark, *Brand* and *Peer Gynt*, were not intended for the stage and early plays, which Ibsen submitted to the theatre, had all been rejected, no conflict between publishing and theatre surfaced before Ibsen's *The League of Youth* was accepted at the Royal Theatre. Ibsen's correspondence with Hegel reveals some of the difficulties that were involved in writing for the double-market of theatre and books, as each market had its own demands and its own preferences. The correspondence reveals how Ibsen sought to navigate between the different interests, and how the negotiations were carried out between the interested parties. Already in October 1868, Ibsen had written to Hegel about his new play *The League of Youth*, and stated that it 'was made for the theatre'.[212] That it was made for the theatre must be seen in opposition to his two previous plays *Brand* and *Peer Gynt* which, initially at least, were intended to be read. Yet, in Ibsen's following letters to Hegel it became evident that he not only intended for it to be performed on the stage, but also that it was primarily intended for theatrical production and only eventually intended for publishing.[213]

At the core of the conflict of interests between the Royal Theatre and Gyldendal was the question of whether the play should be published before it was staged. As a rule, the theatre paid reduced fees for plays that were already published, and thereby already available to the public. Besides, it was usual to only pay reduced fees for foreign plays, to the extent that the author was paid at all, as some of the author's remuneration was used to pay for the translation.[214] With Ibsen and the other Norwegian authors in Denmark, however, it was an

[212] Letter: Ibsen to Hegel 10 October 1868.
[213] Letter: Ibsen-Hegel 31 October 1868.
[214] HIS 12k p. 423

open question, and consequently a matter of negotiation, whether their plays should be regarded as foreign or not as no translation was required and the written language was so close to Danish.

In the correspondence between Ibsen and Hegel during the spring of 1869, Hegel suggested a small initial print run of *The League of Youth* intended only for theatres, and it was decided that initially no more than four copies should be made, one copy for each of the national theatres of Norway, Sweden, and Denmark, and one for Ibsen himself. The idea was to submit the printed plays with a handwritten title page. In this way the play would be classified as a manuscript rather than a published play, and it was thereby hoped to make the play eligible for increased fees as it was technically speaking not published.[215] According to the regulations at the Royal Theatre, a play would only be remunerated according to the highest rate if it was unpublished, written in Danish and not previously performed.[216]Following this strategy, Ibsen hoped for a performance of the plays in September and a subsequent publication of the book in October.[217] Hegel agreed to do the small print run of four copies, but obtained Ibsen's permission to do a full-size print run intended for the public, which was, however, to be withheld until the play had been performed at the Royal Theatre.

Though Hegel apparently accepted Ibsen's wish of giving the theatre priority over publication, he counselled him to ensure that he would have his 'hands free' to publish the play in the event that the theatre failed to bring the play onto the stage before October.[218] This reflects Hegel's greatest concern which was to have the book ready in time for the Christmas sales, something he warned Ibsen about again and again. Hegel's reason for warning Ibsen was the fact that the theatre at times worked very slowly, and any promise to withhold the publication until after the premiere might delay the publication for an indefinite length of time. In Ibsen's letter to the manager of the Royal Theatre, Andreas Linde (1814-1888), to whom he submitted the play, Ibsen added Hegel's condition, by way of stressing that the play would be published in the autumn. He further added that he was well aware that he would hereby be remunerated for the play according to the 'lower rate', and he added:[219]

> The fee is not the essential point to me; but it is of the greatest import also from the stage to win the favour of the Danish audience, whose favour it is my pleasure to have found in the realm of letters, a favour that I do not fear to loose with the present comedy.[220]

Ibsen's letter to the Royal Theatre in general, and his statement that 'the fee was not the essential point' in particular, reflected Ibsen's uncertain position in relation to the theatre at the time. When he submitted *The League of Youth*, all his previous plays had been rejected, and besides the regulations, which governed the area, in reality they left the theatre to pay what they wished

[215] Ibid. p. 383.
[216] Robert Neiiendam, *Det Kongelige Teaters Historie 1874-1922*, vol I (Jespersen og Pio, 1921), p. 151.
[217] Letter: Ibsen to Hegel 20 February 1869.
[218] Draft letter: Hegel to Ibsen 21 May 1869
[219] Letter: Ibsen to Andreas Conrad Putscher Linde 15 June 1869.
[220] Ibid.

for foreign plays. What was important to Ibsen at the time must therefore have been to have his play accepted at the theatre in the first place. On the matter concerning the fee, one must assume that he considered this an item for later negotiation. On the other hand, he still reserved the right to let the play be published when he chose. The consequence of this strategy was, according to Hegel, that Ibsen was 'grossly underpaid' by the theatre, but he paid heed to Hegel's main concern.[221]

After the Royal Theatre's approval of *The League of Youth* the acceptance of *The Pretenders* and *The Vikings of Helgeland* followed. For *The Vikings at Helgeland* Ibsen had again received a low fee, something with which he was no longer entirely satisfied. The play had originally been submitted in 1858, but it had been rejected by Heiberg, who was the censor at the time. Consequently, Ibsen had not received the higher fee that the theatre offered for unpublished Danish plays, something which now troubled him, as his plays in the meantime had proven very successful at the theatre. In a letter to Hegel dated 25 November 1875, he voiced his discontent and complained that the Royal Theatre 'ought to have paid him the higher fee for both plays as they had been offered the play when they were first published'. In his reply, Hegel agreed that Ibsen had been given too low a fee. Initially, he was offered Kr. 1000 for *The Vikings at Helgeland*, but Hegel later ensured that he was given another Kr.500 twice as additional fees.[222] Ibsen's main point of complaint was, however, that he was not paid a percentage of the receipts. Again Hegel agreed with him. He ought to be paid a fee based on a percentage in the same way as Danish authors that submitted plays to the theatre were. Compared to these, the lump sum which the theatre had paid Ibsen had been too low:

> Yet, it [the fee for *The Vikings at Helgeland* and *The Pretenders*] was worse in the case of *The League of Youth*, which was brand new when it was performed here. Unfamiliar with the [general] conditions, you accepted Berner's [manager of the Royal Theatre at the time] offer of a fee of, if I remember correctly, 600 Rdl. [approx. Kr. 1200] once and for all, rather than claim a fee based on the theatre's regulation, whereby you would have earned at least three times as much, and it was too late when I was informed and made you aware of it. This must be a lesson to you for the future, when you submit your new works.[223]

In the same letter, Hegel could assure Ibsen that there was no playwright whom the management of the theatre held in as high esteem as they held him. It was with this in mind that Ibsen sought to negotiate the conditions for *Pillars of Society*.

In 1877, in connection with *Pillars of Society*, the question of whether the theatre or publication should be prioritised surfaced again. This time, it was both a question of time of the publication and a question of the fee that the Royal Theatre offered to pay Ibsen. With this play, Ibsen again

[221] Narve Fuldsås et al. remarks in a note to the letter that with this letter Ibsen gives the printed play priority over the performed. In a sense they are right, not least in the light of events that followed, but seen from the perspective of Ibsen the decision cannot yet have been fully made. It is more likely that the decision to prioritise the publication of the plays over their performance of the theatres was a decision that grew on him spurred on by the unfavourable conditions offered to him by the Royal Theatre. (HIS 12k p. 423)
[222] HIS 13k p. 408
[223] Draft letter: Hegel to Ibsen 29 November 1875 (HIS 13k p. 409)

envisioned a production at the theatre prior to the publication of the play.[224] In his reply, Hegel explicitly recommended Ibsen to request the fee paid by the theatre for 'new works of Danish authors'.[225] Yet, when Ibsen submitted his play to the new manager of the theatre, Edvard Fallesen (1817-1894), he did not specify any conditions with regard to the fee.[226] The theatre accepted the play, and on conditions that were very similar to those offered for *The Vikings at Helgeland*. The theatre offered an initial fee of Kr. 1000, and additional Kr. 500 each after the 11th, 21st and 26th performance. As the play was eventually only performed twenty-five times two instalments were paid.[227] On this account, Ibsen accepted the terms the theatre offered though he saw them of 'little advantage', something he did not refrain from informing the theatre of in the telegram in which he accepted the terms. Ibsen was, however, not the only Norwegian dramatist who was being underpaid. In 1875, Bjørnson had complained to the theatre for the little more than nominal fee which he was being offered for his play *A Bankruptcy* according to the regulations for foreign dramas. This demand of an increase in fee led the present censor, Molbech to recommend to the management that the play be merely dropped, yet the management decided to offer Bjørnson a fee along the lines of those offered to Ibsen, which was an initial lump sum of Kr. 1000 followed by an additional Kr. 100 for each succeeding performance.[228]

Though the management of the Royal Theatre did remunerate the works of Scandinavian authors, it is evident it took advantage of this by systematically paying much lower rates than those to Danish authors. Even Ibsen and Bjørnson, whose plays proved very successful in Copenhagen, experienced great difficulties when it came to negotiating their fees, and having no protection from the regulations, relied in the end on the goodwill of the management. By 1878 this changed, however, and the works of Scandinavians acquired the same status as those of Danish authors.[229] For Ibsen this took effect with *A Doll's House*, which experienced tremendous success at its world premiere at the Royal Theatre. Paid a percentage of the receipts, according to the regulations, he made more than Kr.9000 by the twenty-fifth performance.

The conflict between the publishing and the staging of a play was not a matter of the fee, but a matter of the time of publication. This time it was generated by a letter sent by Fallesen, in which he requested that the publication of the play be delayed until after the premiere. Ibsen's reply is of interest as he stated the reason why he found that the publication of the book was of greater importance than the staging of the play. In the letter, Ibsen primarily relied on financial arguments. Thus, he repeated Hegel's claim that the publication of the play could not be delayed as it would harm their sale. His first claim was that as the Royal Theatre was not inclined to

[224] Letter: Ibsen to Hegel 20 April 1877.
[225] HIS 13k, p. 498.
[226] Letter: Ibsen to 'Det Kongelige Theater i København' 24 August 1877.
[227] HIS 13k, p. 519
[228] Neiiendam, *Det Kongelige Teaters Historie 1874-1922*, p. 151 (vol 1).
[229] Robert Neiiendam, *Det Kongelige Teaters Historie 1874-1922*, vol. III (København: Jespersen og Pio, 1925), p. 75.

submit a percentage of the income to him, he was forced to finance his work through the publication of the play, rather than the performance, and therefore, it was essential to publish the book in time for the Christmas sales.

> As the Theatre Royal does not see its way to allowing me a certain percentage of the receipts, I am compelled to make the sale of the book my chief source of profit. In our Scandinavian countries, as you are aware, the last two months of the year are the book-selling season; and in order that a book published in Copenhagen may be available at the proper time in the more remote districts of Sweden and Norway, not to mention Finland and America, where a good many of my plays go, it is imperative that it should be sent off not later than the middle of October. If this is not done, there is no chance of the edition being sold out during the Christmas book-market, and the author must wait for a whole year before a new edition is called for. I dare not and cannot expose myself to the risk of such a pecuniary loss, - a loss for which such a payment as the Theatre Royal offers would be no compensation.[230]

But the financial argument only formed half of Ibsen's argumentation. As for the other part, Ibsen deployed an aesthetical argument as to why he thought that publication prior to staging was to be desired. The argument was aimed at the theatre's regulation that rewarded unpublished plays with a higher fee than the published plays.

> Another aspect of the matter is that I think it is damaging to a dramatic work if it is first made available to the general public through scenic [re]presentation. [...] As it is now, a new play cannot be perceived and assessed isolated, in its purity, as it is as poetry. The judgement [of the public] will [therefore] always include the play and its performance, that becomes part of it, and these two rather different things are mixed and the main interest of the audience is as a rule more directed towards the performance, the execution, the players than the play itself.[231]

The argument that Ibsen deployed was new, to the extent that he did not have any of these concerns in the spring when he proposed himself that the play was to be staged at the Royal Theatre in September and followed by publication in October. It is interesting how Ibsen created a very fundamental distinction as part of a discussion which was really about the financial side of his work. In this, I think, one sees the connection between the material condition offered and the possible choices available to him.

Between publishing and theatre

The conflict between publishing and the theatre, as it played out in connection to the transfer of Ibsen's dramatic works to Denmark, was a conflict that evolved around access to the Royal Theatre, the fee paid by the theatre and whether the publication of the play should be directed by the performance of the plays. During the earlier period of his affiliation with the Royal Theatre, Ibsen's approach was very careful. In his first letter he wrote that he himself was aware that his play could only be paid according to the lower rate, but that 'the fee was not what mattered' to him only that it be allowed on the Danish stage. From Ibsen's request the imbalance

[230] Letter: Ibsen to Fallesen 3 October 1877. Translated in Ibsen, *The Correspondence of Henrik Ibsen*, pp. 305–306.
[231] Ibid.

of the relationship is evident. Yet, to Ibsen it was really a matter of gaining access to the Royal Theatre in the first place and the specific conditions must therefore have been of secondary importance to him. In the following period, he was paid a relatively modest amount for the production of some of his older plays. However, as Ibsen's position in relation to the Royal Theatre became more secure, Ibsen's expectations of the fee increased. The fee that he was offered, however, did not increase accordingly and this discrepancy between Ibsen's expectations and the actual fee that he was offered led him to consider the publication of his plays of primacy to their performance.

In the long-run, it could hardly be helped that the concerns of the publishing business should prevail over those of the theatre, as there were numerous reasons which steadily pushed Ibsen in that direction. First of all, there were the difficulties which Ibsen and the other Norwegian writers faced when they submitted their plays to the Royal Theatre. The series of rebuffs which Ibsen experienced when he submitted his plays left him in a very weak position to negotiate his fee when *The League of Youth* was finally accepted. But once his plays were accepted he was faced with the Royal Theatre's regulation which dictated lower fees for foreign plays. Next, there was the fact that by the time his plays were accepted at the Royal Theatre, Ibsen had a steady income generated by his engagement with Gyldendal.

Chapter 4: The scandalous play *Ghosts*

Moving from the Ibsen's acceptance at the Royal Theatre, I now make a jump in time to the scandal which was caused by the publication of the play *Ghosts* when it came out in 1881. The reason for the jump in time is to show how the scandal which surrounded this particular play and its subsequent rejection at the established theatres allowed for a change in the agency involved in the theatrical production. The scandal which followed the publication in the press and the established theatres' rejection of *Ghosts* was, however, not only a Danish phenomenon, but was something which occurred simultaneously throughout Scandinavia, as Gyldendal by that time released Ibsen's plays on the same day in every country. Furthermore, the scandal which the play caused in Scandinavia makes it a valuable point in terms of comparison when I later investigate the transfer of Ibsen's plays to Germany and Britain, where the conflict caused by *Ghosts* greatly influenced the overall transfer of Ibsen's work.

By making the jump directly to the publication and the production of *Ghosts*, I make a huge leap in the chronology of the appropriation of Ibsen in Denmark, and, thus, skip the emergence of Ibsen's famous contemporary problem plays. In Denmark, these plays served to increase Ibsen's renown as a dramatist, and so his position in the cultural field had been consolidated. Chronologically, *Ghosts* followed *Pillars of Society* (1877) and *A Doll's House* (1879) and especially the latter experienced a tremendous success in Copenhagen, something which had heightened the expectations of Ibsen's next play.[232] By the time of the publication of *Ghosts*, Ibsen was, in other words, a long established author who enjoyed renown and widespread success, an important fact when comparing the reaction in Scandinavia to the reaction in Germany and Britain. Yet, the fact that *A Doll's House* had been accepted at the Royal Theatre, even though it dealt with a somewhat controversial topic, shows that the aesthetical field had changed since Ibsen was first introduced in Denmark.

The cultural field in Denmark in 1881 looked very different compared to the late 1860s, when Ibsen had just broken with Clemens Petersen. In the meantime, Georg Brandes had risen to become a great critic in Denmark. But whereas Petersen as a critic had confined himself to the areas of aesthetics and ethics, the cultural life now had a pronounced political side to it, not least due to Brandes, where religion and the emancipation of women had become red hot issues. The explicit politicisation of the cultural field meant that Brandes was not only a literary critic, but also an intellectual with a broader agenda. In this way, Brandes was not the entire nation's 'chief critic' in the way Petersen could have been said to have been, when the aesthetic field was still largely constructed around commonly shared aesthetical principles. The field was now largely polarised between conservatives, who still adhered to the familiar principals of the aesthetic idealism, and Brandes' 'men of the modern breakthrough', as he was later to name

[232] HIS 7k, p. 238ff.

them, writers and intellectuals who had rallied behind his banner since the beginning of the 1870s.[233]

Ibsen: Ghosts, a calculated risk

In light of later events, it is noteworthy that even before the publication of *Ghosts* Ibsen was quite aware that it would likely cause a 'stir' once it came out, given the play's controversial topic. Yet, Ibsen pronounced himself quite ready to run this risk, in order to 'break new ground' as he called it, even though it meant offending some of his audience. With *A Doll's House*, Ibsen had to some extent used this strategy and with great success. *A Doll's House* had been controversial, but it had at the same time been a tremendous financial success as a book and at the Royal Theatre. From the summer of 1881, it is possible to follow Ibsen's preparations for the publication of *Ghosts* in his correspondence with Hegel. Initially, Ibsen was very secretive with regard to the nature of the play. After his recent success, expectations were higher than ever, and there were those who expected a follow-up to *A Doll's House*.[234] Yet not even to Hegel did he reveal the content of the play, which he merely referred to as a 'family drama'.

At end of November, Ibsen finally revealed the reason for all the secrecy with which he had surrounded *Ghosts.* He wrote: '*Ghosts* will most likely cause a fuss in some circles, but it must be so. It would not have been necessary to write it if it had not been so'.[235] Ibsen was in other words aware that his play was likely to cause strong public reactions once it was published, and he saw no reason to let it happen before time. Enclosed in the letter to Hegel were a number of letters for Scandinavian theatres, including the three Scandinavian national theatres, to which he asked Hegel to send copies of the play as soon as it was ready.[236] Finally, on the 13 December the play was published in 10,000 copies.

None of the theatres to which Ibsen sent *Ghosts* accepted the play. That theatres were unwilling to take the play was not a complete shock to Ibsen, who himself was well aware of the controversial character of the play. On the 22 December he had written to Ludwig Passarge (1825-1912), one of the German translators of *Brand*: '... I regard it as completely impossible that the play [*Ghosts*] should be performed at any German theatre; I think that people in the Nordic countries hardly dare to perform it for the time being.'[237] Though Ibsen may have been prepared for the rejection at the theatres, it seems that he was not quite ready for the critics' negative reception and how it would affect the sale of the book. On the 2 January 1882, Ibsen wrote to Hegel again. In this letter it seems that he was beginning to fear that the many very

[233] Lars Handesten et al, *Dansk Litteraturs Historie Vol III, 1870-1920.* (København: Gyldendal, 2009), p. 19ff.
[234] Letter: Ibsen to Hegel, 18 June 1881.
[235] Letter: Ibsen to Hegel 21 November 1881.
[236] The following were the theatres to which he wrote: The Royal Theatre, Copenhagen; Kristiania Theatre, Kristiania; The Royal Theatre, Stockholm; The National Stage of Bergen, Bergen.
[237] HIS 14, p. 102

critical reviews which the play had received in the meantime might damage the sale of the book, and asked Hegel if he thought that that could be the case.

> I am not the least disturbed by the violence of the reviews and all the folly that is written on the subject of *Ghosts*. I was prepared for it. When *Love's Comedy* appeared, there was just as great an outcry in Norway as there is now. *Peer Gynt* too was reviled; so was *Pillars of Society*; so was *A Doll's House*. The cry will die away this time, just as it did on the former occasions. […] One thing troubles me, when I think of the big edition printed. Has all this uproar hurt the sale of the book?[238]

Hegel, however, who was reluctant to be the carrier of bad tidings, was hesitant to tell Ibsen just how poorly the sale of the book was. The Norwegian author Alexander Kielland (1849-1906), who also had Hegel as his publisher, mentioned this in a letter to Georg Brandes: 'The old "heron" [Hegel] was quite uneasy and even went as far as to ask me for advice. I said, of course, that Ibsen ought to be old enough to be able to take an answer to a question.'[239] Yet, Hegel did not feel uneasy without reason and the news that he could convey to Ibsen was not of the most uplifting sort:

> You ask: Has uproar hurt the sale of the book? And to this I must definitely reply: yes. As you would know from the reviews, *Ghosts* has this winter caused a stir like *A Doll's House* did two years ago. This is, however, nothing more than what one could expect. However, alongside the admiration there followed an indignation against the conditions described in *Ghosts*, which are something that people by no means want to enter the family-literature. The effect hereof, has been felt immediately. [...] From several of the bookshops from out of town, mainly Stockholm and Christiania where the papers have directly worked against the sale of the book, I have already received notice that the sale of *Ghosts* does not meet expectations and have been requested to take back large consignments of books; not only copies which they have in commission but also those that were delivered on 'fixed invoice' [books already paid for] and which by the current rules cannot be remitted. In order to keep a good relationship with my colleagues I have decided to oblige their request. Here in Copenhagen, the sale of *Ghosts* has been significantly poorer than your previous writings. – And this has had a negative effect on your earlier works too. Every Christmas, I normally sell a not insignificant number of copies of your writings, but this year's sale has been notably reduced.[240]

From Hegel's description, it would seem that Ibsen's well calculated risk with publishing *Ghosts* had backfired when it came to the financial side of things. Yet, in order to gage the relative success or failure of *Ghosts* one may compare it to sales of *A Doll's House.* When *A Doll's House* was published in December 1879 the first impression was of 8,000 copies. Later that same month a second impression of 3,000 copies was issued, and in March 1880 a third print run of 2,500 copies was printed. After these initial print runs, no new impression was needed until 1896 when another 1,250 copies were printed.[241] With *Ghosts*, the first and very ambitious print run of 10,000 copies lasted until 1894, before another 1,250 copies were

[238] Letter: Ibsen to Hegel, 2 January 1882. Translated in Ibsen, *The Correspondence of Henrik Ibsen*, p. 348.
[239] Quoted from HIS 14k p. 205.
[240] Quoted from L Nielsen, p. 355. My translation.
[241] The initial sale of *A Doll's House* may, however, have been bigger than what is reflected in the publication numbers from Gyldendal. The bookshops of Copenhagen, in addition to the original, sold a translation in German at a much lower price than the Danish edition. The German translation was priced at 20 pfennig while the Danish was priced at 2.25 kroner, and could therefore take some of the expected sales in the Nordic countries. (HIS 7K, p. 224)

printed.[242] After the grand success of *A Doll's House* there is little doubt that the experience of the immediate rejection of *Ghosts* must have seemed very grave to Ibsen and Hegel. In the long-run, however, there was not a very big difference in the numbers of the copies printed when compared to *A Doll's House.* In the period from the time of publication to the turn of the century, *Ghosts* was published in 11,250 copies, whereas *A Doll's House* was published in 14,750 copies. The fact that *Ghosts* did not sell immediately as a book was not even directly reflected in Ibsen's private economy, as he received his fee from Gyldendal when his plays were printed. The economic effect of the scandal caused by *Ghosts* was, however, reflected clearly in Ibsen's overall income due to the missing income from the Scandinavian theatres. Here one sees a big difference with *A Doll's House* which had indeed proved very profitable to Ibsen.

The scandal: Ghosts in reviews

When it came out in December 1881, Ibsen's *Ghosts* caused a scandal like few other plays in the history of Scandinavian theatre. The play, with its references to syphilis and euthanasia, was thought to be appalling and the topic not something that most people thought appropriate to be put in print or brought onto the stage. In spite of the very rough treatment that Ibsen and his play received in most Scandinavian papers after the publication, it was not everybody who was against the play. In Denmark Brandes and his 'men of the modern breakthrough' publicly supported Ibsen, and in Norway Bjørnson decided to put old enmity aside and entered the debate to defend Ibsen. The debate which followed the publication of *Ghosts* was not only a question of aesthetical and politically conservative forces struggling about the hypocrisy of bourgeois culture, with Brandes and Bjørnson. In Denmark, a new artistic generation, who had not been part of Brandes' modern breakthrough, was emerging, and to them Ibsen's latest play appeared a godsend.

In his book, *Ibsen and Denmark* (1898), Valdemar Vedel (1865-1945) sketched the commotion which *Ghosts* caused in Denmark when it came out, but at the same time he touched upon the generational aspects which led to widely different interpretations of the play:

> After *A Doll's House* followed *Ghosts.* Had the previous made a din as a cabbage stem fed to the munching ducks in the run, *Ghosts* now had the effect of an unspeakable word suddenly uttered during a society dinner, or a plague victim that turns up in an unsuspecting city. It was hushed down in the papers, and was debarred from the homes, fathers treated it as if it was a dangerous dynamite cartridge, sons smuggled it in as illicit goods, young girls dared not admit to have read it, and from all over bookshops returned numerous pre-ordered copies to the publisher, and the big print run which had been made after the success of *A Doll's House*, lasted for a dozen years before it was sold out. But on a small intellectually sensitive group of readers the play had a stronger and more profound effect than perhaps any play had had either before or after, stronger perhaps than any piece

[242] The numbers of printed copies in this paragraph are drawn from: 'Liste over Henrik Ibsens indtægter, udarbejdet på grundlag af Gyldendals arkiv' by Paul Helbøll (1956).

> of art in living memory. The play functioned as an acid to separate the components in Ibsen's audience.[243]

Vedel's description of the scandal which *Ghosts* caused, though inaccurate when he claimed that it was hushed down in the press, very effectively conveys the impression of the scandal from the perspective of the bourgeois family. Judging from Vedel's age, the description most likely drew on his own experiences of the reception of the play as a young man. What was significant was the generational aspect of the scandal evident in the description, something which was mirrored in other countries where *Ghosts* became the play of the very youngest artistic generation. The group of 'sensitive readers', which Vedel mentioned, was the generation of artists and writers which was emerging in the wake of the modern breakthrough, but who had been too young to be part of Brandes project. Unlike the 'breakthrough generation' they thought little of revolutionising the cultural field or politicising arts, but were taken up with more introspective matters and, Vedel claimed, read *Ghosts* in a very different way than Brandes and his generation.[244] The Danish author and critic Herman Bang (1857-1912) was one of the people to whom *Ghosts* strongly appealed. Bang's first novel, *Families Without Hope* (1880), had itself caused something of a scandal when it came out in Denmark, and was one of the few books of the time that was banned and had to be withdrawn. Bang's reception bears witness to how *Ghosts* to his generation became a rallying point, though for different reasons than for those of the modern breakthrough.

In the following, I investigate positions in the Danish reception to the publication of *Ghosts*. In order to give an overview of the composition of the formations in the reviews I have divided it into three perspectives, which correspond to three different positions in the cultural field: that of the dominant conservative press, which was opposed to *Ghosts*, that of Brandes, and finally I will investigate the perspective of Bang, but not until later in the chapter when I turn to the first production of the play.[245] As positions in the cultural field, the three perspectives did not carry equal weight. What I have here labelled the conservative perspective, as it must be seen as a combination of right wing politics and aesthetic idealism, was by far the most dominant in terms of visibility in the press and the institutional weight it carried. The latter is evident from the fact that *Ghosts* was rejected by all theatres, and it was this perspective which dominated most in Danish papers. Though Brandes' perspective was voiced primarily by him, he and the people around him had long been a force in the cultural debate. Thus, Brandes' review of *Ghosts* must be seen as part of the ongoing cultural debate touching on big issues such as religion, the rights of women and public morality, and his praise of *Ghosts* as an act which served to place the play in the movement of the modern breakthrough ideology. Bang's position in the literary

[243] Valdemar Vedel, *Ibsen og Danmark* (Bergen, 1898), p. 91.
[244] Ibid., p. 93 ff.
[245] For general trends in the Scandinavian reception of *Ghosts* see HIS 7k pp.435-449. To the extent that I accentuate the reception differently than the referred Odland (1990) one must remember that the focus of the present thesis is the agency involved in the transfer rather than an overview of the reception, which makes some agents reception more important than others.

field was, however, even more marginalised. Like Brandes, his position was a counter-position to the established cultural order, but it differed from Brandes' position and had neither the political ambitions nor the support which the modern breakthrough movement possessed. Yet, despite his marginalised position, Bang was a popular columnist in the papers, and his position is important as it provides some insight into the self-perception of the people engaged in bringing *Ghosts* to the stage. I return to Bang and this emerging position in the field in greater detail below.

The reception in the conservative press

The reviews of *Ghosts* were fiercest in the conservative press. The outcome of the increased fusion between art and culture, which followed in the wake of the modern breakthrough, had escalated the political rhetoric of the reviews and Ibsen's play could not avoid being caught up in the battle between entrenched positions. This fusion between art and politics was not least evident in the review of the play in the Danish paper *Dagbladet*:

> Ibsen has called his play a 'family drama', but he could just as well have called it a 'revolutionary drama' for the overall trend is not reformation, but revolution, and when it portrays the ethical organisation of society, which is its topic, it is in the darkest colours available and not to show that its organisation can and may be better, more just, purer, but, in truth, to announce that it is to be replaced by something altogether different.[246]

The view that Ibsen's play was altogether subversive and aimed at undermining the core values of society was a popular view often repeated in both Danish and, as we shall see later, German and British papers. In Denmark, an even more violent rejection of *Ghosts* could be read in the paper *Nationaltidende*, which stated: '...only Ibsen's great skill and his literary standing prevents that his latest work is thrown straight in the cesspit where this type of writing rightly belongs.'[247] The latter statement was, however, uncharacteristically coarse for a newspaper in which Ibsen had enjoyed a high standing amongst the (national) writers for a long time, and is more akin to the statements which would greet the play in Britain, where he was an unknown writer from a faraway country at the time the play was first produced. The scandal which *Ghosts* caused was also a pan-Scandinavian phenomenon and some of the most elaborate attacks on *Ghosts* were not to be found in Denmark, but in the conservative Norwegian press. The Norwegian reception has been estimated to be more vicious than both the Danish and the Swedish reception of the play, but the attacks followed the same line of argumentation.[248] The review of *Ghosts* in the paper *Aftenposten* may serve as an example of the conservative

[246] Unsigned review, 'Review of Ghosts in "Dagbladet" 21 December 1881', *Dagbladet* (Copenhagen, 21 December 1881).
[247] Quoted from Vedel, p. 92.
[248] HIS 7k, p. 436

Norwegian reception and its objections are particularly noteworthy as Brandes referred to them in his defence of Ibsen.[249]

The review in *Aftenposten* began by stating that, unlike Ibsen's earlier plays, *Ghosts* was not likely to promote any discussion amongst its readers. All Ibsen's preceding plays had stirred up debate by forcing readers and spectators to consider the 'big questions of the time': *Brand, The League of Youth* and *A Doll's House* had all had that effect. In *Ghosts*, however, there was nothing to be 'puzzled about', as the play was 'too bizarre to be taken seriously'. The description that Ibsen offered of society in his play was too distorted to be recognisable and was not a description of a society that the reviewer was willing to recognise as his own.

Like the Danish review in *Dagbladet*, *Aftenposten* also saw *Ghosts* as an attack on the foundation of society, but in *Aftenposten* efforts were made to dismiss Ibsen as an adversary 'that had already been dealt with'. Thus, Ibsen was portrayed as merely the latest in the long line of people who preached the gospel 'of utilitarian morality':

> [Ibsen is] one amongst the many voices, which have already sounded long and will continue to do so, preaching the teachings of the utilitarian moral in its different shades; heredity, naively perceived as freedom from responsibility, free love, the breaking of family ties, the 'painless death' for the sick and the unhappy, etc.. [...] We receive *Ghosts* from Darwin, Mill, Spencer, Häckel, Hellenbach, Brandes, etc. not with the apprentice's respectful air, but with an unceremonious familiarity, with which one accepts everyday disagreement and pretty scuffle. We receive Ibsen's drama as an uncomfortable shower; we dry ourselves and live on.[250]

It is evident how Ibsen, in the eyes of *Aftenposten*, had placed himself in a certain infamous tradition with his latest play, a tradition that had Brandes as the Scandinavian representative. This association with the 'utilitarian morality' led to a number of what were evidently stock-accusations. According to the review, Ibsen had accused society of two 'major crimes', which led to the play's horrible conclusion. The first was that society could not accommodate the late Mr Alving's (depraved) 'appetite for life', and the second that the priest, in the name of duty, sent Mrs Alving back to her husband when she tried to leave him. Ibsen's answer to these challenges, claimed the reviewer, was suicide in the case that 'the abandonment of virtue did not make people happy'. It should be added that accusing Ibsen of advocating suicide was nothing extraordinary for this review, but was a common accusation in the negative reviews both in Scandinavia and elsewhere.

In Denmark, not all conservative critics were as harsh as the reviewer in *Nationaltidende* or the Norwegian *Aftenposten.* Erik Bøgh (1822-1899) wrote a review in the paper *Dagen* where he praised Ibsen's technical skill.[251] Bøgh's review was of particular importance as besides being a literary critic he was the new censor at the Royal Theatre. Following general condemnation, Ibsen was personally quite content with Bøgh's review and even wrote and thanked him for

[249] Unsigned review, 'Literatur - Henrik Ibsen: Gengangere', *Aftenposten* (Kristiania, 17 December 1881).
[250] Ibid.
[251] Erik Bøgh, 'Om Henrik Ibsens "Gengangere"', *Dagen* (Copenhagen, 20 December 1881).

it.[252] Yet, neither Bøgh's good opinion of the especially skilful construction of the drama, nor Ibsen's letter, changed the fact that Bøgh as censor felt compelled to reject the play.

In his review, Bøgh compared *Ghosts* with *A Doll's House*, but rather than lament the development in Ibsen's latest play, Bøgh used the comparison to highlight the technical advancements in the construction of the narrative. In his review, Bøgh repeated some of the criticism levelled at *A Doll's House* when it came out, which at the time was claimed to be psychologically implausible due to the discrepancy between Helmer's devotion to his wife and Nora's willingness to abandon man and children, as well as the radical transformation that Nora undergoes from innocent 'child-wife' to independent woman. These technical weaknesses, Bøgh claimed, did not exist in *Ghosts*. But more than anything, it was the realism with which the events occur that impressed Bøgh: 'Everything occurs naturally, without jumps, without implausibility and exaggeration.'[253] To Bøgh, the realism of the play was one of its chief virtues: 'All the characters are so real as if they had been photographs of nature and they neither say nor do anything that does not correspond to their nature and predisposition of character.'[254] Bøgh's praise for the play was connected with what he saw as technical advancements compared to the previous play, something which was connected to the emerging naturalism in Scandinavian literature and drama. The review, however, hinted at the following rejection at the Royal Theatre, as Bøgh concluded that the play would not be for everybody, especially not those who seek 'beauty and reconciliation' in art. Bøgh's ultimate rejection of the play as censor must be seen in connection with the conservative outlook which was part of the theatre's institutional self-understanding as the guardian of (national) culture.[255]

Georg Brandes in defence of *Ghosts*

Brandes' review was printed in the Danish paper *Morgenbladet.* Compared to other reviews, it arrived relatively late, something which gave him the possibility of addressing the criticism to which the play had been subjected to in the press. Brandes' point of entry in his review of *Ghosts* was a comparison between a dissertation, written on heredity and morality, and the play.[256] 'Where the one deals with the topic scientifically', he wrote, 'the other deals with it dramatically'. With this thesis as his point of reference, Brandes claimed a connection between 'emotions and heredity', stating that 'emotions and dogmas' that no longer belong to existing conditions of life are preserved in society, even after the conditions which originally motivated them had ceased to exist.

> Ibsen's drama deals with the theory of heredity dramatically and displays with support in [the theory of] determinism, which once and for all is the modern sciences final word on the matter, the child's

[252] Letter: Ibsen to Bøgh: 24 December 1881.
[253] Bøgh.
[254] Ibid.
[255] Bøgh, censorship report 26 December 1881. Reprinted in Agerholm p. 279.
[256] Georg Brandes, 'Henrik Ibsen: Gengangere', *Morgenbladet* (Copenhagen, 28 December 1881).

> general determinedness by the parents [...]. This [the hereditary emotions] do produce, particularly in civilisations and individuals who have artificially been hindered from participating in the advancing cultural life, a more or less tenacious conflict between new insight and an old emotional life that not only hinders the acquisition of new truths, but produces an internal reaction against them.[257]

The connection that Brandes established between heredity and emotions (and dogmas) was of particular importance as it formed the foundation for a more general assault on religion and tradition, which he found confirmed in the play. Though Brandes did not write what he thought were the moral consequences of the theory of heredity, there is little doubt that he lived up to the viewpoint presented in *Aftenbladet*, where he was already mentioned on list of persons advocating utilitarian morality.

In his review Brandes took time to defend the play from the criticism put forth in many of the negative reviews of the play. It is worth noting that the reviews which he dealt with were the Norwegian ones, which underlines the fact that the two countries had a mutual forum for literary debate. Brandes attacked the negative reviews on two grounds: first for the fact that they often expected Ibsen's opinions to be expressed directly through the lines of one of the characters (usually Mrs Alving or Osvald) which he claimed was sheer foolishness, adding that 'persons like Mrs Alving did exist long before Ibsen invented his characters'. Secondly, he rejected the claim that *Ghosts* was too 'epic', which had been a recurring point of criticism. Given the fact that it was a drama, too much of the narrative was located in the past and only appeared on the stage through the characters' dialogue. These objections had their roots in the aesthetical teachings that were popular early in the century and of which Heiberg was an example in Denmark. From the way in which Brandes addressed these objections, it is evident that he considered them aesthetically outdated, thereby suggesting that the critic who advanced them were falling behind the times.

Yet, it is important to note that Brandes' review was not only about aesthetics. He quoted the review from the Danish paper *Dagbladet*, which had stated that it was 'naive' or 'an act of defiance' that Ibsen had submitted his play to the Royal Theatre, as the reviewer considered it a downright impossibility that any theatre should be willing to stage the play.[258] This prompt rejection of *Ghosts* leds Brandes to continue:

> [W]hen I look at the effort that *Dagbladet* and other likeminded papers put into it, I do think it plausible that they will succeed in preventing the staging of *Ghosts* in Copenhagen in spite of the intelligent and unencumbered eye of the manager and in spite of everything that the theatre owes Ibsen. Those couple of thousand people who make up [high] society and call themselves 'the society', try to make the millions believe that they are the state, have a chief interest in preventing an officially authorised place from producing anything which is serious, gripping or strikingly true; they may easily be able to stop the performance or at least ruin it for the playwright and the theatre. Fifty years ago they would have made the printing of the play impossible, now they can hinder its performance and continue to do so for as long as the national theatres in Europe do not consider

[257] Ibid.
[258] Unsigned review, 'Review of Ghosts in "Dagbladet" 21 December 1881'.

> themselves state theatres, which was their original purpose, but a luxury of society or [high] 'society'.[259]

Brandes did not go as far as to name the people that he thought made up high society, and who allegedly controlled the theatres. Though for contemporary readers there may not have been a need for any specification of the people or groups which Brandes referred to. Throughout the review, Brandes mostly confines himself to attacking the review of *Dagbladet*, but in the quote above it is obvious that the battle was not merely a matter of a quibble about aesthetics, but that the reception of the play reflected an underlying struggle for hegemony in the field. Evidently, the ideological control of the theatre was thought to be of vital importance to the cultural battle between Brandes and his followers and the adherers of the established social order. Aesthetics, morality and politics were closely intertwined and looking in the reviews of *Ghosts* it is impossible to tell which was the most important at the time.

It was at times difficult to place Ibsen in relation to politics, and he himself actively resisted the attempt to associate him with any political faction. Yet, in the case of *Ghosts* and *A Doll's House* before it, the plays dealt with issues which meant that they became associated with the new radical literature. To some of Ibsen's conservatively minded supporters this was undoubtedly an unfortunate development. From the review in *Nationaltidende*, it is evident that Ibsen by the time of *Ghosts* had reached a position where most reviewers found it impossible merely to dismiss the drama out of hand. Even in the most negative reviews considerable consideration went into dealing with the play. This was not least true in Norway where Ibsen held a perhaps even more prominent position in the cultural life than in Denmark. The aforementioned review in *Aftenbladet*, for instance, sought to find a way to reject *Ghosts* and yet salvage Ibsen's early work. In Denmark, the various reactions in the conservative press are equally striking. It ranged from outright rejection in *Nationaltidende* to Bøgh's position where he could still praise the technical advancement of the play, in spite of the topic.

Brandes' review is telling of the way in which he and his faction positioned themselves in cultural life. Their position was constructed around a notion of representing the advancing cultural life, largely drawing on a scientific discourse. This is particularly evident in Brandes' review, where he made a connection between the theory of heredity and the historical progress of man. The distinction that underlay the review was not one between a moralist standpoint and an immoral standpoint, but one between being in accordance with 'the advancing cultural life' or of holding on to outdated beliefs, which belonged to an earlier historical period. In this way, Brandes was indirectly saying that the moralist standpoint was outdated, as it held on to dogmas which had lost their validity. Thus, Brandes, and Ibsen in the case of *Ghosts*, stood through their alliance with science for the future, and their standpoint was a direct challenge to traditional bourgeois values. This becomes very clear in the second quotation from Brandes' review, where he explicitly addressed the commonplaceness of what he called 'society' (high

[259] Brandes, 'Henrik Ibsen: Gengangere'.

society), claiming that they had made a plaything of the Royal Theatre and stripped it of its aesthetic value.

Ghosts' path to the stage – the story of a touring company

The scandal which *Ghosts* had caused at publication and its subsequent rejection by the Royal Theatre's censor, meant that the play for a time was left in a vacuum, where not even the commercial theatres dared attempt to stage it. But whereas the established cultural institutions showed little interest in bringing it to production, there were people who yearned to see it performed. In this way, the vacuum left by the rejection proved to be an opportunity for a new set of agents that now for the first time had a possibility to engage with Ibsen's plays, which otherwise had been the privilege of the Royal Theatre. In Scandinavia, *Ghosts* was first performed by the Swedish actor manager August Lindberg (1846-1916) and his travelling company. The first production was staged in the Swedish provincial town of Helsingborg, and from there it was moved to Copenhagen where it was housed at Folketeatret. From Copenhagen, Lindberg went on a tour with *Ghosts* to the three Scandinavian countries.

Lindberg's preparations to bring the play to the Danish capital were all carried out in the shadow of the scandal which the play had caused upon publication. The first premiere of the play had been relocated to the provincial Swedish town of Helsingborg, presumably to gauge the responses to the play before transferring the production the short distances across the sound to Copenhagen. One of the people who followed the preparations of Lindberg and his troupe was Herman Bang. Bang was a personal friend of August Lindberg and had been invited to witness the dress rehearsals, from which he reported in the magazine *Vor Tid (Our Time)*. From Bang's accounts one receives a strong impression of the nervous excitement brought on by the dread of renewing scandal, which characterised the final preparations. Yet, to Lindberg, the actors and Bang there was no doubt that what they were about to undertake was a profound achievement. Bang wrote:

> Lindberg is admirable as Osvald. To think that all the theatre managers of the North *now* for two years have had the play at their desk and yet it is *he* who is the first to perform it. He, who is to direct – arrange and himself play Osvald. He has done it in such a way as presumably no other than he would be capable of doing it. After him a host of actors will assume the part and celebrate triumphs. Yet, it will never be forgotten that he was the first.[260]

Bang's involvement with Lindberg's production is particularly noteworthy because of the role he would later play in the early French appropriation of Ibsen's plays. In the 1890s Bang assisted Aurélien Lugné-Poe (1869-1940), the pioneer of French symbolist theatre, with the

[260] Herman Bang, 'Gengangere: I. Generalprøven', *Vor Tid*, 1883.

productions of Ibsen's plays, which in this way were aesthetically drawn from the direction of the original Scandinavian productions.[261]

The fact that Lindberg's production had been moved to provincial Sweden, it becomes evident that the cultural field had a special dimension to it which related to geographical space. In the issue of the magazine *Vor Tid*, in which Bang's article appeared, there was a review of the production by Peter Nansen (1861-1918).[262] In his review, Nansen placed as much emphasis on the event of the production as on the performance itself, and it was clear that he, like Bang, shared the sensation of witnessing something monumental. From Nansen's review one receives a sense of the significance that was attached to the fact that the play was first staged in a provincial Swedish town. When keeping in mind Copenhagen's theatrical market, Nansen's reflections on the fact that the premiere had been moved out of Copenhagen sheds light on the geographical dimension involved in the cultural field which almost renders it tangible. Thus, Nansen called the attention of the readers to Lindberg's marginalised position, fashioning him as one who had been driven from the theatres of the capital:

> Finally the moment has arrived when a brave man dares to portray the Hamlet of our time, whose name is Osvald Alving. Debarred from the capital's stages, *Ghosts*, this a brilliant dramatist's most brilliant work, had to move to a small provincial theatre to be interpreted by a man who himself has been driven from the capital of his country.[263]

A theme of ostracism ran throughout the review and Nansen used the figure of Hamlet to underline Lindberg's position not only as a voice from the fringe but as a voice of truth, a figure, which in other words contained many of the qualities that Lindberg may have wished to have associated with his production. Yet, the idea to associate the production with Hamlet was perhaps not Nansen's own invention. Lindberg had himself played Hamlet in Copenhagen not long before the production of *Ghosts*, and had shocked the audience by not delivering the lines of the prince of Denmark in the usual high, declamatory style, but in something resembling everyday speech.[264] What underlined the comparison with Hamlet was the fact that Lindberg had chosen to perform the play in the Swedish town of Helsingborg, which is the Swedish counterpart to the Danish town of Elsinore.

Yet, Lindberg may have had other reasons to find Helsingborg attractive as a place for his premiere of *Ghosts*. Helsingborg was only the first stop on the tour. After a single performance at Helsingborg Stads Teater the tour would, in the event of success, continue to Copenhagen, and the short distance between Helsingborg and Copenhagen made it easy to move the performance to the Danish capital. But the short distance between Helsingborg and Copenhagen not only made it easy to move the performance, it also made it possible for people

[261] Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, 'Le Grand Metteur En Scène: Herman Bang in Paris, 1893-94', *Scandinavian-Canadian Studies*, vol. 9 (1996), 73–90.
[262] Nansen was later to become literary manager of Gyldendal in 1896 at the request of Frederik Hegel's son Jacob Hegel.
[263] Peter Nansen, 'Gengangere: II. Den Første Opførelse', *Vor Tid*, 1883, 342–43.
[264] Lagerroth 2006, p. 97

from Copenhagen to attend the premiere. That this happened is evident from Nansen's review, in which he gave an account of the audience:

> The entire aristocracy of Skaane was present, and took up the first couple of rows. Then there were the many visitors from Denmark, a number of our authors, actors – though, none from the Royal Theatre – and journalists too, were strongly represented. Then the remaining audience; every seat in the theatre was taken. At the last minute, a steamship from Copenhagen arrived with a late party of Danes.[265]

The account of the spectators to some extent contradicts the notion of a marginalised event, as we learn that the entire aristocracy of Skaane was present at the performance. It also shows that the play, though on Swedish soil, clearly was a prelude to the performance in Copenhagen as many of the people attending the performance were those who would support the Danish premiere. Following the premiere in Helsingborg, the production moved to Folketeatret in Copenhagen, where it ran as a guest performance with Lindberg's troupe. In both Danish and Swedish papers the production was pronounced a success.[266]

The general success of Lindberg's production of *Ghosts* in Scandinavia may seem surprising given the outcry that the same had caused not even three years before. Most likely there is no single explanation that accounts for the general readiness to accept the play, which covers the local contexts in the different countries. With his next play, *An Enemy of Society* (1883), Ibsen had himself done what he could to reconcile with his wider audience, and this to some extent worked. In Sweden, for instance, the national theatre did in fact stage *Ghosts* only a short time after Lindberg's troupe had performed it in the city, which suggests that in Sweden at least the consternation had passed over. In Denmark, however, this was not the case, and the Royal Theatre did not stage *Ghosts* until 1903.[267] Lindberg's production generally received favourable reviews, but, interestingly, given Lindberg's premiere in Sweden, the fact that it was a travelling troupe which staged the play under makeshift conditions and not the Royal Theatre seems to some extent to have mollified the critics. The improvised character of the production may also account for the fact that no attempts were made to censor the production or restrict it due to the Royal Theatre's privileges.

In more structural terms, the increased differentiation of the theatrical market, which happened over the course of the second part of the nineteenth century but which really gained momentum in the last quarter, was also a factor which made time work in favour of Lindberg and Ibsen's controversial play. When *Ghosts* came out the outcry against it had seemed almost universal, with only Brandes and a few others sided with Ibsen, but even at that point the views expressed did not necessarily represent views of the public as a whole. In the beginning of the 1880s, the vast majority of papers were culturally and politically conservative, and the censor of the Royal

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[265] Nansen.
[266] Adolf Falkman, 'Henrik Ibsens "Gengangre Paa Scenen', *Aftenposten* (Kristiania, 25 August 1883); Unsigned review, 'Theater', *Helsingborgstidningen Skånes Allehanda* (Helsingborg, 23 August 1883); Unsigned review, 'Teater. Gengångare Af Henrik Ibsen', *Helsingborgs Tidning* (Helsingborg, 23 August 1883).
[267] Repertoire Database: http://ibsen.nb.no/id/41578

Theatre was a notoriously conservative office. These institutions, however, were increasingly challenged when it came to speaking for the bourgeoisie as a whole, even it cultural matters, which amongst other things is evident from the fact that it was amongst the younger generation that one found the supporters of *Ghosts*. The increased segregation of the theatrical audience, which followed as more theatres emerged during the latter part of the nineteenth century, was another factor that made it possible for *Ghosts* to flourish in the theatre as a niche production, even if it was shunned by the more conservative theatre-going public.

The story of Ibsen's *Ghosts* and its way to the stage is not only the narrative of the scandal it caused, but also about constrains in the theatrical markets. From the history of the transfer of *Ghosts* to Germany and Britain, it is evident that the play in these countries also challenged the local markets by being difficult to incorporate in the existing structures. In Copenhagen, the theatrical market was dominated by the Royal Theatre due to its privileges. This in turn had produced an institution with a specific agenda, which could not accommodate a play such as *Ghosts* that fell into the category of drama yet was perceived to be subversive. It was, however, the Royal Theatre's rejection of the play which provided Lindberg with the opportunity to engage with one of Ibsen's plays, something which he would otherwise not have been able to do. In a broader perspective, Lindberg's production may be seen as part of the attempt to establish a serious theatre outside the institutional framework which the Royal Theatre offered. In this way, Lindberg's success with the play was not only due to the masterful skills of him and his troupe, but may partly be attributed to the diversification of the theatrical market that happened in those years and for which it catered. Thus, it is telling that Copenhagen's third commercial theatre, Dagmar Theatret, which had opened the same year as Lindberg's staging of *Ghosts*, soon after sought to break with the restrictions in the repertoire and aspired to become a literary theatre by staging the plays of Ibsen and authors belonging to the same modern vain in Scandinavian drama.

Conclusion

The first part of the thesis followed Ibsen and the transfer of his plays from Norway to Denmark through an investigation of the structures, which conditioned the transfer and the agent who together with him were involved in appropriating the plays in relation to the markets and the cultural field.

Chapter One set out to analyse the agency and the structural conditions involved in Ibsen's transition from his engagement with various Norwegian publishers to his lasting collaboration with the publisher Frederik Hegel at the Danish publishing house Gyldendal. The chapter made use of a double perspective, as it first investigated the transfer from the perspective of the Norwegian authors, and subsequently the perspective of the Danish publisher. In relation to Ibsen, the financial limitations of the Norwegian market, both the theatrical and the book market, was used as a backdrop to explain why it was attractive to seek a Danish publisher despite the fact that he was engaged in cultural nation-building. From this point of departure, the chapter investigated the agency of the transfer, and showed how first Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson with the help of Clemens Petersen, and later Ibsen through the mediation of Bjørnson found their way to Gyldendal. Adopting a perspective of the importer, the transfer was placed in relation to Gyldendal's position in the Danish field of publishing. It was found that at the time of the initial transfer a generational shift was occurring in Danish publishing with the decline of the dominating publishing house Reitzel, which had successfully published all the major artistic writers of the previous generation. Reitzel's decline made it attractive to Gyldendal to publish up-and-coming authors, in spite of the risk which was initially estimated to be connected with the publication of Norwegian authors. The change in the balance of power, which occurred in the publishing business at the same time as Gyldendal began to issue the works of the Norwegian authors, must be seen in connection to the shift in the field of literature described in the outset of chapter two. Here the emergence of a notion of the decline in Danish literature made critics and publishers look abroad to Norway when it came to filling the vacuum left by the former generation of Danish authors.

Chapter Two provided an investigation of Ibsen's attempts to be integrated into the Danish cultural field. The chapter analysed two principal issues: first, the aforementioned emerging notion of the decline of Danish literature after the apogee of the former generations, something which by some was interpreted as an opening towards the import of the works of Norwegian authors. Secondly, the way in which Ibsen sought to place himself in the field, by attempting to obtain Clemens Petersen's patronage. The background for understanding Ibsen's attempt to secure Petersen's goodwill was found in the changes which the Danish field of culture underwent in the 1860's, where the former dominating aesthetic paradigm, aesthetic idealism that in Denmark was championed by Johan Ludvig Heiberg, increasingly came under pressure. In this time of change, the position which Petersen, together with Bjørnson, was constructing in the field was found to be the strongest contender when it came to replacing the former

paradigm. Given the rising position of the Petersen-Bjørnson axis in Danish cultural life, it was found that this was the main reason for Ibsen's attempt to be associated with the project. The chapter further investigated the development of Ibsen's attempt and how Ibsen finally broke with Petersen when it became obvious to him that his work was not found to match Petersen's aesthetic programme.

Chapter Three provided an investigation of the transfer of Ibsen's plays to the theatres of Copenhagen. This was based on an analysis of which of Ibsen's plays were staged in Copenhagen and at what theatres the individual plays were brought to production. The analysis revealed that the Royal Theatre staged the majority of Ibsen's plays, and that the commercial theatres were left with the plays that for various reasons were not taken up by the Royal Theatre. The Royal Theatre's key role in the appropriation was ascribed to the privileged position which it held in the Danish theatrical market, a position which meant that the theatre in effect controlled the general availability of Ibsen's plays in Copenhagen. The central position of the Royal Theatre led to an investigation of the institution's internal structure, in order to explore the agency behind the institutional power of the theatre, and the reasons for accepting or rejecting Ibsen's plays. In the analysis the general power to determine the repertoire was found to rest with the theatre's changing censor, but the work of the censor was seen to be shaped by the notion of the theatre's cultural mission, the paradigm of aesthetic idealism and the notion of the Royal Theatre's obligation to be the protector of the Danish language. The specific circumstances in connection with the acceptance of Ibsen's *The League of Youth*, however, showed that the censor's power to define the repertoire in praxis was a matter of negotiation and at times could be circumvented. Thus, the manager, in collaboration with Mrs Heiberg, succeeded in revoking the current censor's, Hauch's, decision to reject *The League of Youth*, which led to a general acceptance of Ibsen's plays at the theatre.

The fourth and final chapter of Part One made a jump in time to the scandal caused by the publication of Ibsen's play *Ghosts*. By the time of publication, Ibsen had cemented his position in the Danish literary sphere as one of the leading authors. It was shown that the cultural field in Denmark had changed, and a new radical position, that of Georg Brandes, had emerged. This position was in opposition to the paradigm of aesthetic idealism, which still held sway with large parts of the public and in established cultural institutions and media. Prior to the publication of *Ghosts* Ibsen was himself well aware that his latest play would possibly alienate some of his audience due to its controversial topic, but this was something he was prepared to risk in order to 'break new ground'. The fact that with *Ghosts* Ibsen had succeeded in making a controversial play, which caused the anticipated scandal, meant that Ibsen gained influence with the advocates of the new radical literature. In financial terms the scandal meant that *Ghosts* in the short run proved less profitable that Ibsen's preceding plays, and that he entirely lost the projected income from the Royal Theatre, as the play was rejected. The rejection at the Royal Theatre, however, had the effect that a new set of agents had the possibility to engage with Ibsen's work. Thus, the Swedish actor manager August Lindberg became the first to stage the

play not only in Copenhagen, but in all of the Scandinavian capitals. Lindberg's production of *Ghosts*, which toured all of Scandinavia after its staging in Copenhagen, must be seen in connection with the other European productions of the play which followed. As a general trend, these productions were debarred from the established theatres, and very often only non-public staging of the play was possible, which was the case with the first German and English productions.

Part Two: Ibsen and Germany

Introduction

'The transfer of Ibsen's plays to Germany' is the second part of the thesis; it is preceded by an investigation of the transfer of Ibsen's plays to Denmark and followed by one transfer to Britain. The investigation of the transfer to Germany (German Empire) consists of five chapters with the overall aim to follow the diffusion of Ibsen's plays through translations, publications and theatrical productions in the period from when the first drama was translated in 1866 to the general breakthrough on the German stages in the late 1880s. On an overall level, I work with the notion of three waves in the theatrical productions of Ibsen's plays: the first was characterised by the translation and theatrical production of his historical plays in 1876-1878 (Chapter 3). The second encompasses Ibsen's problem plays, *Pillars of Society* in 1878 and *A Doll's House* in 1880, which in the theatres proved his first big commercial success and a subsequent failure repectively (Chapter 4). The third wave was the naturalists' appropriation of his plays, most notably *Ghosts*, which like in Scandinavia caused a scandal, though managed to pave the way for Ibsen's breakthrough (Chapter 5). The three chapters are preceded by a chapter on Ibsen's life as an author in Germany, and what his presence meant for the transfer of his plays (Chapter 1), and a chapter on the general conditions of the book market and how it influenced the publications of Ibsen's works (Chapter 2).

The transfer of Ibsen's plays to Germany both in print and as theatre was a much more complex affair than was the case with the transfer to Denmark; not only did the plays have to be translated, which added another level to the process, but they were not protected by copyright, which meant that many more agents could partake in the dissemination. The absence of copyright meant that at times there were competing transfer attempts where translators, both with and without Ibsen's consent, translated his plays and sought to market them in Germany. The Norwegian language, however, remained an obstacle for the easy transfer of Ibsen's plays, and the central agents, especially in the early period of the transfer, were very often the people who were capable of translating the plays. This means not only that my investigation takes on a new dimension as I investigate the agency of the translators, but the absence of copyright has the consequence that the narrative becomes one with multiple strands and many more agents than was the case with my investigation of the transfer of Ibsen's plays to Denmark.

Increased complexity also arose from the fact that the German Empire, not to speak of all the German speaking areas, was a vast cultural space which had a number of cultural centres. In spite of its recent political unity and the fact that more cultural power was centred in the new Reichshauptstadt the princely courts still had important cultural functions and cities such as Munich and Dresden were important cultural centres in their own right. Unlike in Denmark and Britain, where cultural power to a very large extent was centred in the capital, attention must

be given to the polycentric structure of the German cultural field. In theatre, Berlin, with its many commercial theatres, gradually assumed more importance during the final quarter of the nineteenth century, yet the court theatres that still existed in many places were and continued to be important cultural institutions. The German theatre, which throughout the period was considered the most prestigious, was not even in imperial Germany, but was the Hof-Burg Theater in Vienna.[268] In publishing the pattern was much the same: only in the 1860s did Berlin supersede Leipzig as the German capital of publishing, but the former centres, first and foremost Leipzig, but also Hamburg and Munich, remained important as well.[269]

The plurality of cultural centres, the number of waves in the introduction of the plays, and the number of agents, which partook in the transfer, means that I change the scope of the investigation to a more overall level, compared to the one in the first part of the thesis. Where it is possible, I still single out individual agents in the cases in which I think they were vital to the overall transfer, but generally I attempt to view the individual agents in relation to overall formations in the transfer activity. In some of the episodes in which the reception of a given play was contested, as was the case with productions of both *A Doll's House* and *Ghosts*, I aim to focus more narrowly on key productions in order to give a qualitative view of the reception. I do, however, as far as possible seek to give accounts of how the local conditions affected the appropriations.

The first chapter in this part deals with the fact that Ibsen lived in Dresden and Munich during the time in which his plays were promoted in Germany. The chapter investigates Ibsen's presence in two ways: first the chapter aims at placing Ibsen in a social setting, investigating Ibsen's local social and professional network, and to what extent his local networks helped him promote his plays. Secondly, the chapter investigates other important instances during his time in Germany, in which Ibsen's personal presence and the construction of an identity as an author in Germany were closely connected; Ibsen's visits to the Duke of Meiningen in connection with the Meininger troupe's production of his plays is one example of the former, his acquaintance with the Berlin naturalists who increasingly took part in promoting his plays from the middle of the 1880s is an example of the latter.

The second chapter investigates the general developments in the German book market and how it conditioned the publication of Ibsen's plays, and the way in which the plays themselves in turn influenced the field by being part of new trends in the industry. The developments in the market related in different ways to the transfer. Thus, the initial difficulties of finding a publisher for the plays reflected structural tendencies in the market. The technological developments of the publishing industry were also an important part of the background, which meant that Ibsen's plays rose to the rank of bestsellers in the ground-breaking paperback series.

[268] Brauneck, p. 178.
[269] *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert Bd. 1 Teil 1.*, ed. by Georg Jäger (Frankfurt am Main: Buchhändler-Vereinigung, 2001), p. 62 ff.

Finally, the chapter covers the development in the 1880s when a range on new publishers emerged as a new dynamic force in the publishing industry. Initially, I analyse how the difficult conditions which faced the publication of Ibsen's plays in the German book market must be seen as general tendencies which were integral parts of a market hampered by constringing mechanisms in the trade between publisher and bookshops. From this background, I trace the innovations which came to influence the publication of Ibsen's plays: the advent of the cheap paperback series, most notably Reclam Verlag's Universalbibliothek, and the emergence of the 'Kulturverläger' S. Fischer, which had close ties to the German naturalist movement.

In the third chapter, I investigate the first wave of Ibsen-translations in Germany in order to determine the origin of the transfer. Many early translations were made by people without any prior contact to either publishers or theatres. Most of the attempts were, therefore, rather ineffectual, and the individual attempts to translate certain plays into German in most cases must be seen as the outcome of a primarily private interest. Besides the initial translation attempts, I examine in greater detail two much more effective attempts of bringing Ibsen's plays to the German public: the first by the most important of the early translators, Adolf Strodtmann, the second being Ibsen's own attempt to promote his own plays to the theatres. In spite of the fact that Ibsen's historical plays in some instances were successfully at provincial theatres, where they appeared alongside the classics, they did not manage to catch the attention of the German audience or the commercially run private theatres.

The fourth chapter analyses the second wave of Ibsen's plays, which consisted of the success of *Pillars of Society* and the relative failure of *A Doll's House*. In this chapter, I demonstrate how this phase in the transfer was characterised by the appropriation of Ibsen's contemporary plays in the tradition of the popular French comedy of manners at the private theatres, and not as examples of early naturalist drama, as it has often been suggested. The implication of this reinterpretation is that the successful transfer of Ibsen's plays was connected to *Pillars of Society*'s ability to be integrated into the existing practices of the commercial theatres and not due to aesthetic innovation. This new perspective on the fate of the two plays makes it possible to create a coherent narrative in which *Pillars of Society* was successful on the German stages because it answered to the appropriation and *A Doll's House* was not because the final act clashed not only with the attempts of appropriation, but also the general audience's horizon of expectations.

The fifth and final chapter is concerned with Ibsen's breakthrough on the German stages which occurred in 1886-1889, and which led to continual interest in his plays and a wide diffusion of his work. In the analysis I show how the early naturalist appropriation of the play *Ghosts*, which was continuously rejected by German censors, not only led to a general interest in Ibsen's work, but was also used to spearhead the German naturalist movement. The focus of attention is the agency involved in the various attempts to stage *Ghosts* in spite of the censors' repression, and

the culmination of these endeavours in the founding of Freie Bühne Verein, which was a theatre organised as a private club with the explicit aim of circumventing censorship.

Chapter 1: Henrik Ibsen in Germany

From 1868 to 1891 Ibsen lived in Germany, first in Dresden (1868-1875) and then in Munich (1875-1891). During this period he made long trips to both Scandinavia and Italy, and lived in Rome for a short time. Finally, in 1891, Ibsen returned to Norway and from then on did not leave the country again. For the present investigation this means that, unlike what was the case in Denmark and Britain, Ibsen was himself present in Germany during the time in which his plays transferred to the country, from the first introduction to the readers to his popular breakthrough in the theatres. This raises the question of what the presence of Ibsen meant for the diffusion of his plays and if it had any impact on his general breakthrough? The focus of the chapter is both Ibsen's personal integration into the cultural and social life of the places where he lived and to what extent he used his personal networks to promote his plays, but also his integration as an author into the cultural field on a more professional and even symbolic level. Speaking of Germany in general is difficult at times due to its changing political and geographical outline, and the statement that Ibsen lived in Germany from 1868 is, of course, not strictly speaking true, as the empire did not come into existence until 1871. The fact that Ibsen lived in Dresden during the formation of Germany, however, leaves more than a want of a common term to cover the duration of his stay in Dresden and Munich. It points to the heterogeneous nature of the German lands at the time, as a place where the existence of regional cultural centres still reflected the old political order, yet were tied together by a strong notion of a common, overarching national culture.

Ibsen in Dresden and Munich

When Ibsen left Norway in 1864 to travel to Rome, no one, least of all he himself, knew that he would not make his home in his native land for more than a quarter of a century. After his initial stay in the papal city between 1864 to 1868, Ibsen primarily lived in Germany, but with frequent short stays in Italy in-between. The fact that he ended up taking residency in the southern German cities seems more to have been a matter of convenience than the outcome of a fixed decision. In the summer of 1868, at the end of his stay in Rome, Ibsen and his family began to travel slowly through Italy towards the north. The primary reason to leave the city was to find a protestant school for his son, Sigurd, something which he did not find in Rome.[270] At this point Ibsen had not yet made up his mind on where to settle next, he may have planned to return to Norway, though it seems likely that he envisioned a short stay in one of the southern German cities on the way. However, he did not return to Norway, and after a series of short stays in northern Italian cities, the family finally stopped in Dresden for the winter. Ibsen had been in Dresden once before when he had gone on a grand tour in his youth during his

[270] Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen: Masken*, p. 15.

employment at the Norwegian Theatre in Bergen. The consequence of the stop in Dresden was not only that the family stayed there over the winter, but for the next seven years.

Relating to the advancement of his career as an author, there was nothing in Dresden which compelled Ibsen to stay, and it seems surprising that he chose to live in the city. Dresden was not a cultural centre, such as Paris, London or Berlin, connected with advancing literary life. There was no literary prestige connected with a life in Dresden. Initially, Ibsen had no professional or social network in the city, and as an author he was completely unknown.[271] Even on a personal level, Ibsen led a secluded life withdrawn from public life. He did not engage much with the residents and was only very slowly integrated into the local social life.[272] Some of the reason for Ibsen's secluded life is undoubtedly to be found in the fact that he continuously, socially as well as professionally, was directed towards Scandinavia.[273] In this respect, Ibsen's stay in Dresden was not different from his stay in Rome, where he had been part of the small colony of Scandinavians which had settled around the Scandinavian club. Not only Ibsen's correspondence during his time in Dresden testifies to a strong, continuous attachment to Scandinavia, but also his social life reflected this attachment, with many visitors from home.

One of the more noteworthy visits that Ibsen received during this period was from Georg Brandes, who came to see him in the summer of 1871. Though the two had been in a lively correspondence since 1869, their meeting in Dresden was the first time they met in person.[274] The opportunity arose as Brandes was returning to Denmark after an eighteen-month-long tour, which among other places had brought him to Paris and Rome, and in Brandes' career it became an important event as it was on this occasion that Ibsen spurred on the young critic to create an independent intellectual profile. Thus, the meeting between Ibsen and Brandes may well be seen as the prelude to what would be Brandes' big confrontation with the idealist aesthetic, which still governed the Scandinavian field of letters.[275] When Brandes returned to Copenhagen, he embarked on his famous series of lectures on the main currents of the nineteenth century's literature, which were to abruptly change the outline of the cultural field in Scandinavia and which paved the way for the positive reception of Ibsen's contemporary problem plays. Yet, even in Germany, the already by then well-connected Danish critic was of immediate use to Ibsen, and was able to provide him with introductions to German authors such as Paul Heyse, when Ibsen moved to Munich in 1875, which eased Ibsen's progress into the circles of the local authors and intellectuals of the Bavarian capital.[276]

[271] Fulsås and Dingstad, p. 45.
[272] Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen: Masken*, p. 96.
[273] Ibid., p. 98 ff.
[274] Ibid., p. 88.
[275] Jørgen Knudsen, 'Jeg Har Dannet Mig et Billede Af Dem', in *Ibsen Og Brandes - Studier I et Forhold* (Oslo: Gyldendal Norsk Forlag, 2006), pp. 15–38 (p. 15ff.).
[276] Fulsås and Dingstad, p. 44ff.

Ibsen's lack of engagement in the German field of letters during the period in which he stayed in Dresden must be seen from the fact that at this point he was still engaged in securing himself a position in the Scandinavian field. Though his financial independence may be said to have been secured after his success with the publication of *Brand*, for Ibsen it was still a matter of marketing his play to the Scandinavian theatres in the late 1860s and early 1870s, as I have shown in the chapter on Denmark. In this light, Ibsen's meeting with Brandes and other Scandinavian artists and intellectuals must, at least partly, be seen as an attempt to retain his position at home though he had now lived abroad for a considerable time.

During the first years of his stay in Germany, Ibsen was caught in a personal dilemma which arose due to his preference for life in southern Germany and the grudge he still nursed against the German state for the loss of Schleswig-Holstein, which it had inflicted on Denmark in the war of 1864. During this period, Ibsen's anti-German attitude led to several social blunders in which blunt anti-German statements in his writings published in Scandinavia were picked up on in Germany as well, to Ibsen's great discomfort. As time passed, however, he became more guarded in his statements about his host nation, and from the middle of the 1870s Ibsen seems to have wholly overcome his dislike for the German state. During the first years of his stay in Germany, Ibsen's stay was at times a matter of mixed feelings not least during the periods in which German patriotism was particularly pronounced, as was the case during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870-71 and the succeeding formation of a unified Germany. In these periods, the strong German expressions of national sentiment seems to have rekindled his old dislike for the Germans (particularly the Prussians), and as late as the winter of 1872, Ibsen stated in a letter to a Scandinavian friend that he 'still hated Germans'.[277] Yet, Ibsen's hatred of Germans was by no means an individual passion; it was shared by many in Scandinavia, not least in Denmark, and was at this time a direct outcome of the Dano-Prussian War of 1864.

The background for Ibsen's very strong emotional engagement in the war was undoubtedly rooted in the fact that he had been a firm supporter of Scandinavianism during the fifties and sixties. When the war broke out, the Scandinavianist notion of Nordic unity, in which Ibsen had so fervently believed, had suffered a wound from which it never recovered. As a movement, Scandinavianism had started out as a purely literary programme in the early decades of the century, but towards the middle decades it had already grown into a much broader cultural movement, which had direct political implications. In Denmark, the question of mutual Scandinavian support soon became closely linked to the troubled relations with the German states over the unresolved problem of Schleswig-Holstein. Particularly after 1860, as the political tensions in the relationship with Prussia grew, the promise of mutual Scandinavian assistance was seen by the Danish National Liberal government as a safeguard from the potential dire outcome of increasingly confrontational foreign politics, and made it continue to set a course on the subject which was very close to the wind. When the war finally came, it

[277] Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen: Masken*, p. 95.

turned out that the promises of mutual support exchanged during the festive gatherings of the Scandinavianists were castles in the air. Even the Swedish King Karl XV, who supported the movement, proved incapable of redeeming his pledge as he was undermined by his more prudent government. In Denmark the National Liberal party, which still dreamed of including the duchy of Schleswig in the Danish nation, discovered too late that the Swedish promises had been quietly abandoned.[278]

To Ibsen, as to many others, the lack of support on behalf of Sweden and Norway in the time of war was seen as an outright betrayal of a 'brother country'. The notion of 'Norway's betrayal' became a recurring theme in his letters and Dybbøl, the place where the Danes lost the final battle, the symbol of the Norwegian treachery. At the end of the war in 1864, Ibsen passed through Berlin on his way to Rome and was in time to witness the Prussian victory parade march through the city. In his letters, he would later dwell on his revulsion of the general spectacle.[279] The belligerent nature of the Prussians and not least what he saw as the Norwegian betrayal of the Danish people was to be a constant theme in his poems and in his personal letters in the time to come. It has been suggested that Ibsen gradually worked the war of 1864 into a topos which he used to explain not only the failure of Scandinavianism, but more generally his pessimistic worldview and his dissapointment with the current generation. To Ibsen the myth of the Norwegian betrayal may even have served as a way of explaining his self-imposed exile, and may thus have played an important part in the creation of a new identity abroad.

During Ibsen's time in Dresden, the question of national sympathies once again became a very important theme, with the Franco-Prussian War of 1871 and unification of the German states which followed. In keeping with his previous sentiments, Ibsen was hoping for a French victory in the conflict. In his poem *Balloon Letter to a Swedish Lady* (1870), he described his feeling of being under siege, like the Parisians, by German patriotism and militarism. In the poem, he made light of the subject, but the 'balloon letter' was not the only poem in which he had expressed his feelings on the subject. In spite of the fact that he was virtually unknown at the time, his anti-German statements published in Scandinavia eventually attracted public attention in Germany. In October 1871, an anonymous article in the magazine *Im Neuen Reich* attacked Ibsen for hating the very people that were generous enough to host him.[280] The occasion for the attack was the recent publication of a collection of his poems in Copenhagen, from which two of the poems were used as evidence to back up the accusations.[281] Particular emphasis was put on the fact that Ibsen, in his poem *The Murder of Abraham Lincoln*, had referred to Germany as 'das Land der Lüge'.

[278] Kristian Hvidt, *Danmarks Historien 1850-1900*, Danmarks Historien, 11 (Gyldendal & Politiken, 1990), p. 118 ff.
[279] Letter: Ibsen to Toresen, 3 December 1865
[280] Unsigned notice, *Im Neuen Reich*, ‚Beiläufig: 'Deutschenhass und erwachende Vernunft im Norden'. p. 538. (Published 6 October 1871).
[281] The previously mentioned 'Balloon Letter to a Swedish Lady' and 'The murder of Abraham Lincoln'

Ibsen replied promptly to the attacks, by means of a letter in *Im Neuen Reich*. Here he argued that what he had expressed in the poems was by no means an attack on the German people, but was directed against the former politics and diplomacy of Prussia, something, Ibsen added, on which the German people had no influence.[282] 'A poet does not hate individuals', Ibsen claimed, he only hates 'ideas, principles, and systems'.[283] Thus acquitting himself of hating Germans, Ibsen added that his voluntary stay in Dresden, and the fact that his son attended a German school, also testified to the fact that he was no Germanophobe. As a last argument, he pointed out that he, in his own household, had overseen the translation of German plays into Norwegian, and thus, helped to promote German culture in his home country.[284] This was a fact which he believed to be irreconcilable with the portrait drawn of him in *Im Neuen Reich* as anti-German. After Ibsen's reply the matter was dropped by the German press, when only one other paper had reiterated the accusations from *Im Neuen Reich*. A larger scandal, in other words, had been avoided, and Ibsen from then on learned to be more cautious with public statements.

In 1875 Ibsen left Dresden and moved to Munich, which was to be his primary city of residence until he returned to Norway in 1891. The move to Munich seems to have coincided with a general change of attitude on Ibsen's behalf with his approach to his social and public life. From the beginning of his stay, he was more engaged in meeting other writers who resided in the city, and immediately upon arrival he called on Brandes for an introduction to Paul Heyse (1830-1914).[285] Heyse was one of the most celebrated German writers of his time; even as a young man he was regarded as the literary hope of Germany, and in 1862 he had been invited to Munich by the Bavarian king, who offered to sponsor his writing. By the time that Ibsen moved to Munich, Heyse was at the height of his career. Through skill and immense productivity he had excelled both as an author of short stories and novels and also as a dramatist. Heyse was, however, not only gifted with extraordinary skills as an author but was endowed with great social skills, which made him the centre of literary life in Munich, where his villa was both a meeting place for many of the local authors as well as the many that travelled through the city. In spite of their temperamental differences, Heyse and Ibsen developed a close friendship and met on a regular basis.[286] It is primarily in this capacity, as the facilitator of social interaction between the many artists and writers living in Munich, that Ibsen's ensuing friendship with Heyse achieves significance. As an author Heyse wrote in the idealist tradition, and as such he was in perfect tune with the literary taste which still held sway in Germany. His friendship with Ibsen brought him to admire his plays, and even to learn Danish to be able to read them in the original, but it was predominately Ibsen's early productions, the historical plays and dramas of ideas, which spoke to him. The artistic distance between them grew, however, as Ibsen's writing veered away from the path of idealism towards naturalism. Heyse was still appreciative of *A*

[282] Letter: Ibsen to *Im Neuen Reich* (1871).
[283] Ibid.
[284] It was Ibsen's wife who had translated a German play (See note to letter in: HIS 13k)
[285] Moi, p. 59.
[286] Ibid., p. 60.

Doll's House, but wholeheartedly disliked *Ghosts*.[287] The relationship was further strained by the fact that the naturalists, which ardently took up Ibsen's plays during the 1880s and with whom Ibsen was acquainted, attacked Heyse's idealism with the same force as they promoted Ibsen's plays.

Another sign of the more socially engaged Ibsen was the fact that he became a visiting member of the local literary circle, known as 'Gesellschaft der Krokodil'.[288] In Dresden, Ibsen had been a member of the local literary association but without participating much in the activities. In Munich, on the other hand, he was an active member and made a number of friends amongst its other members. The circle, which had been founded 1857 and existed until 1883, originally reflected the court's attempt to attract writers and artists to Munich. It had been centred on an idealistic aesthetic, but the circle eventually lost its artistic prominence as some of its founding members left.[289] By the time Ibsen joined the circle it was primarily a social circle for the members. Ibsen's membership of Die Krokodil must be seen as an important step in his attempt to be integrated into the local society of artists and writers. The circle was dedicated to writers only and included many of the famous authors who resided in Munich, some of which held key positions in the cultural life of Munich such as the artistic leader of the royal theatre Karl Von Perifall (1824-1907).

The question is what this greater involvement in the intellectual and artistic milieu meant for Ibsen as an author in Germany. As far as his own literary production goes there is a general agreement that Ibsen's involvement with the authors of Munich did not influence his writing to any discernable degree.[290] At a time when he himself was turning away from writing historical and idealist plays to write his so-called modern problem plays his friends from Die Krokodil were still firmly rooted in the idealist tradition which he himself was leaving. The turn in Ibsen's writing is therefore better explained by seeing it in the context of the general development in Scandinavian literature: there were, for instance, many similarities between Bjørnson's play *A Bankruptcy* (1875) and Ibsen's *Pillars of Society* (1877).[291] Ibsen's greater involvement in the artistic field, however, had a substantial influence on his own attempts to promote his plays in Germany, and in this context his friends and acquaintances proved helpful, but it is only the year after Ibsen moved to Munich when one sees his first organised attempts to establish himself as an author in Germany. I return to this in greater detail below, but it is important to note that these attempts were rooted in the social and professional network which he created during his first time in Munich. The effect of Ibsen's presence through his social network on the transfer of his plays to Germany was evidently strongest in Munich and Dresden where his network was most developed. This was evident in the case of his attempt to promote his historical play *The*

[287] Ibid., p. 92.
[288] Ibsen was registered as a visiting member for the years 1875-1877 and 1880. (Fulsås and Dingstad, p. 81.)
[289] Fulsås and Dingstad, p. 44 ff.
[290] Ibid., p. 50
[291] See Part II, Chapter 4.

Vikings of Helgeland in 1876, the first play which he himself commissioned the translation and printing of.

The Duke of Meiningen

Another important outcome of Ibsen's presence in Germany was the recognition which he received from Georg II of Sachsen-Meiningen (1826-1914). During his stay in Germany Ibsen was invited twice to stay with the duke in connection with the production of one of his plays by the Meininger court theatre, and on each occasion he was honoured with an order by the duke.[292] Though Ibsen's acquaintance with the duke was only partly of a personal nature, it was an important early step in the recognition of Ibsen as a major playwright in a German context. The first visit in 1876 may especially be considered of primary importance, not least to Ibsen himself, as it coincided with Ibsen's own more focused attempts to promote his plays in Germany, which followed in the first period after he moved to Munich. The duke's attention may, therefore, have fortified Ibsen in the belief that there was a market for his plays in Germany. The fact that the Meininger troupe took up Ibsen's plays, however, was more than a symbolic recognition, and the influence of the pioneering theatre extended far beyond the provincial town of Meiningen due to the troupe's extensive European tours. Thus, the immediate effect of the inclusion of Ibsen's historical drama *Pretenders* in their repertoire was that it was staged in Berlin during their tour of 1876.[293]

The Duke of Meiningen has largely been remembered due to his pioneering work in the field of theatre. Soon after Georg II had taken over the rule of Sachsen-Meiningen in 1866 he became closely engaged in running the court theatre that he helped to reform, and which from 1874 became famous through extensive tours throughout Europe.[294] It was particularly for their interpretations of historical drama for which the troupe became well-known: in their productions they aimed at a realistic, rather than an idealised, presentation of the past; great care was taken that the presentation of the past should be in accordance with the present level of historical research and experts were consulted to make sure that this was achieved.[295] Costumes were to be appropriate for the historical period in which the play took place, and props such as weapons should be carried and used in accordance with historical knowledge, rather than in an imitation of their modern usage. The duke, who was himself a skilled painter, designed the highly detailed scenery for the plays. Besides their fame for historical authenticity the troupe became renowned for its stunning portrayal of crowd scenes, in which they aimed at creating a unified effect through careful choreographical planning of the movements of every person on stage. The emphasis put on the entire ensemble working together was in stark contrast

[292] Letter: Ibsen to Hegel 15 September 1876; Letter: Ibsen to Hegel 5 January 1887.
[293] See: Appendix II.
[294] NDB/ABD: 'Georg II'
[295] Brauneck, p. 151 ff.

what the established practise at the time where the star actors were the centre of the play and even the trained actors of the troupe even had to take the place of extras to ensure a general level of quality.[296] Through their innovative practices, which took aim at ensuring the authenticity of the performance, the Meininger became an inspiration to the naturalists groups, which gradually emerged during the 1880s.[297]

The Duke of Meiningen was first made aware of Ibsen's plays by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson. The duke had previously visited Norway, and during this trip he had been the guest of Bjørnson's farther.[298] Perhaps due to this connection, a number of Bjørnson's historical plays had already been brought to production in Germany by the late 1860s.[299] On an overall level, however, both Bjørnson and Ibsen's historical dramas fell in line with the specialty of the Meininger troupe, which was the classics and historical drama. Bjørnson's play *Between the Battles* had been included in the Meininger troupe's first tour in 1874, but the play was met with little interest in the German capital.[300] The inclusion of Bjørnson's plays, however, created precedence for the inclusion of Norwegian drama in the troupe's repertoire.

Despite the fact that Ibsen was only invited to Meiningen by the duke two times, the meetings occurred at crucial moments in the history of the plays' German diffusion. The first was in connection with the aforementioned production of *The Pretenders*. This production was not only the first production of a play by Ibsen in Germany, but also the first time that one of his plays was staged outside Scandinavia.[301] The play was first shown in Meiningen on the 30th of January 1876 before it was included in the troupe's tour, during which it was shown seven times in Berlin. In connection with the Berlin performances, Ibsen was first invited to witness the production and then to stay at the duke's summer residence in Liebenstein.[302] At the time when the Meininger troupe staged *The Pretenders*, Ibsen had already decided to try to conquer the German market through a series of translations which he himself commissioned. Yet, Ibsen's first invitation to the ducal residence and the relative success which his play had met in the Meininger interpretation must have confirmed Ibsen's belief that there was indeed a German audience for his plays. What perhaps was more important than the personal reassurance of the duke's favour was the fact that the order which he received was a public recognition of his work, and that the duke, though devoid of political influence at the time, was still capable of delivering some of the pomp which this type of distinction required.[303]

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[296] Grube, p. 30.
[297] Brauneck, p. 152.
[298] A. M Koller, 'Ibsen and the Meininger', *Educational Theatre Journal*, 1965, 101–10 (p. 101).
[299] The Meininger troupe staged *Between the Battles* in 1867 and *King Sigurd I-III* in 1869. Pasche, p. 37, p. 42.
[300] Pasche, p. 39.
[301] Se Appendix II.
[302] Letter: Ibsen to Hegel 15 September 1876.
[303] As an author Ibsen was quite aware of the importance of official distinctions when it came to promoting his own work, but personally he seemed to have relished them. In the beginning of the 1870s he had successfully been lobbying to be awarded the Swedish 'Order of Vasa' and the Danish Knight's Cross, two royal distinctions. See Figueiredo, *Henrik Ibsen: Masken*, p. 85ff.

Ibsen's second encounter with the duke took place in December 1886 in connection with the Meininger troupe's production of the play *Ghosts*. As I will show later, at the beginning of 1886 the court theatre in Meiningen was the first theatre which took up Ibsen's plays after they had been absent from the German stages for close to five years. For this reason, but not least due to their subsequent production of *Ghosts*, the Meininger troupe was closely connected with the revival of Ibsen's plays at the German theatres in the late 1880s. The production of *Ghosts* was of importance because the play, due to it scandalous reputation, had only been brought to production once before in Germany. With the Meininger production, however, it received the approval of an ensemble of theatre people that enjoyed widespread recognition. Ibsen was invited to Meiningen to be present for the premier, and this time was received with great veneration by the duke, who again presented him with a distinction.[304] The importance of the honour bestowed on Ibsen on this occasion must be seen in relation to the conflicted reception of the play, and the general rejection with which it was met by most established theatres. The progressive nature of the troupe is evident from the fact that at this very early stage they decided to put on a play, which only in the following years was taken up by various naturalist groups and performed at the more marginalised commercial theatres.

The duke was not only important in as far as his troupe was the first which brought one of Ibsen's plays to production, but also as he returned to Ibsen's plays with a production of *A Doll's House* after the long period in the mid-1880s during which there were no Ibsen-productions. Besides, it must be added that the court theatre in Meiningen hosted the second German staging of *Ghosts* at a time during which it was otherwise widely banned, something that set it apart from other German court theatres of the time, which were largely characterised by their conservative repertoires. The production in Meiningen was also important in preparing the first production in Berlin, which was to take place place at Residenz-Theater in January 1887, and served to make the French naturalists around the Parisian Theatre Libre aware of Ibsen's plays, something which resulted in the first French Ibsen production.[305]

The connection with Berlin naturalists

Following the first productions of *Ghosts*, which I investigate more closely in Chapter Five, Ibsen gradually became more involved with the young naturalists who were actively engaged in promoting and staging his plays. Compared to his acquaintances from the literary circle in Munich his relationship with the naturalists was different. Most of them were a full generation younger than him, and in contrast to Ibsen, who already had an established position in the world of letters, many of the naturalists were still in the process of creating positions for themselves. The naturalists with whom Ibsen became acquainted were to a large extent critics, translators

[304] Letter: Ibsen to Susanna Ibsen 21 December 1886.
[305] C. A. Swanson, 'Ibsen's Ghosts at the Théâtre-Libre', *Scandinavian Studies*, 16 (1941), p. 285.

and theatre people. Also, it is worth noticing that even though his plays had a profound impact on the new generation of playwrights he was not personally acquainted with them to the same level as he had been with the people in Munich.[306] To both the emerging naturalist groups and to Ibsen the connection served them well in establishing a new aesthetic agenda in German theatre through the promotion of Ibsen's plays. During the 1880s there were naturalist groups in many German cities, the more influential being in Munich and Berlin. Though Ibsen became acquainted with Felix Philippi (1851-1921) and Ludwig Fulda (1862-1939), who by the middle of the 1880s were based in Munich and who organised the first German production of *Ghosts*, the more important connection was with the group in Berlin that gathered around Otto Brahm (1856-1912) the later manager of Freie Bühne.

Otto Brahm was one of the key people when it came to the promotion of Ibsen's plays in Berlin during the 1880s. This was not only due to his position as manager of Freie Bühne, but also because he wrote extensively about Ibsen at a time when he had all but vanished from the German public eye, following the failure of *A Doll's House* in 1880. To Brahm and the group around him their early discovery of Ibsen's problem plays became of great importance to their future careers, as Ibsen's plays gave them an ideal for how German theatre could be transformed. But also of importance to Ibsen was the growing influence of the young naturalists as their advancement in the cultural hierarchy meant first acceptance and later the canonisation of his modern plays. The core group around Brahm dated back to his student days: he studied in Heidelberg where he met his lifelong friend, the two years older Paul Schlenther (1854-1916), in 1877. That same year he met the Germanist Wilhelm Scherer (1841-1886), who as his teacher took both men under his wing.[307] Where Brahm's acquaintance with Schlenther proved to be the creation of one of the most lasting duos in the promotion of Ibsen in Germany, their association with Scherer was to speed up their integration into the literary field. The young men were swiftly integrated into the circle around Scherer, the so-called 'Germanistenkneipe', where among others they met the Danish philologist Julius Hoffory (1855-1898).[308] Their acquaintance with Hoffory was most likely of major importance for directing Brahm and Schlenther's attention to the prominent Scandinavian authors of the time, and witnessing a production of *Pillars of Society* in 1878 seems to have made the two dedicated followers of Ibsen.[309]

During the 1880s, both Brahm and Schlenther worked as theatre critics for various newspapers in Berlin. Most notably, first Brahm (1881-1885) and later Schlenther (1886-1898) was the theatrical critic of the influential newspaper *Vossische Zeitung*. It was here that they they worked alongside the renowned author Theodor Fontane (1819-1898), who late in the 1880s entered on the side of the naturalists in the debates caused by *Ghosts*. Their work as critics made

[306] For Ibsen's impact on German playwrights see Georg Brandes, 'Henrik Ibsen Og Hans Skole I Tyskland', *Tilskueren*, 7 (1890).
[307] Horst Claus, *The Theatre Director Otto Brahm* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: UMI Research Press, 1981), p. 3.
[308] Claus, p. 11.
[309] See also: Part II, Chapter 4.

them suited for the promotion of Ibsen's plays. Their public promotion of Ibsen seems to have begun around 1883-1884. In 1883, Schlenther published a pamphlet in which he criticised what he saw as the lack of artistic ambitions at the Königlischen Schauspiele, which was the court theatre in Berlin. In the pamphlet, he recommended the plays of Ibsen and Bjørnson as a remedy against the prevailing artistic stagnation.[310] The pamphlet made something of a scandal in Berlin and served to make Schlenther's name well-known overnight, as he attacked the manager of the theatre who had headed it for more than three decades. Brahm's public campaigning for Ibsen started around the time of the translation of *Ghosts* in 1884, which he reviewed in several papers.[311] For both, however, their time as critics and their campaigning for Ibsen served as a stepping stone for practical theatre work as Brahm was manager first of Freie Bühne from 1889 to1893, then Deutsche Theater in 1894 and finally Lessing Theater in 1904.[312] Schlenther, on the other hand, was manager of Burgtheater in Vienna between 1898 and 1910, when he returned to Berlin and continued his work as a critic.[313]

Compared to Brahm and Schlenther, Julius Hoffory made a less public figure. Nevertheless, he was of first importance in introducing Ibsen to the Berlin naturalists and in establishing the connection between the two. Hoffory, whose family was of Hungarian origin, had left Denmark and moved to Berlin after a scandal he had caused in his student days made it impossible for him to find a position in Denmark.[314] In Berlin he worked as an independent scholar until he was finally appointed professor in Nordic Philology and Phonetics in 1887.[315] After the first production of *Ghosts* in Berlin, he was in frequent correspondence with Ibsen, and contact between Ibsen, Brahm and Schlenther was mediated through him. Hoffory has left an important source to understanding the social significance of the production in the form of a report on the event to the Danish periodical *Tilskueren*.[316] It was following this production that Hoffory established contact between the young publisher, Samuel Fischer, and Brahm, and thus made the foundation for their future cooperation, which proved to be decisive for the promotion of both Ibsen and German naturalism.[317] The period in which Hoffory worked as a scholar and a mediator of literature between Scandinavian and German was very short. In 1897, Hoffory died from typhus at the age of 42, but the disease had rendered him insane years before, which made his active years very few.[318] When he died he left precious little in writing: a dissertation in linguistics on phonetics and work on the Danish-Norwegian playwright Holberg, which he had written together with Paul Schlenther, were the most prominent titles. His perhaps most important contribution to the exchange of literature was that he pioneered *Nordische Bibliothek*,

[310] Paul Schlenther, *Botho von Hülsen Und Seine Leute* (Berlin: Internationale Buchhandlung, 1883), p. 55 ff.
[311] See Part II, Chapter 5.
[312] NDB/ADB: Brahm, Otto.
[313] NDB/ADB: Schlenther, Paul.
[314] DBL: Julius Hoffory
[315] Ibid.
[316] *Tilskueren* 1888, pp.61–70
[317] De Mendelssohn, p. 75 ff.
[318] Otto Pinower, *Julius Hoffory*, Magazin für Litteratur (Berlin, 1897), p. 3.

which was a book series published by S. Fischer Verlag that published the new Scandinavian literature. Besides editing the series, he had himself translated Ibsen's *The Lady of the Sea*, which was the first title to appear in the series. In spite of the fact that Hoffory left very little in writing, he played a central part in the social life of the naturalist circle which included Brahm and Schlenther and it is partly through this informal mediation that he assumes importance in the history of the transfer of Ibsen's plays.

The correspondence between Ibsen and the Berlin naturalists, which had primarily passed through Hoffory prior to his illness, was taken over by Julius Elias (1861-1927) who also continued Hoffory's work with the publication of Ibsen's plays for S. Fischer Verlag. Thus, Elias may be said to have continued Hoffory's work and together with Schlenther and Georg Brandes, he was one of the three editors of Fischer's *Henrik Ibsen Sammelte Werke* which was published from1898. That Hoffory and Elias were very different personalities may be inferred from the fact that, according to Ibsen's biographer Halvdan Koth, Ibsen used Hoffory and Elias as models for the two scholars in *Hedda Gabler*: Hoffory being the visionary alcoholic Løvborg and Elias the pedantic Tesman.[319]

To the Berlin naturalists Ibsen's plays came to serve as a standard around which they could rally, but this was also true for Ibsen as a person on the occasions on which he visited Berlin. During the latter part of the 1880s Ibsen made two visits to Berlin in which his presence served to bring together his supporters. The first was when he was invited to witness the production of *Ghosts* at Residenz-Theater in 1887, which was the first production of the play in Berlin. The second was the so-called 'Ibsen week' in 1889, during which three of his plays were staged at different theatres, amongst them the first production *Lady from the Sea* at the Königliches Schauspielhaus, which was something of a landmark in the recognition of his plays. On both occasions there were celebrations in honour of Ibsen in connection with the productions, but whereas the visit in 1887 was a matter of gathering supporters for the daring production of *Ghosts*, the visit only two years later was a manifestation of Ibsen's new status as one of the most popular authors of the time.

If one looks at Ibsen's role in connection with the naturalist appropriation of his plays it is evident that though he was present at the premieres his part was mostly passive. One may even say that what he was able to give to the movement he had already given in the form of his plays; in person his contribution was to be present to receive the praise of his supporters. At the point when the connection was established, however, one has to remember that Ibsen, besides enjoying the status of a well-established and successful playwright, remained a somewhat controversial figure as he was also the author of *Ghosts*. It was the combination of the controversial, yet established, which made Ibsen and his plays eminently useful to the naturalists. By inviting Ibsen to the premiere of *Ghosts* in Berlin the naturalists were able to

[319] Halvdan Koht, *Henrik Ibsen: Eit Diktarliv*, vol. 2 (Oslo: Aschehoug, 1954), p. 209.

borrow some of the status which Ibsen possessed, something which helped them to turn a niche production into an important literary event.

The fact that Ibsen's plays were taken up and so vigorously promoted by Brahm and Schlenther and many others belonging to their circle during the 1880s was undoubtedly a key factor in the eventual canonisation of Ibsen as an author, not least as many of the naturalists with whom Ibsen became acquainted later advanced to occupy key positions in the field of German theatre. That they were able to become personally acquainted with their literary hero and able to keep up this acquaintance in perfect cordiality most likely only increased their determination to champion Ibsen's plays. Yet, in spite of the partial personal nature of the acquaintance the mutual recognition of the connection between Ibsen and the young naturalist movement had an important symbolic power, especially during the phase when Ibsen's plays were revived in the German theatres and the naturalists strived for a viable alternative to the existing theatrical taste. That Ibsen recognised Brahm and his group as capable interpreters of his work by being present at their productions was just as important to them as the group's honouring of Ibsen as an author was to cementing his position in the field. Thus, the alliance which was forged between the naturalists and Ibsen may be said to have been to the benefit of both parties.

Chapter 2: Publishing Ibsen in German

Publishing Ibsen's plays in Scandinavia and publishing Ibsen's plays for the German market proved to be two very different things. The one thing which made all the difference, and which resulted in two very different processes, was the fact that Ibsen's plays were not protected by copyright in Germany. To Ibsen personally this meant to, a large extent, the loss of his share of the income which the publication of his plays generated, but in terms of the plays' general diffusion, it meant a more open process in which many more translators and publishers were free to engage with the dramas of the Norwegian dramatist. The effect of this multi-stringed transfer was not only that Ibsen's own importance in the transfer process was diminished as he became only one out of a number of agents who was engaged in the attempt to have his plays published, but also that the publication of the plays were influenced by the shifting developments which governed the German book market. In this way, Ibsen's plays were perhaps more exposed to the shifting trends in German publishing than would have been the case if his plays had been the property of a single publisher, who like Gyldendal in Denmark could pursue a single strategy. Thus, Ibsen's plays were appropriated by both Reclam Verlag's Universal Bibliothek, the most successful of the cheap-book series which emerged in the late 1860s, and S. Fisher Verlag which from the mid-1880s more narrowly catered for the cultural elite.

Scandinavian culture and literature in German

As we have already seen in connection with the literary transfer between Norway and Denmark, the national framings of literature and drama were important factors in the transfer of the cultural products and it was something which greatly affected the possibilities of the diffusion of Ibsen's plays as well. In connection with the transfer of Ibsen's plays to Germany it is therefore relevant to ask how Scandinavian literature was perceived in Germany. One must, however, keep in mind that the perception of cultural products from various countries changed over time, and that various factions in the cultural field would relate differently to cultural products imported from different countries. The naturalist groups that emerged during the 1880s, for instance, generally embraced Scandinavian theatre, but were very dismissive about French theatre, which had been very popular the decade before. However, in Germany in the latter half of the nineteenth century there was a general conception that Scandinavian and German people had the same origin. The word generally used to describe the relationship between the two peoples was 'Stammenverwandt', which implied that both people belonged to an imagined greater Germanic tribe. This notion of kinship was transposed to a cultural level and used to explain why Scandinavian culture was related to German culture. The notion of the two interconnected tribes was, for example, used by the German critic and playwright Oscar Blumenthal (1852-1917) in an essay on Scandinavian dramatists. Here Blumenthal explicitly drew on the historical connection which he dates back to a mythical past to explain the relevance of Scandinavian playwrights to the German spectators.

> Rege litteratische Wechselbeziehungen zwichen Deutschland und unseren Stammenverwandten nordischen Nachbaren lassen sich bis in die erste Jugend der Litteratur zurückverfolgen – bis in die hellen Frühlingstage der Volksdichtung, wo Volsunga- und Nibelungensage ihre Quellandern ineinanderschlagen und aus der frischen Urkraft volkstümlicher Erfindung das deutsche Nationalepos hervorströmte. Wie damals nordische und deutsche Mythen in ein gemeinsames Becken flossen, so hat auch in der Folgezeit zwischen Deutschland und Skandinavien oft genug geistige Gütergemeinschaft geherrscht und manche skandinavische Dichtung ist als dauernder Besitz in das Gedächtniss des deutschen Volkes übergegangen.[320]

After having established the cultural link in the mythical past Blumenthal could in the same breath then turn to the more recent past to show how other Scandinavian authors had been successful in Germany.

The cultural exchange between Scandinavia and the German lands was always strong. In the time before the nineteenth century, the Scandinavian literature which was taken up in Germany was mostly of a Danish origin.[321] One of the more prominent examples of an early appropriation was the translation of the comedies of Ludvig Holberg (1684-1754) who, though he was born in Norway, lived and worked in Denmark. Next to a vast production of academic and philosophical works, which were often in Latin, Holberg wrote a series of comedies in Danish inspired by the French playwright Molière. These plays, which came to form the foundation of the national repertoire of the Danish stages, were soon translated into German, and were so ingrained in the German tradition that they were included in the canonical collection of plays *Die Deutsche Schaubühne* (1741-1745).[322] The inclusion of Holberg's comedies in a collection of German plays may well be seen to suggest that at the middle of the eighteenth century the notions of national origin were less rigidly imposed, and stricter differentiations between Scandinavian and German authors were not common until the beginning of the nineteenth century.[323] Thus, a number of prominent Danish authors, such as Jens Immanuel Baggesen (1764-1826), wrote works in German as well as in Danish.

The first designated wave of Scandinavian literature in Germany happened during the 1830s with the translation of authors associated with the Danish Romantic movement, which had flourished since the turn of the century and whose ideals came to dominate the Danish aesthetic field. Adam Oehlenschläger (1779-1850), perhaps the most prominent member of the movement, himself translated his own works for a collected German edition, which came out in1829-1830 in eighteen volumes, and was the first major publication of a translated Danish author.[324] Though Oehlenschläger's works were written within a more distinctly national

[320] Oscar Blumenthal, 'Skandinavische Bühnendichter', in *Theatralische Eindrücke* (Berlin: Hofmann & comp., 1885), p. 86.
[321] Lutz Rühling, 'Nordische Poeterey Und Gigantisch-Barbarische Dichtart. Die Rezeption Der Skandinavischen Literaturen in Deutschland Bis 1870', in *Weltliteratur in Deutschen Versanthologien Des 19. Jahrhunderts* (Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag, 1996), p. 115.
[322] Rühling, p. 83.
[323] Fritz Paul, 'Die Übersetzerische Entdeckung Europäischer Literaturen: Skandinavienschwelle', in *Übersetzung Translation Traduction Vol. 2* (Berlin, New York: Walter de Gruyter, 2007), p. 1625.
[324] Paul, p. 1625.

framework than had been the case with the works of the pre-Romantic writers, his extensive use of Nordic mythology ensured a wider Scandinavian and German reception. As part of German nation building in the vein of Herder, Nordic mythology was embraced as the nation's 'missing' pre-history, and was appropriated as a topos for the nation's idealised past and a source for the creation of a national identity.[325] In German lands the stories of the Nordic myths was popularised to a large extent by the epic verse of Swedish authors Esaias Tegnér's (1782-1846) *Frithiofs Saga.* The saga, which had also experienced tremendous success in Scandinavia when it was first published in 1825, appeared in numerous German translations in the following decades.[326] The immense popularity of the saga partly served to shift the German import of Scandinavian literature away from Denmark and towards Sweden and Norway, which was perceived as more originally 'northern', and benefited from being associated with the birth place of Germanic culture. That the German interest in Tegnér's saga to a large extent endured throughout the nineteenth century is evident from the fact that *Frithiofs Saga* by 1890 was the most published Scandinavian title in Reclam's Universalbibliothek, with 73,000 copies since it had first appeared in the series in 1873.[327] This long-lasting interest in ancient Nordic history and the mythic time of the Icelandic Eddas may account for the willingness to engage with the more recent Norwegian history, which was the case with the translations and the theatrical productions of Bjørnson and Ibsen's historical dramas, which came out in Germany in the course of the 1870s. Another of the Scandinavians who succeeded in finding a big German readership was Hans Christian Anderson (1805-1875) who not only had his now famous fairytales translated into German soon after they appeared in Danish, but a long range of his other writings as well. In Germany, as elsewhere, it was his stories for children that secured him his place amongst the most published Scandinavian authors.[328]

Unlike their Danish and Swedish colleagues, Norwegian authors appeared relatively late in German translation. Thus, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's popular peasant stories were the first to find German readers, starting with the translation of this first novel *Synøve Solbakken* in 1859.[329] Like in Denmark, Bjørnson's stories immediately found the favour of the readers, and they gradually opened the eyes of the German reading public to the new Norwegian literature. The popularity which Bjørnson's peasant stories experienced in Germany were not least due to the fact that they were written in a genre which was already known and loved by German readers, and they were frequently compared with Berthold Auerbach's (1812-1882) 'Dorfgeschichten', which for German readers had defined the genre. A Prussian newspaper could proclaim that 'Bjørnson ist der Berthold Auerbach der norwegiachen Hochlande'.[330] The familiarity of the genre was, however, infused with the exoticism provided by the description of the lives of the

[325] Rühling, p. 116.
[326] Paul, p. 1626.
[327] Keel, p. 133.
[328] Ibid.
[329] Baumgartner, p. 23.
[330] Ibid., p. 25.

Norwegian peasants which insured that Bjørnson's stories still presented themselves as a novelty in spite of the well tested format. To Ibsen, the fact that Scandinavian literature was already well-established in Germany undoubtedly eased the transfer of his plays, and especially the immediate success of Bjørnson was something which helped him find a German audience. The general interest in Northern mythology and the exoticism which it provided may furthermore account for some of the interest in Ibsen and Bjørnson's historical plays.

A struggling market

Unlike in Denmark where Ibsen experienced an instant success when his play *Brand* was first published at Gyldendal, the road that his plays had to take to his German readers proved more trying. For the translators who made the first translations, it was difficult to find publishers who were willing to engage with the plays of the unknown Norwegian dramatist, and when Ibsen himself attempted to introduce his work with an authorised translation, he found it necessary to pay for the printing himself. In the following, I sketch the general conditions and development in the German book market during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, the structural and technological developments it underwent, and the way in which it influenced how Ibsen's plays were taken up by German publishers.

The book market which Ibsen's plays faced in Germany at the beginning of the 1870s was not only trying for Ibsen, but offered very difficult conditions for publishers and domestic authors alike. Following the revolutions of 1848, German publishing experienced a period of recession, something from which it had still not completely recovered by the early 1870s.[331] After 1848, the output of new titles dropped dramatically and the publishing industry did not reach its former level until 1879.[332] The problem was not only that the output of new titles was lower than before, but that for the vast majority of publishers and authors it offered very difficult financial conditions. Compared to the Scandinavian market, the German book market was potentially very big. Besides covering the German states, which after 1871 were included in the German Empire, it also covered Switzerland and Austria-Hungary, the border regions where German was spoken, and the big communities of German emigrants spread around the globe. The market of Germany, Austria-Hungary and Switzerland was particularly well integrated, as both publishers and booksellers were part of a trade association which crossed national borders.[333] In spite of the potentially big market, however, the reading public was relatively small by the time of German unification. Books were expensive and even the social classes that could afford to buy books rarely did so. Instead, the use of lending libraries was very common, and it was through the lending libraries that most people consumed fiction in book-form.[334] For

[331] Reinhard Wittmann, pp. 257–294/8200–2876.
[332] Ibid., p. 8277.
[333] Ibid., p. 8281.
[334] Ibid., 8233.

authors and publishers the relatively small market made up by the lending libraries on the one hand, and the few people who bought books on the other, was further hampered by a number of dynamics in the market, which made it less attractive for publishers to take the financial risk it was to engage in the publication of new literature. These dynamics may be seen as an explanation as to why it was difficult for Ibsen and his translators to find publishers in Germany, but also why Ibsen broke through in the way he did, namely, publishing in the cheap book series 'Reclam Universal Bibliothek', and in the regular-priced editions as in Scandinavia.

In the trade between the publishers and the bookshops there had emerged a dynamic which meant that the publisher alone bore the risk connected to the publication of books. The discrepancy in this relationship was due to the fact that the bookshops mainly took the books on commission. This way of trading, in Germany known as 'Konditionsverkehr', meant that the publishers would send their new titles to the booksshops, which were then free to return the copies that they were unable to sell. Usually, the booksellers would then, unrequested, send the books on to potential buyers who would then decide if they wished to keep the book or return it to the bookshop. A common practice by bookshops was also to keep newly published books in stock and then, after the first selling period, buy the book at great discount from the publishers. These practices often led to what seems the inevitable outcome, namely, that the publishers had their books returned already read by their intended buyers. An attempt to change this, for the publishers highly unfavourable practice, was to send checklists to the bookshops where they had to choose which books they would like to receive in advance. The lists, however, came with increasing discounts for the bookshops. The consequences of the Konditionsverkehr was that people with only a small capital could set up a bookshop, while ever-increasing discounts offered by the publishers created a more speculative book market where people with sufficient capital could buy up titles in huge quantities when prices dropped. The latter gave rise to 'antiquarian book dealers' that specialised in new books.

The difficult conditions that faced the German publishers were not improved until 1887, when the publishers' Börsenverein introduced a fixed-price-policy.[335] The policy, known as the Krönersche reform, was to be observed by all its members. In short, the policy stated that the publisher decided a fixed price at which the bookshops should offer a given book to its customers and at the same time did away with all discounts that the publishers had hitherto offered the bookshops.[336] If we turn to the publication of Ibsen's plays we will see that the introduction of the Krönerіesche reform coincided with the opening of the publishing house S. Fischer Verlag, which issued Ibsen's *Rosmersholm* as its first book. Though the introduction of the reform and the opening of Fischer's publishing house was purely coincidental, the reform may be seen as a change on the overall level that made niche undertakings such as Fisher's and

[335] Jäger, *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert Bd. 1 Teil 3.*, p. 26 ff.
[336] Reinhard Wittmann, p. 8280.

later Albert Langen's, who from the 1890s also engaged in the publication of Ibsen's plays, more profitable.

Reclam Verlag: The rise of the mass-book

One of the developments that transformed the German book market and which came to play a decisive role in the dissemination of Ibsen's work was the emergence of the series of mass-produced books, which were sold at prices which were only a fraction of that of the traditional book prices. In Germany the most successful of these book series was Reclam Verlag's Universal Bibliothek, and it was in this that Ibsen's plays were included and in time came to be some of the top bestsellers.

The advent of the cheap mass-produced book was due to a range of technological advancements in paper production, which had greatly lowered production cost, alongside technical innovations which made printing faster.[337] In 1867 was the year in which not only Reclam but a wide range of these cheap book series first appeared in Germany. The immediate occasion was the so-called '*Klassikerjahr'*, which heralded an important turn in German publishing history. The 'Classics' Year' marked the end of the copyright on the works of many of the great German authors, and was an event which had been much looked forward to by German publishers in general. The end of the copyright was the effect of a federal law which made the works of authors who had been dead for more than 30 years free to the public. In effect this meant that the publishers who had hitherto held the rights to the works that had become the classics of German literature for the first time were faced with competition. Many of the authors had until that time been held by the publishing house Cotta, which had used its monopoly to sell the works at high prices. After the Classics' Year the works could be bought much cheaper in one of the cheaply produced book series which emerged as a result of the year. Schiller's play *Don Carlos*, for instance, after 1867 was sold for one-twenty-fourth of the price that Cotta had charged when they still had the sole right to the work.[338]

Though the year had been much looked forward to in bourgeois circles as a means to increase reading and the educational level in general, many of the publishers that had prepared series of classics soon lost momentum and the print runs settled at around the old numbers. Reclam's series was an exception to this and its success continued unhindered. One reason for this could be that the works in Reclam's Universal-Bibliothek could be bought separately in contrast to many other book series which required a subscription. Another reason could be that Reclam's series was more inclusive in terms of the titles included where both classics and lighter items were offered.[339] Though the Klassikerjahr may not have had the desired educational effect it

[337] Jäger, *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert Bd. 1 Teil 1.*, p. 170 ff.
[338] *Geschichte des deutschen Buchwesens : mit 2000 Abbildungen* (Berlin: Directmedia Publ., 2004), p. 8220.
[339] Fulsås and Dingstad, p. 26.

did, however, make the German reading public accustomed to the concept of the publishers' cheap book series.

From 1877, Ibsen's plays were included alongside those of other Scandinavian authors in the Universal Bibliothek, something which in the long-run may be said to have secured the success of his plays in print. The inclusion in the popular cheap book series, however, had far reaching consequences for the general outline of the German publication of Ibsen's plays as a whole, and I will take up some of these over the course of the next chapters: in Chapter 4, I look into how Reclam's exceptionally low prices effectively outmatched competing translations, including the translations commissioned by Ibsen himself, and in Chapter 3, I show how Reclam's dominance amongst the publishers of Ibsen's plays put an end to the various independent translation attempts, which had characterised the early appropriation of his plays.

Unlike later publishers such as S. Fischer Verlag, which started out as a publisher for the new naturalist literature, Reclam Verlag was not in the same way committed to the publication of Ibsen's plays or literature with a specific aesthetic profile. When Ibsen's plays were included in Reclam's Universal Bibliothek, it was alongside the works of many other authors, both German and foreign, which the publisher printed because their works were freely available for publication. And yet, the importance of Ibsen's inclusion in the Universal Bibliothek can hardly be overestimated when it came to the diffusion of his plays. The success of the Reclam series seems to be down to the price and availability, something which meant that everybody had the possibility to read Ibsen's plays when they had their breakthrough at the German theatres. By way of comparison, Ibsen's play *The Lady from the Sea* (1888) which in Scandinavia in Gyldendal's edition was priced kr. 2.75, was in Germany priced 1.50 Mark (kr. 1.34) in Fischer Verlag's edition, and a mere 20 pfennig (kr. 0.18) in Reclam's edition.[340] Over a period of ten years, from 1877 to 1887, Reclam was the only German publisher that published Ibsen's plays, something which only changed when S. Fisher Verlag entered the field of Ibsen-publications with *Rosmersholm*.[341] In the ten-year period Reclam published: *Pillars of Society* (1878) *Nora* (1879), *The League of Youth* (1881), *An Enemy of the People* (1883), *Ghosts* (1884), *Rosmersholm* (1887) and *The Wild Duck* (1887).

The inclusion of Ibsen's works in Reclam's Universal Bibliothek must be seen in light of the book series' specific profile and in the context of which other Scandinavian authors it included. As a publishing house Reclam proved to be very enterprising and the success of their new way of publishing literature, in the cheap format in the Universal Bibliothek, meant that they had the capacity to expand their series and publish a broad range of authors. Foreign literature was particularly well suited to be taken up in the Universal Bibliothek, as the works of foreign authors were generally unprotected by copyright they were therefore unable to claim a royalty

[340] Fulsås, 'Introduktion (HIS 14k)', p. 48.
[341] The only play not published during this time was *Peer Gynt*, which had been translated by Ludwig Passarge and which was published by the Leipzig publisher Sincke, but even Passages of *Peer Gynt* was later published by Reclam.

for the publication of their books. For Reclam this meant that prices could be kept down and profits maximised, and the low prices was the library's raison d'être. In this context, one must see Scandinavian literature as a source of unprotected titles from which Reclam could pick and choose the works and authors which they thought would be most likely to find readers on the German market. Consequently, Ibsen's works were only some out of a range of Scandinavian authors whose works were included in the series.

It is evident from an overview of the other Scandinavian books of the Universal Bibliothek that Ibsen's works were not included due to a specific aesthetic profile but because they were likely to sell on the German market. The first Scandinavian works to be included in the series appeared in 1869, two years after the series had been launched. Both titles were drama: the first, a play by the Danish playwright, Henrik Herz, the other by Ludvig Holberg.[342] Both plays may be said to have been rather conservative choices, Holberg's comedies were, as I have already shown, canonised on the stages in both Danish and German, and Hertz' plays had been very popular in Denmark since the 1830s. In the following years a range of Scandinavian authors followed, primarily from Denmark and Sweden. Like the first two titles, the works chosen for publication were mostly those that had already proved their worth in Scandinavia over a longer period of time. Some titles of a more recent date, however, were also included, but these were very often instances of a conservative aesthetic, such as the works of Danish dramatist and censor at the Royal theatre, Christian Molbeck, who was represented with several plays among which was the very popular *Ring of the Pharaoh*. When it came to Norwegian literature and drama, the publication of Ibsen's works was only preceded by the inclusion of a selection of Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's plays: *The Newlywed* (*Die Neuvermählten*, 1874) and *A Bankruptcy* (*Ein Fallissement*, 1876) both found their way to the Universal Bibliothek before Ibsen's *The Pillars of Society* (1877).

Of the Scandinavian titles which Reclam chose for publication a surprisingly large number were drama, which is surprising given the fact that it was a genre that was generally thought to be unprofitable for publishers. Of the thirty-seven Scandinavian titles published by Reclam before 1879 fifteen were drama.[343] One reason for the inclusion of the many plays may be found in the general expansion of the theatrical market, which had followed the liberalisation of the theatrical market in the North German Confederation in 1869 and which by 1871 was extended to all of Germany. The liberalisation meant that everybody could open now a theatre. The expanding theatrical market could explain why Reclam Verlag may have found it profitable to include drama in their series.[344] In a certain way the Reclam editions were perfectly suited to cater for the theatres, for the plays in the Universal Bibliothek were cheap enough for theatres

[342] Magon, p. 205.
[343] Ibid., p. 205.
[344] Ibid., p. 206.

to buy a copy for each actor rather than to have them copy out their parts, which had been the traditional practice when the printed plays had been more costly.

It has been suggested that German playwright and theatre director Heinrich Laube (1806-1884), who advised Reclam on the titles that were chosen for publication, was accountable for the inclusion of the many dramatic titles.[345] The advice of Laube would account for the turn towards the importation of foreign drama, as Laube in his work as theatre director would have an eye for supplementing the existing repertoire with lighter items that had a broad appeal. It is curious if Laube should have been in some way involved in forming Reclam's strategy, for Ibsen was personally acquainted with Laube.[346] It is nevertheless unlikely that the connection between Ibsen and Laube had any influence on the fact that Ibsen's plays were published by Reclam. When Ibsen negotiated the terms for the publication of *A Doll's House* with Reclam, the negotiation went through the translator Wilhelm Lange (1849-1907), and besides, the inclusion of Ibsen's plays in the series matches the overall pattern of the inclusion of the other Scandinavian authors.

It was to some extent characteristic of the Reclam edition of Ibsen's plays, and later for S. Fischer's, that they were translated by different translators. During the first years the plays were translated by Wilhelm Lange, who was the closest Reclam ever came to having a regular Ibsen-translator. After his translation of *Pillars of Society*, he translated *A Doll's House*, which Ibsen named the authorised German translation, which was also the case with *An Enemy of the People*. Though Lange did not translate *Ghosts*, which was translated by Maria von Borch, it was intended for him to translate *Rosmersholm*. Lange's translation of *Rosmersholm*, however, was never finished, as he suffered a mental breakdown during the work on the translation.[347] Consequently, Lange never finished the translation for Reclam which was accredited to Auguste Zinck (1821-1895).[348] Later, however, when Lange had recovered from his breakdown, he translated some of Ibsen's plays that he published with minor publishers, but he never returned to translate Ibsen for Reclam again.

Lange's exit as Reclam's Ibsen translator happened to coincide not only with the increased popularity of Ibsen plays, which followed the naturalist appropriation of *Ghosts*, but also Fischer's entering the field of Ibsen publication. The continuity in German of Ibsen's work and thereby the driving force behind the transfer was from then on the publishers rather than the translators. The plays' increasing popularity meant that they became more valuable to publishers, and fast and reliable translation took precedence over the question of who did the translation. The competition between Reclam and Fischer also meant that each had an incentive to be the first with the publication. From 1887, when Fischer sent out his first translation, both

[345] Ibid.
[346] Letter: Ibsen to Siebold 9 May 1869
[347] Letter: Ibsen to Hoffory 8 November 1887.
[348] NDB/ADB: 'Gustava Zinck'.

he and Reclam employed a number of different translators to ensure the best and fastest translation of both Ibsen's new plays and also of those plays which had not yet been translated.

Niche productions and breakthrough as a bestseller

Turning to Ibsen's plays in the Reclam editions, the importance of the series is perhaps best understood from the development in publication numbers. In the period from 1877, when *Pillars of Society* came out as the first play, up to 1890, no less than sixteen of Ibsen's plays appeared in the book series, and together these sold 494,000 copies. By the turn of the century, a total of nineteen works had been published in a staggering 1,457,000 copies.[349] The publication of the plays, as Aldo Keel has pointed out, followed Ibsen's success at the theatres.[350]

This correlation between the theatre and the book market was particularly evident in connection with *Ghosts* which became the play that initiated Ibsen's breakthrough in Germany. In January 1884, only two years after the scandal in Scandinavia, *Ghosts* was translated by Maria von Bloch for Reclam Verlag (1853-1895). During the first year the play was printed in two runs of 3,000 copies each, followed late in 1886 by another print run of 3,000 copies. Then something finally happened on the theatrical side: 1886 witnessed the first theatrical production of *Ghosts*, namely, the dress rehearsal in Augsburg in March 1886, followed by the Meininger production of the play in December 1886, and in January 1887, the play premiered in Berlin; first a production by Berliner Dramatische Gesellschaft and then the matinee at the Residenz-Theater. The Reclam print runs were an immediate response to the theatrical performances: print runs of 5,000 copies each were issued in January, February and June 1887, another 5,000 followed both in April 1888 and in February 1889. In September 1889, Freie Bühne opened with *Ghosts*, and the number of copies escalated from an impression of 5,000 copies in September 1889 to 10,000 in October 1889, a number which was called for in March and November 1890, and again in February 1891.[351] This meant that by February 1891 *Ghosts* alone had been printed in 79,000 copies.

According to Aldo Keel the success of *Ghosts* had a positive effect on Ibsen's other plays as well. By 1890 Ibsen's plays occupied five of the places in the top ten of Reclam's Scandinavian publications. *Ghosts* came in second only to Tegnér's popular *Frithjorfs-Saga*. After *Ghosts* in terms of popularity were: *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House, An Enemy of the People* and *The Wild Duck*. One may read the great surge in Ibsen's popularity directly in Reclam's publication numbers. Yet, the following development in the numbers from 1890 to 1900 bears witness to the beginning canonisation, not only of a few plays, but of the entire work. Though there were

[349] Keel.
[350] Ibid., p. 134.
[351] Ibid.

plays such as *Ghosts*, *A Doll's House* and *The Pillars of Society*, and after the turn of the century, *Peer Gynt*, which were more popular than others, even the least popular plays (Ibsen's early historical dramas) achieved remarkably high publication numbers. The fact that even the early plays were published in high numbers can only suggest a general canonisation of Ibsen's work.

The rise of the 'Kultur-verleger'

The German literary field underwent a transformation in the 1880s: it was not only the literature itself which changed in aesthetic terms but also the publishing industry which saw a rise in new agents that matched the development in the literature. Looking back at the development Friedrich Schulze wrote:

> Die literarische Wandlung der achtziger Jahre, eine der einschneidendsten, die wir überhaupt erlebt haben - trägt neue belletristische Verlage empor. In einer solchen Übergangszeit wird viel experimentiert; zahlreiche Gründungen entstehen, von denen nur einzelnen dauernder Erfolg beschieden ist. Schon längst ist Wilhelm Friedrichs Name aus der Liste der Firmen geschwunden, aber er gehört der Literaturgeschichte an. Der eigentliche Repräsentant jener naturalistischen Bewegung ist der Verleger der Freien Bühne (aus der sich dann die Neue Rundschau entwickelte), S. Fischer, geworden. Für den Verlag, der in seinen ersten Jahren außer Bleibtreu und Max Kretzer vorwiegend die großen ausländischen Realisten Ibsen, Tolstoi, Dostojewski, die Goncourt brachte, wurde es entscheidend, daß er seit 1890 Gerhart Hauptmann, und mit ihm einen bedeutenden Teil der jüngeren Künstlergeneration, an sich zu fesseln verstand.[352]

One of the young publishers, who soon became an important figure when it came to publishing the new German naturalist literature, was the already mentioned Samuel Fischer (1859-1934). Fischer started as publisher and thereby began his engagement with Ibsen's drama under very different conditions than Recalm, when it had included Ibsen in the Universal Bibliothek. In 1887, Fischer was a new publisher and he had only a small capital to invest in his new undertaking. The limit in financial means meant that Fischer could only afford to publish a few titles and on these the entire future of his new company rested. During the first year Fischer only published six titles, but they in turn gave the publishing house a very specific profile: the first title to come out was Ibsen's *Rosmersholm*, which at that time was Ibsen's latest play, and was followed by *The Wild Duck*. Besides Ibsen, Fisher published Zola's *Therese Raquin*, and Tolstoy's play *Die Macht der Finsternis* in the first year, as well as a novel by the Hungarian author Maurus Jokai and one by Emil Cohnfeld.[353] In other words, Fischer was from the outset a publisher who only published a very select group of authors, all of whom were associated with the new naturalist current in literature, and as a publisher he became actively engaged in the championing of naturalism. Furthermore, he collaborated closely with the people engaged in bringing naturalism to the German stages and was himself part of the steering committee of

[352] Friedrick Schulze, *Der Deutsche Buchhandel Und Die Geistigen Strömungen Der Letzten Hundert Jahre* (Leipzig: Verlag des Börsenvereins der deutschen Buchhändler, 1925), pp. 223–224.
[353] De Mendelssohn, p. 65.

Freie Bühne, and the publisher of the association's magazine: *Freie Bühne für modernes Leben.*[354] From Fischer's early publications, it is interesting to see that initially naturalist literature was something imported, and here we find Ibsen alongside Zola and Tolstoy, with whom he was often grouped when it came to naming the icons of naturalism in the late 1880s.

Fischer's importance for the dissemination of Ibsen's plays became more pronounced in the following years. In 1888, he launched his first book series called Nordische Bibliothek, and in 1889 was the first publisher to issue a collection of Ibsen's modern plays.[355] Both Nordische Bibliothek and the collection of modern plays were the fruits of the mediation of the already mentioned Danish linguist Julius Hoffory. Thus, Hoffory served as an important mediator of Scandinavian literature which was published by Fischer. But it was also, as already mentioned, Hoffory who facilitated the first contact between Brahm, Schlenther and Ibsen, after the first production of *Ghosts* at Residenz-Theater, and later between Ibsen and Fischer. For Fischer, Hoffory only managed to translate *The Lady from the Sea* before his illness broke out and work for Fischer was to a large extent taken over by Julius Elias who was one of the three editors on Fischer's *Henrik Ibsen Sämtliche Werke* (1898-1904) together with Georg Brandes and Paul Schlenther.

[354] *Geschichte des deutschen Buchhandels im 19. und 20. Jahrhundert Bd. 1 Teil 2.*, ed. by Georg Jäger (Frankfurt am Main: MVB, Marketing- und Verl.-Service des Buchhandels, 2003), p. 215.
[355] De Mendelssohn, pp. 87–91.

Chapter 3: Early translations and historical plays

The first wave of Ibsen's plays in Germany consisted of the translation and the staging of his historical plays. Compared to the success which his contemporary plays experienced, the initial appropriation of his historical plays seems relatively insignificant. Despite the comparatively small impact the early plays had on Ibsen's later breakthrough, the appropriation of the plays, nevertheless, marked a distinctive phase in the transfer of his plays. Yet, Ibsen's plays were not the only Scandinavian drama in Germany at the time; Bjørnson had preceded him on the German stages, just as he had done in Denmark. The manner of the appropriation of both Bjørnson and Ibsen's historical dramas was in many ways so similar that one cannot easily separate the two. From the perspective of the contemporary German critics and that of the audience one must assume the two Norwegian playwrights were closely associated with one another. The appropriation of Ibsen's historical plays must therefore be seen in connection with those of Bjørnson, something which makes the import of the historical Norwegian drama of both authors a more substantial movement in German theatre of the 1870s.

This chapter is an investigation of the early translations, the translators and the problems connected with transferring Ibsen's plays to Germany. The chapter covers the period before Ibsen's first popular breakthrough on the Berlin stages in 1877, when there were no less than three competing translations of his work in circulation. It is characteristic for the early period of the transfer that there were a number of independent translations made by various translators, and that many of these did not prove successful. As there were too many translators to go into detail with each one, the chapter primarily focuses on the most successful of these translators, namely the German poet Adolf Strodtmann. As an agent of transfer, Strodtmann's work reflected the political difficulties which influenced the transfer and his concern with the obstacle which nationalism and an old enmity was to the free exchange between Germany and Scandinavia after the Dano-Prussian War of 1864.

Early translations

The first attempt to translate one of Ibsen's plays into German was not made by a German but a Norwegian. It was made in 1866 by John Grieg, brother of the famous Norwegian composer Edvard Grieg who later wrote the incidental music for Ibsen's *Peer Gynt*. John Grieg had established a connection with Ibsen through his brother who already knew him. Grieg was set on translating *The Pretenders* which he gave the title *Die Thronprätendenten* unlike the later German translations. Grieg's translation is notable not merely because it was the first translation of Ibsen's work into German, but because it was translated into blank verse. The choice of verse is remarkable as the original was in prose and also because Ibsen in exactly this play had abandoned the use of verse, which he had otherwise used in his earlier plays. The play's realistic tone, which was otherwise considered to be the feature which made the play stand out aesthetically, cannot be said to be the motivation for the transfer. What is perhaps more surprising than Grieg's change from prose to verse was the fact that Ibsen did not object to the

change. [356] The stylistic choice of verse as opposed to prose in the translation was in contrast to subsequent translations which kept to Ibsen's prose style.[357] Though Grieg's translation was the first it never came out in Ibsen's lifetime, as it was impossible to find a publisher. After Grieg's unpublished translation, the first of Ibsen's texts to be published was a couple of poems in an anthology made by Bjørnson's main translator Edmund Lobedanz in 1868 (*Album Dänisch-Norwegischer Dichtung*). The poems were translated together with some of Bjørnson's poems, but whereas Bjørnson was represented with twenty-three poems in the anthology it only contained two by Ibsen.

The year 1872 proved to be the year in which the German Ibsen translation took off in earnest. This year brought Peter Friedrich Siebold's (1827-1911) translation of the play *Brand*. Later that same year Adolf Strodtmann translated *The Pretenders* and *The League of Youth*, to which I return below. One of the immediately noticeable features of the early Ibsen transfer was the many translations of *Brand*. After Siebold's translation there followed one by Julie Ruhkopf (1799-1880), published in 1874, and one by Alfred von Wolzogen (1823-1883), published in 1876. The three translations that appeared in the 1870s were in Ibsen's lifetime to be joined by another two: one by Ludwig Passarge and one by Christian Morgenstern, two of Ibsen's later and more established translators. If one looks at the three early translators of *Brand*, one will find that they were all in contact with Ibsen in connection with the translation.

Siebold had already planned his translation in 1868, and he had corresponded with Ibsen about the best way of publishing it. In the correspondence Ibsen sought to help Siebold find a publisher and outlined a strategy for the publication. As a strategic move, Ibsen suggested that the translation should be preceded by a biographical article in which he was introduced to the German public. The biography, Ibsen stressed, should focus on the distinctions that he had received from the Norwegian government, such as the poet salary that he received, rather than on the on-going disputes in which he was involved in his home country.[358] The biography was carried out accordingly and was printed in *Illustrirte Zeitung* (1870), a German magazine with which Siebold had an affiliation.[359] According to Ibsen, the biography would make it easier to find a publisher for the book. Yet, despite the biography, Siebold did not manage to find a publisher until 1872, when it was finally published by Theodor Key in Kassel. Of the three early translations of *Brand*, Siebold's was the only to be published again. Ruhkopf endeavoured to translate *Emperor and Galilean* but she did not manage to find a publisher for the voluminous work. Wolzogen was the leader of the court theatre in Schwerin and had a general interest in the work of Ibsen and Bjørnson. Wolzogen's interest in Ibsen may have been what led the

[356] 'As to whether it is best to make a translation in iambic verse, I dare not give an opinion; I trust entirely to your judgement in this as in all else. Of course I quite agree with you that this form of translation necessarily entails a free treatment of details'. Letter: Ibsen to John Grieg 22 March 1866. Translated in Ibsen, *The Correspondence of Henrik Ibsen*, pp. 100–101.
[357] Bruns, p. 120pp.
[358] Letter: Ibsen to P.F. Siebold 9 May 1869; Letter: Ibsen to L. Dietrichson 28 May 1869.
[359] Fulsås and Dingstad, p. 102.

Schwerin court theatre to perform *The Pretenders* the same year as his translation of *Brand*, but apart from that Wolzogen did not play any further role in the transfer of Ibsen's plays.[360]

The early translations were characterised by the fact that they remained individual attempts at bringing Ibsen's work to German readers, and that translations were neither connected to a theatre production or a publisher. This may be the reason why the early translations did not develop any further. It is clear from the correspondence between Ibsen and the translators that Ibsen in the early period of the transfer displayed a general interest in the work of the translators and to a large extent encouraged them in their work. In the instance of Ruhkopf's translation of the double drama *Emperor and Galilean*, he even offered to buy the translation when she was unable to find a publisher. However, even though Ruhkopf sent her translation to Ibsen nothing came of it. That Ibsen was inclined to help the translators is also evident from his correspondence with Siebold, whom he gave advice to on publishers and helped to write a biographical article. Ibsen's helpfulness towards the first translators was in contrast to his later stance towards unauthorised translations, after he commissioned his own authorised translations. From then on Ibsen sought to protect his work from outside translations.

In the early phase of the transfer, Ibsen was also quite ready to accept changes to his work. In the case of Grieg's translation he accepted a translation into blank verse, even though he had abandoned verse himself. In Ibsen's correspondence with Siebold, it came up after the publication that the translation was not all that Ibsen could have wished. In one of letter his, he asked Siebold, whether he thought that in future editions he might not use rhyming verse for the entire translation, as he had done in the first chapter, even though he was well aware that it would require more work.[361] In the case of Wolzogen's translation, Ibsen was highly supportive of the translation in spite of the heavy adaptations. After acknowledging the very free translation, Ibsen even went as far as to write that had he written the work in German he would have written it as Wolzogen translated it.[362] But then, Wolzogen held a central position at a theatre that had just performed one of Ibsen's plays. Ibsen's desire to acquire himself a name in the German cultural sphere may be said to account for his willingness to sanction changes to his works. After 1876, when he had commissioned his own authorised translations, he became less inclined to accept changes to his work in the unauthorised editions, but as was the case with *A Doll's House* he was still prepared to accept changes to his own editions to retain control of his work.[363]

The agency of the early translations cannot be attributed to any overall transfer strategy neither on the behalf of individual agents, nor on the behalf of Ibsen, who, though he was in contact with the translators, did not play any decisive role in the transfer of the plays. The many

[360] Appendix II.
[361] Letter: Ibsen to Siebold 10 July 1872.
[362] Letter: Ibsen to Wolzogen December 1876.
[363] Ibsen wrote a new ending to *A Doll's House* in order to have it performed in Germany. In the new ending Nora did not leave her husband and children.

translations of *Brand* seem more than anything to reflect the translators' fascination with the work that had also captivated contemporary Scandinavian readers. Yet, there were factors which argued against the success of *Brand*. From the Scandinavian reception, we know that the work to some extent was thought to be inaccessible and obscure, and as it was not a drama for the stage it could not profit from the publicity which a theatrical production meant. Also, unlike in Scandinavia, there were no influential critics who directed new readers to the unknown Norwegian author. It therefore stands that *Brand* did not attract many German readers despite it captivating the translators.

Adolf Strodtmann: mediator between Denmark and Germany

The most important of the early translators was the German poet Adolf Strodtmann (1829-1879). Though Strodtmann only translated two of Ibsen's plays, *The League of Youth* and *The Pretenders*, he made an important contribution to the general promotion of Ibsen's work in his book on Danish arts and culture: *Das Geistige Leben in Dänemark* (1873). Why Strodtmann may be said to be the key translator in the early phase of the transfer is not least of all due to his translation of *The Pretenders*, which was the play that more than any other made it onto the German stages in the time before the success of the contemporary problem plays. Strodtmann's translations also proved more durable than the other early translations. His translations, which were originally published by the Berlin publisher Gebrüder Paetel (1872), were later taken up by S. Fischer Verlag in their *Nordische Bibliothek* in the late 1880s, and even made it into Fischer's collection of Ibsen's *Sämtliche Werke in Deutscher Sprache*, which was published from 1898. With their inclusion in Fischer's collected Ibsen, Strodtmann's translations made it into the body of canonical Ibsen editions, something which none of the other early translations managed to achieve.

As a poet in his own right, Strodtmann had a lyrical production which dated back to the middle of the century. His poetry and artistic outlook had been shaped by the rebellious movements of the spring of 1848. Being from Schleswig, he had joined revolutionary movements and participated in the German uprising in Schleswig-Holstein against the Danish crown. During the conflict, Strodtmann was wounded and taken captive, and was sent to Copenhagen as a prisoner of war. In his first work, *Lieder eines kriegsgefangonen auf der Dronning Maria* (1848), he dealt with his experiences as a prisoner in Copenhagen. As a translator, Strodtmann did not only translate Ibsen, but translated from a wide range of languages; he mostly translated from English and Danish, and his translations count among them some poems of French realism as well. His background from Schleswig meant that Strodtmann was well suited as a mediator between Scandinavia and Germany. Being from Schleswig meant that some of his formal education would even have included Danish.[364]

[364] NDB/ADB: 'Adolf Strodtmann'

As a mediator of Danish and Norwegian literature Strodtmann's acquaintance with Georg Brandes played a significant role in his choice of literature to translate. Strodtmann had already translated his first Danish novel when he sought out Brandes in Copenhagen in 1871 with the intention of introducing Danish literature to Germany.[365] The trip to Copenhagen became the starting point for a long connection between Strodtmann and Brandes, and if one looks through Strodtmann's translations one may trace Brandes' influence, as many of the authors that Strodtmann translated were the authors who made up Brandes' 'men of the modern breakthrough'. Thus, Strodtmann translated the Danish authors Holger Drachmann and Jens Peter Jacobsen, but he was also the translator behind Brandes' authorised German translation of 'The Main Currents' lectures from 1872, which came out in German in 1872-1874. One of the outcomes of Strodtmann's trip to Denmark was that he became interested in Ibsen's work, and it is very likely that it was Brandes who first introduced him to the works of the Norwegian poet.[366] The immediate effect of Strodtmann's newfound interest was the translation of two of Ibsen's plays and the inclusion of many of Ibsen's poems in Strodtmann's books on Danish culture.[367]

Strodtmann's book *Das Geistige Leben in Dänemark* was an explicit attempt of mediating between Denmark and Germany. The book presented itself as a general introduction to Danish culture, but it is questionable if it was usefed as such. It was an introduction primarily to literature and drama and its focus was highly eclectic. It has been pointed out that Brandes stayed with Strodtmann during the drafting of the book, and supplied Strodtmann with notes on Danish cultural affairs. Though Brandes revealed this in his letters himself, he also stressed that he did not want it to be widely known that he was helping Strodtmann with his book.[368] The effect of Brandes help may indeed have been that the general introduction to Danish art, culture and politics presented its subject in a manner so explicitly polemic that it must have been somewhat puzzling to German readers. Thus, Brandes was praised as the only truly educated Dane in Strodtmann's book, and his adversaries dismissed according to the same fashion. The fact, however, that *Das Geistige Leben in Dänemark* was to a considerable extent an introduction to Danish cultural life as Brandes saw it, may be the reason why Ibsen was given a very prominent place. About one fifth of the entire book was dedicated to Ibsen's dramatic as well as and lyrical works with translations of long passages from his plays and with full a translation of many of his poems.[369] The only other author equally well presented was the Dane Palludan-Müller (1809-1876), another of Brandes' literary heroes. The Norwegian authors

[365] Jørgen Knudsen, *Georg Brandes , Frigørelsens vej, 1842 -1877.* (København: Gyldendal, 1985), p. 299.
[366] Knudsen, *Georg Brandes , Frigørelsens vej, 1842 -1877.*, p. 299ff.
[367] Ibsen's plays were, however, not the only Scandinavian drama that Strodtmann translated. He translated plays by both the Danish playwright and censor at the Royal Theatre Molbech and by Bjørnson – this was however not until after his connection with Brandes had ended.
[368] Knudsen, *Georg Brandes , Frigørelsens vej, 1842 -1877.*, p. 299.
[369] Adolf Strodtmann, *Das Geistige Leben in Dänemark. Streifzüge Auf Den Gebieten Der Kunst, Literatur, Politik Und Journalistik Des Skandinavischen Nordens*, (Berlin: Gebrüden Paetel, 1873).

Wergeland, Welhaven, and Bjørnson, however, were only mentioned in passing when compared to Ibsen.

Strodtmann may have taken over many of Brandes' views in this book, but what makes *Das Geistige Leben in Dänemark* interesting from the perspective of cultural transfer is that it offers Strodtmann's thoughts on why Ibsen's *The Pretenders* would be of interest to a German audience. Strodtmann's considerations on the topic are important as *The Pretenders* was the play that proved most successful with German theatres. In his assessment of the play, Strodtmann compared the play to Shakespeare's tragedies claiming that it was the greatest play that had been written since.[370] Comparing the play to the Shakespearian tragedies was not only an affirmation of its worth, but served as an indication of the categorisation of the play. Later, when the play was taken up by the Meininger ensemble, it was included in a repertoire that mostly consisted of canonised historical drama, such as Shakespeare and Schiller. After the comparison to Shakespeare, Strodtmann returned to the question of the play's relevance to a German audience:

> Man glaube nicht etwa, daß der behandelte Stoff, welcher allerdings der norwegischen Geschichte des Mittelalters entnommen ward, für uns kein lebhaftes Interesse habe. Die politische Idee, welche dem Stück zu Grunde liegt – die Einigung der lange in Zwiespalt getrennten Glieder eines Reiches zu einem großen und mächtigen Volk – dürfte in Gegentheil gerade in Deutschland zur jetzigen Stunde der allgemeinsten Sympathie und allseitigen Verständnisse begegnen.[371]

Strodtmann's reflections pointed to some of the objections that later met the play when it was brought to the stage. Here one of the main objections was that medieval Norway had no interest to a German audience. It is more uncertain if the attraction of the play was, as Strodtmann put it, the theme of unification, or whether the profile of the play, as a historical piece dealing with medieval times, was what earned the play its performances at various theatres. It is, however, significant that it was taken up by the Meininger following the troupe's productions Bjørnson's historical plays, which as well as Ibsen's *The Pretenders* dealt with the Norwegian Middle Ages.

German-Danish relations in the shadow of 1864

As a mediator between Denmark and Germany Adolph Strodtmann seemed ideally suited with his background from Schleswig, but Strodtmann's background from Schleswig was one of the problems which haunted the Danish-German relationship. The wars of 1848 and 1864 influenced the relationship between the two countries. Strodtmann had actively taken part in the first war and his experiences of the fighting and the succeeding captivity must have shaped his conception of Denmark and the Danes to no small degree. In the preface to *Das Geistige*

[370] The emphasis put on *The Pretenders* is not surprising if one keeps in mind Brandes' partiality for this particular play, but that does not mean that Strodtmann's enthusiasm was less genuine.
[371] Strodtmann, p. 214.

Leben in Dänemark he recapitulated his experiences as a prisoner of war in Copenhagen. More than twenty years later, he still had a vivid recollection of the incessant Danish patriotism coupled with a profound hatred of anything German, which had greeted him in Copenhagen in 1848. The Danish hatred for Germans *(da: 'tyskerhadet')* was thus a theme that occupied Strodtmann, not least as he had been exposed to it himself during his time of captivity. It is important, however, that he also recollected that he was met with some kindness and understanding amongst the Danes. Strodtmann described how, while in Copenhagen, he met with some of his former Danish schoolmates, and how they were able to get along amiably as long as they decided not to venture into talk of the on-going war. Not touching on the question of Schleswig-Holstein meant that their conversation turned towards culture and literature, an experience which Strodtmann put down as the main reason for his interest in Danish literature.[372] Strodtmann's description of how he met with his old mates again, and how this time they found themselves on opposing sides in the conflict, mirrors the problematic state of affairs that nationalism imposes on people living in border regions. On the one hand, it provided him with an insight into Danish culture and the linguistic capacity to access the Scandinavian literature, and on the other hand, he experienced the strong anti-German sentiment that many Danes harboured.

In his book, Strodtmann saw the enmity between the Danes and Germans as the most immediate obstacle to a free cultural exchange, and pointed to the fact that it was difficult to overcome as long as the question of Schleswig had not been resolved. The question of Schleswig had great symbolic value, and not only to the Danes. Before the war it was taken up by the Scandinavianists who argued that the other Scandinavian countries should make common course with Denmark against Prussia. The support was never sent, which somewhat shattered the dream of Scandinavian unity. To Ibsen, who had been a firm supporter of Scandinavianism, the war of 1864 became linked with a deep disappointment of the failure of the Scandinavian project. In the period after 1864 the tables had been turned, so what used to be a problem of a German minority under Danish rule was now a Danish minority under German rule. After ceding the duchies of Holstein, Lauenburg and Schleswig the Danes had been promised a division of the duchies' national lines based on a public vote, but the question was continuously delayed. The question of the future of Schleswig was therefore still open which explains why Strodtmann let it play such a predominant role in his book, and why it continued to be a touchy issue.

In *Das Geistige Leben in Dänemark,* Strodtmann raked over the question and the way it had been treated in the Danish public. The immediate reason was that Bjørnson, at a public meeting in Denmark, had advocated for a more peaceful approach to Germany and had subsequently been attacked for this attempt of reconciliation. Bjørnson had done this in a speech in which he advocated for 'a change of signals'.[373] As an example of the resulting attacks Strodtmann

[372] Ibid., p. 12.
[373] Hvidt, p. 213ff.

quoted Ibsen's poem 'The signals of the north', in which Ibsen poured scorn on his rival Bjørnson and his proposal. To Strodtmann this was nothing short of an attack on Germany and Germans, and he in turn reproached Ibsen.[374] In his only surviving letter to Strodtmann, Ibsen replied immediately and with deep regret to Strodtmann's accusations, which he claimed were based on an erroneous interpretation of the poem. Yet, Ibsen stated, if a man as learned as Strodtmann mistook his intentions with his poem, then what may he not expect of others?[375] Ibsen had his reasons to respond promptly to Strodtmann's interpretation for he had already once before been accused of harbouring anti-German sentiments. The earlier attack, as already mentioned, had been printed in the German magazine *Im neuen Reich* and Ibsen had found it necessary to refute the attack through a long letter printed in the magazine.[376] To Ibsen the attack had been very embarrassing as he lived in Germany, yet he remarked later that the incident may have strengthened his foothold in Germany as his apology, which he had issued immediately, was widely accepted.

Ibsen's export strategy

In 1876, after witnessing the sporadic attempts to translate his work into German, Ibsen decided to commission translations of his plays himself. Over the next two years he commissioned translations of the historical plays *The Vikings of Helgeland* and *Lady Inger of Østeråt* besides his new contemporary play *Pillars of Society*. As already mentioned, it would seem that there existed a general connection between Ibsen's move to Munich and his initiative to engage in the dissemination of his own plays. There may be a number of reasons for that, but it is evident that he received help from many of his new acquaintances, something I will explore in detail in the following. Yet, the successful entering of a new market was not only a matter of Ibsen making the necessary steps and trusting in the quality of his work. The challenges which he faced were partly structural, such as the lack of copyright and the reluctance of the German publishers to venture into foreign drama. The solutions which he attempted to use were not new, but already tried out by Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson, who had previously had some success in what Ibsen was about to attempt.

As an attempt of cultural transfer, Ibsen's export strategy was more organised at introducing his plays in Germany than the attempts of the individual translators which had preceded it. The overall strategy was based on two key elements: the first was his cooperation with the German publisher Theodor Ackermann (1827-1911), for the publication of his play, the second was his new membership of the writers' association 'Deutsche Genossenschaft Dramatischer Autoren

[374] Strodtmann, p. ix
[375] Letter: Ibsen to Strodtmann 20 March 1873.
[376] HIS 13, p. 31; HIS 13k, p. 136 ff.

und Componisten'. This membership, he trusted, would serve to protect his plays from the lack of copyright protection, which robbed him of royalties from the theatrical productions.

The translations which Ibsen published were undertaken by Emma Klingenfeld (1846-1935). In spite of the fact that Klingenfeld was one of the more important of Ibsen's translators, little is known of her. Besides translating the plays which came out at Ackermann's publishing house, she later translated more of Ibsen's plays: *The fest at Solhough* (1888), in honour of Ibsen's sixtieth birthday, and *Hedda Gabler* in 1891. She lived in Munich and should have belonged to the circle around Heyse.[377] According to Julius Elias and Halvdan Koht in *Henrik Ibsen Sämtliche Werke* vol. X. (1906), Emma Klingenfeld translated the *Vikings at Helgeland* without a fee, and submitted the play to the actor and director Heinrich Richter (1820-1898) at the Könglische Hof- und National Theater in Munich.[378] It is therefore possible that Klingenfeld's mediation with the theatre, and the prospects which it offered, was the immediate reason why Ibsen decided to attempt to promote his plays at the time that he did. Klingenfeld's negotiation with the theatre was in any case successful and *Nordische Heerfahrt* was staged with Heinrich Richter in the leading role on the 10th April 1876.[379]

When the plays were published, Theodor Ackermann's name appeared on the cover as the publisher, though he had in fact only taken the plays on commission and Ibsen himself had paid for the printing. The plays were on sale in Ackermann's bookshop, something for which Ackermann took a fifty percent commission.[380] Compared to the conditions which Ibsen had been offered in Denmark by Gyldendal, where he was paid for every print run and very often in advance, the conditions which he faced at Ackermann were very poor. Though the reason for this can partly be ascribed to the overall difficult condition of the German book market, Ibsen himself put the lack of copyright protection down as the main reason why German publishers were unwilling to publish him.

> Truly to take on the publication of works of Norwegian dramatists the German publishers dare not because they may never be safe from competing editions due to the absence of [copyright] agreements.[381]

Though the lack of copyright was undoubtedly part of the explanation, the market for printed drama was notoriously poor, which only served as an additional reason as to why German publishers would not risk publishing (unprotected) drama. However, it is evident that not only Ibsen, but also Ackermann from the outset thought that the play's lack of protection was a problem which needed to be confronted. This can be seen from the way all the plays in

[377] As no correspondence from the time of the translations between Ibsen and Klingenfeld is known today apart from a single letter, which dates from the time of the translation of *Pillars of Society*, it is quite possible that matters regarding the translation were arranged face to face.
[378] Henrik Ibsen, *Henrik Ibsen Sämtliche Werke in Deutscher Sprache*, ed. by Julius Elias, Georg Brandes, and Paul Schlenther, vol. I-X (Berlin: S. Fischer Verlag, 1898), p. 494, vol. X.
[379] Appendix II
[380] Letter: Ibsen to Berner 18 February 1882
[381] Ibid.

Ackermann's editions were all labelled 'deutsche Originalausgabe'. The labelling was not only a way to distinguish them from the previous translations, which had not been commissioned by Ibsen, but also an attempt to deter competing editions. Ibsen was in fact not the first Norwegian author to have his works published by Ackermann, Bjørnson had his play *A Bankruptcy* published by Ackermann under conditions similar to those that Ibsen was offered. Like Ibsen's plays were labelled 'original German edition' so had Bjørnson's play been labelled in a similar way. The difference, however, was that *A Bankruptcy* had been published in Germany first, which made the German translation the original and thereby protected by German copyright law. This was what Ackermann claimed when he threatened Reclam Verlag with prosecution when Bjørnson's play was later translated by the Leipzig publisher.[382]

Confronted with the conditions offered by Ackermann, it should be considered why Ibsen found it attractive to publish his plays with Ackermann in the first place. Unfortunately, most of the sources relating to Ibsen's agreements with Ackermann have been lost so there is no way to tell to what extent Ibsen profited from his connection with Ackermann. It is, however, unlikely that Ibsen profited from it to any large extent.[383] The answer must therefore be that the book edition was not an end in itself, but more a means to have his plays on the stage. The primary market was therefore not the book market but the theatrical market where Ibsen could hope for royalties from the performances. If Ibsen commissioned the translation and publication with theatre production as the primary aim of his association with Ackermann it becomes more understandable that he agreed to conditions even though they were not very advantageous.

This brings us to the second part of the transfer strategy, namely the mediation between author and theatre, which was where Ibsen's membership of the Deutsche Genossenschaft Dramatischer Autoren und Componisten became important. The association had been founded in 1871 by the two authors Ernst Wichert and Paul Heyse, who was Ibsen's friend from Munich.[384] The purpose of the association was to protect the rights of the authors and composers, and to ensure that members received the remunerations to which they were entitled from the theatres. Besides the aim to defend the author's rights, the association functioned as a theatrical agency. As an agency it acted as a middleman between the publisher and the theatres. For a fee of ten percent it carried out the task of submitting the members' plays to the theatres and collecting the author's share of the revenue from the performances. In connection to its work as an agency, the association published the magazine, *Neue Zeit*, in which it wrote about its members.

As a foreign author whose work was unprotected, Ibsen must have been drawn to the association in the hope that his membership would ensure that his works would be protected by German copyright. As an author, Ibsen had been very preoccupied with the protection of his work since

[382] According to Fulsås and Dingstad, it is unlikely that Ackermann's threats had any effect. Fulsås and Dingstad, p. 106.
[383] Fulsås and Dingstad, p. 105.
[384] Ibid., p. 107.

he left Norway, and the idea behind an association like the Deutsche Genossenschaft Dramatischer Autoren und Componisten must have appealed to him. Bjørnson had joined the association as early as December 1874, but he had had a longer history with German publishing and theatre and it is likely that he became aware of the problems connected with the attempt to defend his work in Germany sooner than Ibsen.[385] Eventually, as I show in the next chapter, it turned out that Ibsen's membership did not protect his works against the publication of unauthorised translations and against unauthorised performances, but there is plenty of evidence in his correspondence of the time that indicates that Ibsen initially thought his work was protected. In February 1876, for instance, Ibsen wrote to the censor at Kristiania Theatre that his membership of the Genossenschaft ensured him ten percent of the income from theatre when his plays were performed, which he added, was what all theatres had to pay German authors.[386]

The first play which Ibsen had published by Ackermann was *The Vikings at Helgeland*. In connection with the publication he drew up a list of the people who were to receive a copy of the play.[387] The list contained ninety-one recipients who were to receive a total of one hundred ninety-six copies. This was a way for Ibsen to promote his new play to the theatres, and it tells something about Ibsen's professional and social network at the time. If one compares the recipients on the list with the three theatres that took up *The Vikings at Helgeland* in 1876 it seems likely that Ibsen's own mediation played a decisive role and the promotion which was carried out by the Genossenschaft Dramatischer Autoren was less effective when it came to making the theatres take on the play.

Out of the copies, fifty went to the organisation Genossenschaft Dramatischer Autoren und Componisten. In Munich, twenty copies were sent to Karl von Perifall (1824-1907), who was the artistic leader of the royal theatres and a friend of Ibsen[388], fifteen copies to Franz Grandaur, a fellow member of the 'crocodile-circle', who was director at the Königliches Hof- und National-Theater, and who had already been very engaged in promoting the play.[389] The high number of copies undoubtedly reflected the fact that the play had already been taken on by the Königliches Hof- und National-Theater where it was staged in April 1876.[390] Besides sending the play to the Münchner theatres, Ibsen made use of his network in Dresden where the play was staged at Königliches Hoftheater Dresden in September 1876.[391] In Dresden, he sent the play to a number of members of the literary association, of which he had been a member when he still lived in the city.[392] A number of the recipients were actors, but, what was perhaps more

[385] Ibid., p. 109.
[386] Letter: Ibsen to Lassen 21 February 1876.
[387] Letter: Ibsen to Ackermann 25 March 1876. See HIS 13k p. 430ff. for the list of people.
[388] Letter: Ibsen to Lange 21 November 1879.
[389] Letter: Ibsen to Ludvig Josephson 5 March 1876.
[390] Appendix II.
[391] Repertoire database: Germany.
[392] HIS 13k p. 430.

decisive for the outcome, the play was also sent to Councillor Julius Pabst (1817-1881), who was secretary of the city's Royal Theatres. The third theatre which staged the play was Hofburgtheater in Vienna. Ibsen submitted the play himself in April[393], but he also sent it to Charlotte Wolter (1834-1897), the actress who was later to play Hjørdis in the production when it was put on in October 1876.[394]

Following the publication of *The Vikings of Helgeland* Ackermann published another of Ibsen's early historical dramas, *Lady Inger of Østeråt*. This play, however, seems primarily to have been circulated to the theatres through the Deutsche Genossenschaft Dramatischer Autoren und Componisten, as there is no surviving evidence that Ibsen attempted to promote the play himself. This way of promoting the play seems to have been less efficient than Ibsen's own mediation and the play was only brought to production once at the National-Theatre in Berlin in 1878, which in spite of the name was a minor commercial theatre.[395]

Competing translations

Pillars of Society came to mark a turning point for the translation and publication of Ibsen's plays in Germany. It was to be the last of his plays that appeared in the 'original editions' published by Ackermann, and it was the first to appear in Philipp Reclam's Universal Bibliothek. The inclusion in the Reclam series was to be a turning point in the history of the publication of Ibsen's plays, as the inclusion not only meant that Ibsen's plays were to be had at very low prices, but also that they were circulated on a hitherto unknown level through Reclam's extensive distribution system. But the publication of *Pillars of Society* also marked a turning point in terms of transfer as it was the first time that the German translation followed immediately after the publication of the original, thus eliminating the time-lag between the original and the translation. It was also, however, the first time that more translations were issued within a very short time of one another, and therefore competed to be taken up by the theatres. After Gyldendal had published *Pillars of Society* in the autumn of 1877 three German translations followed: it was published in Ibsen's authorised translation by Emma Klingenfeld, in Reclam's Universal Bibliothek translated by Wilhelm Lange, and in a version heavily adapted for the stage with a translation by Emil Jonas (1824-1912) and published by Otto Janke's Haus-Bibliothek.

To Ibsen, as an agent of transfer of his own work, the increased competition meant that he changed his strategy in the long run, but that was not obvious from the start. In November 1877, his own edition of the play, like the previous two plays before it, was published by Ackermann. From Ibsen's correspondence it is clear how he only gradually learned of the competing

[393] Letter: Ibsen to Burgtheater 28 April 1876.
[394] Appendix II.
[395] Wahnrau, p. 528.

translations: in December 1877 he wrote to Frederik Hegel that Reclam had published the play in a translation by Wilhelm Lange, but he claimed that it could not be submitted to the theatres.[396] In other words, Ibsen must still have been under the impression that his own authorised translation, together with his membership of the Deutsche Genossenschaft Dramatischer Autoren und Componisten, protected his rights to the play. Ibsen, however, was soon to be proved wrong. Already in January he had not only learned of a second unauthorised translation, but also that these pirated editions were being taken up by the theatres. The second unauthorised translation was by Emil Jonas and was an adaptation made for the theatre. This meant that Jonas had made extensive cuts to the text, in particular the first act had been shortened a great deal. As an adaptation it was very popular with the theatres and in many places it was preferred over Klingenfeld's translation.[397]

Jonas's translation managed to especially infuriate Ibsen. In a letter to Jonas he attacked him and his translation very strongly, threatening to denounce him in the Scandinavian press if he published his adaptation:

> In reply to your letter I have to remind you of the fact, which cannot be unknown to you, namely that I at Theodor Ackermann's publishing house already in the beginning of November last year have published a German original edition of my play *Pillars of Society.* A translation from your hand is therefore completely superfluous, and an adaptation, as the one which you propose to present me with, I must firmly decline.
> What you write of your cuts to the first act is neither here nor there and testifies to the fact that you have not the slightest way grasped the work which you believe yourself capable of adapting. It seems to me that it should be evident even to the most common literary bungler that in this play not a single character can be left out and not a single line omitted. The play has already, and also in an un-shortened and un-tampered with version, been accepted at many German theatres. Should you, in spite of what I have here told you, proceed with your plans and thus through your lack of skills distort and corrupt my work, I must hereby inform you that I without delay will expose the matter in the Scandinavian press, to make it known in the highest places and the result of which you will know in due time.[398]

Ibsen's threat to denounce Emil Jonas in the Scandinavian press, however, did not stop Jonas from publishing his adaptation. As for Ibsen's threats, they were never carried out. The only aftermath in the Scandinavian press were a few negative articles about Jonas published in *Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfarts-Tidning* (*Gothenburg commerce and shipping News*), but it is not known what was the outcome of Ibsen's threats.[399]

By the time he wrote to Jonas, Ibsen must have come to realise that his authorised edition did not prevent German theatres from staging other translations, a realisation that must have been very disappointing to him. In effect it meant that when German theatres chose a translation other than his own he would lose the author's share of the income the performance would generate, as it would pass to the translator and not to him. It is revealing of Ibsen's lack of

[396] Letter: Ibsen to Hegel 16 December 1877.
[397] HIS 13k p. 556.
[398] Letter: Ibsen to Jonas 16 January 1878.
[399] HIS 13k pp. 561-562.

possibilities that he did not threaten Jonas with any legal actions, but only threatened to appeal to the public. In other words Ibsen must have realised that his claim to his own work was only moral as opposed to legal. Moreover, he must have reached the conclusion that either an effective public appeal was not possible or that it simply was not worth it.

Compared to the early translations, it is obvious that Ibsen's attitude towards unauthorised translations changed dramatically after he had commissioned his own 'original editions'. Before Klingenfeld's translations, Ibsen had generally supported the attempt to translate his plays, even in those cases that involved heavy, and not always equally skilful, adaptation, as was the case with Grieg's and Wolzogen's translations. After the success of *Pillars of Society* in the German theatres, Ibsen's frustration with Jonas' translation must be seen not least in light of the financial loss which it inflicted on him every time his own translation was passed over.

After the publication of *Pillars of Society* Ibsen gave up his cooperation with Ackermann, and when *A Doll's House* was published in Germany it was in an understanding with Lange and the publisher Reclam. We can see it as a change of strategy, Ibsen's authorised editions had been defeated: on the stage by the competition from the other translations (and not least Jonas' translation), as a book by the cheap Reclam edition. With the publication of *A Doll's House* or *Nora*, which was Lange's German title for the drama, Ibsen for the first time turned to what was to be his new (and only) weapon in his struggle to retain some control over his own work, namely the possibility to enable the edition which he authorised to receive early access to the unpublished play. This meant that the authorised edition would have a head start over other editions, which would have to be translated from the Scandinavian publication.

What Ibsen offered Lange and in later translators was to send the printed drafts from Gyldendal as soon they emerged from correction, so that Lange could then translate the play as it became ready. In return for early access to the play Ibsen received free copies from Reclam and did not have to pay Wilhelm Lange for the translation. Furthermore, and this must have been the crucial point for Ibsen, he and Lange would share the income from the theatres. For Reclam Verlag the cooperation with Ibsen meant that their edition of *A Doll's House* could be published simultaneously with the Norwegian original. The head start which this offered the Reclam edition could be the reason why only a few other translations, and none of those that were published by Reclam, were published until S. Fischer Verlag published their translation ten years later.[400]

Copyright and German dissemination

How did the absence of copyright agreements between Germany and Scandinavia affect the dissemination of Ibsen's plays? This is a question which must be seen in connection with

[400] HIS 7k, introduction to *A Doll's House*.

Ibsen's work as an author. As an author Ibsen was dependent on his income from the publication of his books and the royalties from the theatres. During the early part of his career, when he still lived in Norway, it was difficult to earn enough money from writing so that he could live from that income alone, he therefore had to supplement it by directing and managing various theatres. As Ibsen's plays entered the larger Scandinavian market through Gyldendal and the ensuing success with the play *Brand*, Ibsen's financial troubles were over, and his continuous status as an independent author was secured from then on. As far as the Scandinavian book market was concerned, Ibsen's works were protected by copyright and it was primarily on that income he depended. The theatres in Denmark were more reluctant to pay the same remunerations to Ibsen and other Norwegian authors as they paid to their own countrymen, as long as no legal requirement was in place, something which meant that publication continued to be Ibsen's main source of income.

If one compares Ibsen's income from the German speaking areas to the income he received from Scandinavia it was trifling. None of the German publishers that published Ibsen's plays before 1890 paid him any royalties except for Ackermann, who paid insignificant amounts from the sale of books. In 1890, Reclam Verlag voluntarily paid a 1,000 Mark lump sum in recognition of the great sales which Ibsen's plays had experienced in the Universal Bibliothek, yet in comparison the royalties from Gyldendal that year alone made up ten times that sum. Only in the 1890s did Fischer Verlag begin to pay Ibsen smaller amounts, though not in the form of royalties but rather for the rights to be the first with the German translation.[401]

If one turns to theatres, the royalties which Ibsen received from the German theatres were significantly lower than those he received from Scandinavian theatres. Yet, the meagreness of the income obtained from the theatrical productions was due to the fact that very few of the theatres paid any royalties to Ibsen at all. Of the theatres which did pay royalties, some of the bigger venues, such as Hof-Burgtheater in Vienna, paid amounts which rivalled those which Ibsen received from the Scandinavian national theatres from the late 1870s.[402] It is telling for the conditions governing the field, that the extent to which Ibsen was able to profit from the productions in Germany seems to have depended on the manner of the mediation. If one looks at the income recorded in Ibsen's account book from German speaking theatres it is evident that the theatres which proved the most profitable were those to which Ibsen himself had submitted his plays, such as the royal theatres and Dresden, Königliches Residenz-Theater in Munich and Hof-Burg theatre in Vienna.[403] In other words, the theatres with which Ibsen himself had established a connection with early on. His engagement with Genossenschaft Dramatischer Autoren must be seen as a failure: though it did secure some income during the years which Ibsen was a member the amounts were insignificant even compared to the royalties which he received from the three aforementioned theatres. The best year financially that Ibsen

[401] Fulsås, 'Innledning (HIS 15k)', pp. 22–23.
[402] Fulsås and Dingstad, pp. 92–92.
[403] Henrik Ibsen, *Account Book 1870-1901 Vol. 2*, http://www.dokpro.uio.no/litteratur/ibsen/ms/varia.html.

had before his plays were marketed by the theatrical agency Felix Block Erben was 1881, due to his cooperation with Wilhelm Lange about his translation of *A Doll's House*. The income which Ibsen received through Lange for north German and the Berlin productions of the play was equal with the profit he had made from the productions at the Danish Royal Theatre the year before, when the play first premiered in Denmark.[404] The real breakthrough for Ibsen in terms of income from the German theatres did not occur until he joined the theatrical agency Felix Block Erben, which from 1887 managed all mediation with German theatres, save for the few especially lucrative venues with which Ibsen continued to negotiate himself.[405]

The question of copyright, however, was not only a matter of how much money Ibsen was able to make from his writing, but also a matter that must be perceived from the perspective of the importers as well. It is therefore necessary to ask what the absence of copyright meant for the importers. Essentially, the question of copyright is about the economy of the transfer and the number of translators and publishers that could be engaged in the transfer at a given time. What makes the question difficult to answer is not least the fact that the market value of Ibsen's plays changed over time: evidently, publishing and especially staging Ibsen's plays after his breakthrough was bound to be a profitable business, but this was not always the case.

During the early phase of the transfer, before Ibsen issued his own translations, there were a number of translators who independently of one another translated one or more of Ibsen's plays, as I have already shown. The plays were considered fair game to translators and publishers, and translating and publishing unprotected material was a common practice. However, the translations seem to have been driven at least as much by enthusiasm for the plays as by financial calculations. The more striking example of early import is the three translations of the play *Brand* which emerged in 1872-1876. It is obvious that three translations of the same play within such a short space of time would be unthinkable had the copyright been in place. The question, however, is if copyright would have deterred all of the early translations because the economy of publishing the plays would have been too meagre to sustain a fee to the author as well as the translator. We know that some of the translators of the early 1870s, such as Siebold and Ruhkopf, already found it difficult to find publishers for their translations, something which seems to indicate that publishing the largely unknown Norwegian author was considered financially uncertain. Besides, there is nothing which suggests that any of the early translations sold very well, and besides Siebold's, which managed two print runs, it is not recorded that any of the others managed more than one print run.[406] Ibsen was himself actively engaged in the question of the effects of the absence of copyright. In 1882, in a letter to a member of the Norwegian parliament outlining his publications abroad in respect to the absence of copyright, he argued that it was the lack of copyright which made the German publishers unwilling to publish the works of Norwegian authors, as they could not be safe from competing

[404] Ibsen, *Account Book 1870-1901 Vol. 2*, p. 63.
[405] D'Amico, *Domesticating Ibsen for Italy*, p. 73.
[406] Letter: Ibsen to Berner 18 February 1882.

translations.[407] This, however, seems unlikely, and it must be remembered that Ibsen's statement was part of an argument that as an author he was deprived of income due to the lack of copyright agreements between Norway and countries outside Scandinavia. He evidently did not employ arguments which could suggest that the absence of copyright may have promoted the dissemination of his works abroad.

In one important instance it seems that the absence of protection did in fact greatly contribute to the overall dissemination of the plays, namely when it came to their inclusion in Reclam's Universal Bibliothek. The concept of the Universal Bibliothek was based on the fact that it could offer literature at very low prices, and the classics that were no longer covered by copyright and foreign authors who also had no protection served the needs of the series particularly well. As I have shown above, Ibsen was just one out of a large number of Scandinavian authors whose greatly varying works were included in the series, something which suggests that Reclam was systematically taking advantage of the unprotected literature. It therefore seems safe to conclude that also in the case of Ibsen's plays the lack of copyright was a decisive element in the decision to introduce the plays in the series. Even if one imagines a scenario in which Reclam early on had offered Ibsen a fee for the publication of his plays it seems unlikely that he would have been inclined to accept, given the way he handled the publication in Scandinavia and keeping in mind his arrangement with Ackermann which had already been made by the time Reclam began to publish his plays. It must also be remembered that Ibsen was discontent with the arrangement which he made with the translator Wilhelm Lange about the publication of *A Doll's House* by Reclam, as he was of the opinion that the German translation had a negative impact on the sales of the original in Denmark due to the big difference in price.

Based on the role that Reclam played in the diffusion of Ibsen's plays, it appears justifiable to state that the absence of copyright had a predominantly positive effect on the diffusion of Ibsen's plays in the German speaking world. This was not least true during the early 1880s, when Ibsen's plays were made available in the Universal Bibliothek in spite of the fact that they were absent from the theatres. Though Ibsen was deprived of much of the profit which his plays generated both in the form of books and theatrical productions through the absence of copyright, it seems highly unlikely that the added revenue would have influenced his productivity in any way. From the time that he settled in Dresden, the means he had from his home market had already provided him with a certain lifestyle and a pace of production and it is important to note that this did not change as his income increased over the years. For Ibsen as an author the existence of a secure home market which could support him financially was of chief importance when it came to establishing and maintaining a position as an autonomous author, but this logic seems only applicable until a certain point. For the diffusion of his plays, though less so for Ibsen's private economy, it was a great boon that they were not restrained by copyright.

[407] Ibid.

Chapter 4: Commercial appropriation

When Ibsen's *Pillars of Society* first came out in 1877 it was immediately translated into German in three competing translations. In the theatres the play experienced an unprecedented success; in Berlin alone it was staged at no less than five theatres at the same time. For Ibsen it could well look like a real breakthrough. As time would show, however, it was not the breakthrough that it seemed to be. Though 1877 undoubtedly was a good year for Ibsen in Germany, the success of *Pillars of Society* did not lead to any lasting interest in his work; Ibsen's next play, *A Doll's House*, flopped on the German stages and Ibsen's plays vanished altogether from German theatres for close on five years.

For any history of the staging of Ibsen's plays in Germany, the sudden success of *Pillars of Society* and the subsequent failure of *A Doll's House* are crucial moments in the history of the plays' diffusion. The long pause in Ibsen-productions which followed, calls for some interpretative effort on the behalf of the historian if it is to be merged into an overall narrative. One of the problems facing the interpretations of the success of *Pillars of Society* in Germany is connected with the fact that in the historiography the play is taken to be the first of Ibsen's so-called problem plays. Placing the play in this category often leads to the assumption that the success of the play on German stages was due to the novelty of the dramatic form and its critical approach to society.[408] Attributing the success of the play to these features has not least been advanced through the use of a naturalist interpretation of Ibsen's plays which were developed by, for instance, Otto Brahm and Paul Schlenther from the mid-1880s.[409] In the construction of this interpretation, Schlenther and Brahm's retrospective accounts of their initial experiences of watching the play in 1878 has played a central role and has been used extensively in the Ibsen-literature. Schlenther's account of his first impression appeared prominently in the introduction of Fischer Verlag's canonical *Henrik Ibsens sämtliche Werke*. This statement in the preface, in which he compared his state of mind after watching *Pillars of Society* in Berlin together with Brahm, with that of the impressible German youth that ninety years before experienced Schiller's *Kabale und Libe* for the first time, has been endlessly repeated.[410] So has Brahm's statement relating to the monumentality of his experience of watching the play.[411]

The problem of stressing Schlenther and Brahm's accounts of the importance of the 1878 production of *Pillars of Society* is that they are not generalizable and that they lead to

[408] This is arguably the case made in commentary to *Henrik Ibsen Skrifter vol. 7*, in which the general Scandinavian reception serves as the foundation for letting the reader make the inference of a similar German reception. The inference that *Pillars of Society* was, indeed, a naturalist play at its German premiere is then strengthened by the usage of a single quotation from Otto Brahm (see below) who praised the play for its aesthetic novelty (See HIS 7k 65-66).
[409] This tradition can be observed as early as Paul Stein's *Ibsen auf den Berliner Bühnen 1878-1900* which appeared in the magazine *Bühne und Welt*, vol. 3, 1901.
[410] See for example: Stein (1901), p. 4; Friese (1976), p. xi.
[411] The Brahm quotation in which he praised *Pillars of Society* was from an article in *Neue Freie Presse* 10 May 1904 (Brahm *Kritische Schriften* (1915) p. 447). It has been repeated in for instance: George, p. 25. and HIS 7k, p. 65.

anachronistic conclusions regarding the early appropriation of the play. This consequently leads to misleading assumptions about the reasons for the diffusion of Ibsen's plays, and ultimately about Ibsen's path to success in Germany. First of all, it must be noted there were a number of different German translations of *Pillars of Society,* not all of which were equally close to Ibsen's text.[412] This alone renders the generalizability of the experience problematic. Though some of the translations were 'faithful' to the realistic features which Schlenther and Brahm later praised, others were heavily adapted to better suit what at the time was perceived to be the general taste of the audience. This was, for instance, the case of Emil Jonas' translation as we shall see below. Secondly, there is the problem of relying on accounts of the experience of a production which were either written after the naturalist interpretation of Ibsen's plays had been canonised or which themselves were part of an attempt to establish Ibsen as a naturalist author. In both cases, Schlenther and Brahm had clear interests in projecting a certain interpretation of events back in time, either by way of promoting the naturalist Ibsen or to emphasis their own early discovery of Ibsen's innovative aesthetics. The uncertainty of the effect that the play initially had, even on the two supreme champions of the naturalist Ibsen, is emphasised by the fact that they were unable to get their stories straight. Thus, Schlenther later claimed that Brahm initially did not even like *Pillars of Society*, but preferred Bjørnson's *A Bankruptcy*, and that he himself had to point out the merits of the play to Brahm.[413]

A derived problem of relying too heavily on the naturalist accounts of the success of *Pillars of Society* is that the relative failure of *A Doll's House*, which is seen as the problem play par excellence, becomes very difficult to explain within this context. Investigating the early German productions, one is furthermore faced with the problem that the changed ending, in which Nora did not leave her husband, may obscure the reason why the play did not prove to be the success it had been in Scandinavia. Indeed, one may be led to suppose that the play flopped due to the changed ending.[414] However, this was not the case, and though the changed ending was generally condemned by the critics it was not the main reason why they were unhappy with the play, and why it was unsuccessful with the audience.

This interpretation of the early appropriation of Ibsen's plays in Germany is based on the notion that the productions of both *Pillars of Society* and *A Doll's House* were heavily adapted to suit the taste of the audience and the theatrical practices of the primarily commercial theatres at which they were staged. This meant that most productions of *Pillars of Society* in the late 1870s were staged in the French tradition of comedies of manner or 'Sittenstück'.[415] Particularly the

[412] Schlenther and Brahm watched *Pillars of Society* in Wilhelm Lange's translation (Stein (1901) p. 4).
[413] Pasche, p. 190.
[414] This arguably is the interpretation made of the premiere in Residenz-Theater in Berlin in *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter vol. 7*. See HIS 7k, p. 246ff. and p. 264.
[415] This notion can also be found in Moe's *Deutscher Naturalismus und ausländische Literatur*, but whereas Moe seeks to support her claim through an analysis of minor, possibly unintended, shifts in significance in Lange's translation compared to the original, I also base my analysis on Emil Jonas' much more heavy handed adaptation and on accounts of the stage practice common at the private theatres. Moe, p. 93 ff. This argument has also been developed in Dingstad Dingstad, *Den Smilende Ibsen: Henrik Ibsens Forfatterskp* (Oslo: Akademika, 2013).

French dramatists Augier and Sardou were very popular at the time and their plays were the bread and butter of the private theatres.[416] As a consequence, the adaptations of *Pillars of Society* emphasised the melodramatic effects: the dramatic action, the development of cheap thrills and of making the characters more easily recognisable. All of this was done in order to make the plays fit the taste of the audience and in line with the established aesthetic practices of the theatres. It is, however, important to note that Ibsen's plays, and Bjørnson's which preceded them, already shared many of the features of this tradition: Bjørnson's *A Bankruptcy* and *Pillars of Society* both had reconciliatory endings, which to a large extent mitigated the social criticism in them, and in *A Doll's House* the ending was changed by Ibsen himself to conform with the expectations of the audience.

With both *Pillars of Society* and *A Doll's House* there would have been great differences in how closely the individual productions would have followed the dialogue and directions given in the original. With *Pillars of Society* there were three translations and with *A Doll's House* there was an alternative ending, which, though it was made by Ibsen himself, was contrary to his intentions with the play. Some productions were undoubtedly quite true to the text and some would even have imitated the way the plays were staged in Scandinavia, which was the case of the Munich production of *A Doll's House* where Ibsen himself attended the rehearsals.[417] Nevertheless, in most cases any adherence to Ibsen's text cannot be assumed, and besides the alterations (and outright mistakes) already made by the translators, any number of changes could have been made in the preparation of the production. Changing the names of the characters to German names was a very common practice, as were cuts to the text.[418] As for the aesthetics involved in the acting, it must be assumed that the style was the same which was used for staging the usual French and German plays, and not the attempt for realism which became the hallmark for the naturalist productions which followed in the second half of the 1880s. The Danish critic Georg Brandes, for instance, confirms this consistency in stage practices: in 1877 he commented on the explicit theatricality of the acting starring Hedwig Neumann-Raben, one of the big stars of German theatre, stating that 'such was the acting of all the major German stars'.[419] In 1880, Neumann-Raben toured with Nora and starred in a number of different productions of the play. From Brandes' account of her play at the premiere at Residenz-Theatre in Berlin, it is evident that she had retained her style of acting, which he had previously described, and that it was in complete accordance with the expectations of the audience.[420]

Dingstad must also be credited for bringing the controversy between Ibsen and Emil Jonas to my attention. His own analysis, however, was first published after I had finished writing this chapter and is therefore not further referenced.

[416] Georg Brandes, *Berlin som tysk Rigshovedstad; Erindringer fra et femaarigt Ophold*, (Kjøbenhavn: P.G. Philipsen, 1885), p. 52.

[417] Emil Paulsen, '"Et Dukkehjem" Paa Det Kongelige Residenstheater I München', *Ude Og Hjemme*, 128 (1880).

[418] This was not only common in German theatre productions but also in British, to which the rough appropriation of *A Doll's House* under the heading of *Breaking a Butterfly* testifies.

[419] Brandes, *Berlin som tysk Rigshovedstad; Erindringer fra et femaarigt Ophold,* p. 54.

[420] Ibid., p. 357 ff.

A false start: Pillars of Society and A Doll's House on the German stages

The success and far-reaching diffusion of *Pillars of Society* did not come out of the blue. Ibsen's play followed on the heels of Bjørnson's latest play, *A Bankruptcy*, which had spread like a wildfire through Germany after its triumphant premiere at Königliches Residenz-Theater in Munich. From Munich the play, with the actor Ernst Possart in one of the leading roles, toured the German theatres in the following years, beginning in Nationaltheater in Berlin.[421] Thematically there were strong similarities between Bjørnson and Ibsen's plays, and in reviews the two plays were frequently compared to one another.[422] To the audience in general it may even be assumed that the two plays were so closely associated that Ibsen could build directly on Bjørnson's success. The success which had greeted *Pillars of Society* was not lasting and did not lead to any general interest in Ibsen's work. His next play, *A Doll's House*, which had proved successful in Scandinavia, failed to catch the German audience, and the play's relative failure marked the beginning of a long pause in the German theatres' adaptations of his plays.

In order to make an adequate account of the sudden success of *Pillars of Society* one must take into account not only the different translations and what they meant for the possibility to adapt the play, but also the significance of the fact that Ibsen abandoned the historical play as a genre. The success of Bjørnson's play *A Bankruptcy*, which preceded it on the German stages, must also be taken into account, and the question of the theatrical tradition into which it was appropriated. Finally, the long pause in the staging of Ibsen's plays in Germany which followed after the failure of *A Doll's House* in Germany leaves valuable clues as to why *Pillars of Society* was initially successful.

The success of both Bjørnson's *A Bankruptcy* and Ibsen's *Pillars of Society* on the German stages in the late 1870s must be seen in relation to the fact that they both dealt with a topic which to the contemporary audience must have felt very pertinent, namely the moral habitus of the emerging capitalist class. In Germany, the short-lived economic bubble which had followed from the general liberalisation of the industries, the French war reparations and unification had by the middle of the 1870s given way to an economic recession where many of the undertakings started during the time of growth were now faced with bankruptcy. The 'Gründer' had become the symbol of the new capitalist class; someone who brought about social change through rapid industrial growth which had followed the wake of the liberalised markets. After the collapse of the stock market in 1873, in the so-called 'Gründerkrach', the image of the Gründer changed, and he was increasingly recast as the originator of risky financial speculations and as someone who operated outside the sphere of public morality. It was this composite creature of obvious financial power but with a morality which was unaccounted for that could be seen lurking

[421] Pasche, p. 63.
[422] See for example: Karl Frenzel, 'Berliner Chronik: Die Theater', *Deutsche Rundschau*, 1878; Unsigned review, 'Theatre- Und Kunstnachrichten (Die Stützen Der Gesellschaft)', *Neue Freie Press* (Wien, 23 February 1878); Unsigned review, 'Stadt-Theatre - Henrik Ibsen: Die Stützen Der Gesellschaft', *Magdeburgische Zeitung* (Magdeburg, 27 February 1878).

behind the main characters of both Bjørnson and Ibsen's plays. When Bjørnson's play premiered in Berlin, it was the modern-day businessman who appeared on stage; he may have been Norwegian, but he shared all his important features with the Gründer. To the audience the Gründer was something from their own world brought on stage: he was a character from everyday life, if in no other way than as a regular figure in the newspapers, which related scandals and bankruptcies alike. Seeing him live on the stage was an altogether novel experience for the German audience.[423] The failed businessman in Bjørnson's play and the morally unsound consul Bernick in Ibsen's were explicitly seen as representing this class. Though, as I will attempt to show in the following, this did not necessarily entail the social criticism which one might expect based on the later reception of the play. Yet, the choice of topic, which must have seemed very relevant to a contemporary German audience, must nevertheless be considered one of the main reasons why the plays proved to be successful and were widely diffused in a short space of time.

The pertinent theme was not the only feature which paved the way to success. A gripping plotline mingled with melodramatic elements and a reconciliatory ending were also among the elements which ensured that first *A Bankruptcy* and later *Pillars of Society* found an easy reception with the German audiences. The use of well-known stylistic elements was a feature no less important for their integration into the repertoire of German theatres as the novelty of the theme. Contrary to later adaptations, the early success of the plays did not rely on a naturalist adaptation, but were staged in the manner in which the private theatres excelled, namely in line with the French comedies of manners popular at the time. With Bjørnson's play this had been fully possible, as it was closely related to the French plays by Augier and Sardou.[424] Though it dealt with a novel and potentially controversial theme, namely the consequences of a bankruptcy to a hitherto respectable businessman and his family, it ended by confirming traditional values. In the play, the bankrupt businessman, Tjæde, was finally persuaded to declare his insolvency, which he had sought to hide, but through the confession he regains his moral standing, though he loses his fortune. In the final act the family is portrayed three years after the bankruptcy, happiness restored once again, and though Tjæde has abandoned big business, he has managed to repay his creditors through honest work. The emphasis which Bjørnson placed on the happy ending in his play, by devoting the entire fourth act to it, to a large extent curbed the social criticism to which the topic would otherwise easily have lent itself.

A Bankruptcy may aesthetically have been closer to the comedies of manner than *Pillars of Society*, but in many of the adaptations the melodramatic elements, which were already present in Ibsen's play, were emphasised. As I show below, this was not least the case in the translation made by Emil Jonas, which more than the other translations was an adaptation made for the theatre. Thus, the parts of the plot which cover the plan of Bernick's son to run away to America,

[423] Baumgartner, p. 76.
[424] Ibid., 74.

Bernick's plan to bring about the untimely demise of his cousin by way of letting the unseaworthy ship go to sea and the sudden peril in which he later realise this has placed his son, may well be seen as melodramatic devices.[425] The ending of *Pillars of Society*, which is similar to the ending of *A Bankruptcy*, is a reconciliatory ending in the comfort of the family. It may, however, be seen as more open than that of Bjørnson's play because Bernick only makes a clean breast of some of his wrongdoings. The open ending may therefore be interpreted as potentially more critical towards the economic elite, which Bernick represented. However, this may not have been the effect that it had on the contemporary audience. In his review, the influential critic Karl Frenzel (1827-1914) praised Ibsen's ending in respect to that of Bjørnson, as Ibsen's did not lapse into the praise of the prudent middle class.[426] Thus in effect sparing the audience from witnessing the degradation of the family as it happened at the end of Bjørnson's play.

Emil Jonas' translation and the adherence to convention

The most important indication that the initial success of *Pillars of Society* rested on compliance with the audience's expectations and not by introducing a new set of aesthetics is to be found in the approval with which the changes in Emil Jonas' translation were met. Not only was Jonas' translation preferred by a larger number of theatres than Ibsen's authorised translation, but the alterations which he made to the script must be seen to reflect the expectations of the theatres at the time. Some of the alterations in Jonas' translations, such as making extensive cuts to the first act, were also in keeping with what many critics thought was appropriate, as they thought that too much emphasis was put on relating the background of the plot, the epic elements, and too little on presenting the narrative through dramatic action on the stage. Thus, Frenzel wrote in his review that it was generally not possible to imagine Ibsen's plays on stage without first submitting them to extensive use of 'the red pen'.[427] In his review Eugen Zabel, who would later write a biography on Ibsen, also praised the changes which Jonas had made:

> Für das Stadttheater, welches die Novität Sonnabend, den 2. Februar, zum ersten Male aufführte, hat Emil J. Jonas eine empfehlenswerthe Uebersetzung und Einrichtung geliefert. Die Ueberfülle gleichgiltiger Personen ist beseitigt, die Längen der rhetorischen Ergüsse sind entsprechend gekürzt worden. In dieser Form entspricht das Stück unserem Bühnenbedürfniß, so weit dies bei dem architektonischen Grundfehler des Ganzen möglich ist. Nach wie vor leidet das Schauspiel an der Verworrenheit der Exposition, die den Zuschauer erst sehr allmälig in die Bedingungen der Handlung einweiht und ihm die Vorgeschichte des Dramas in einzelnen, sich bis zum dritten Akte hinziehenden Gesprächen enthüllt.[428]

[425] Moe, p. 95.
[426] Frenzel, 'Berliner Chronik: Die Theater'.
[427] According to Frenzel, this was a general problem in Ibsen plays of which he claimed: 'Das lyrische und das epische Element überwuchern so sehr den dramatischen Bau, daβ ohne die rücksichtsloseste Anwendung des Rothstiftes gar nicht an die Vorführung dieser Dichtungen als Theaterstück zu denken ist.' (Frenzel, 'Berliner chronik: Die Theater').
[428] Eugen Zabel, 'Stadttheater', *National-Zeitung* (Berlin, 5 February 1878).

For the theatres, Jonas' reduction of the first act also meant that a number of roles could be entirely omitted as they did not appear again later in the play, a feature which must have recommended Jonas translation to the theatres above those which more closely followed the original. Not all critics, however, were equally happy with the alterations preferred by the theatres, and some pointed out that the cuts made by Jonas led to a loss in the complexity of the characters, which turned the roles that in the faithful translations possessed 'real individuality', into stereotypes (Theaterschablonen).[429] The omissions to the text, which Jonas had made, not only reduced the roles' complexity, thereby serving to make the characters more easily recognisable to the audience, but also shifted the focus from the intricate story, which preceded the drama, to the events unfolding on stage. For the adaptation of the play this was a crucial step because the play hereby better fitted to the tradition of Augier and Sardou, which was the run-of-the-mill play for the private theatres, and what cast and audience was accustomed to.

A central feature, of Jonas' translation was that the social criticism of the original was played down. This made Jonas' translation differ from the later naturalist appropriations of the play in which the drama's explicit social aspects were central to its success.

> Zwischen beiden [the translation by Lange and by Jonas] ist ein nicht unerheblicher Unterschied: wer den Verfasser kennen lernen will, muß zu jener greifen, für die Bühne mag die letztere handlicher sein, obwohl uns darin manches Befremdende aufgestoßen ist. Im Originale heftet sich an *den Titel*, welcher im ganzen Stück die Parole bildet, etwas Tendenziöses, welches dem Grundmotiv nothwendig einen Zug von Uebertreibung beimischt; denn daß die gesellschaftliche Tartufferie, die sociale Lüge und Heuchelei, eine Stütze der Gesellschaft sei, entspricht doch weder der Wahrheit noch der Wirklichkeit; wo es so ist, kann es nur als Schein, höchstens als Ausnahme gelten. Der Bearbeiter hat diesen Fehler bis auf einen mäßigen Rest getilgt, um aus dem Drama *ein Familiengemälde* zu machen, in welches nur an einigen Stellen gewisse socialphilosophische, moderne Reflexe einfallen.[430]

By choosing to play down the criticism of society, and focusing on the private side of the affair, Jonas had taken another step in the direction of making the play more akin to the melodrama which primarily populated the private theatres. Also, the critic Fritz Mauthner confirmed this general belief, stating that the plays had less of an impact on the general audience than one would have expected from the popularity of the play, and blamed the theatres for not letting the audience benefit from the brilliance of the dialog.[431]

In relation to the later appropriation, *Pillars of Society* may indeed have proven to be the revelation to some of the younger generation, like Paul Schlenther and Otto Brahm, which they claimed it to be. It is, however, evident from the contemporary sources and from the way in which Emil Jonas changed the play that most of the adaptations of *Pillars of Society* in 1878 were made to comply with the existing expectations of the theatres, and not as the forerunner of a naturalist aesthetic. The critical aspects of the play were generally played down and the focus shifted from the public to the private sphere, thus making the play more like the popular

[429] Unsigned review, 'Stadt-Theatre - Henrik Ibsen: Die Stützen Der Gesellschaft'.
[430] Ibid.
[431] Philipp Stein, *Henrik Ibsen Zur Bühnengeschichte Seiner Dichtungen,* (Berlin: O. Elsner, 1901), p. 3.

French plays of the time. It is the claim of this interpretation that the success of *Pillars of Society*, as well as Bjørnson's *A Bankruptcy* before it, was achieved due to the play's ability to comply with the aesthetic familiar to the private German theatre, something which meant that it could supply these theatres' constant demand for new plays.

Fiasco: A Doll's House in Germany

After the success of *Pillars of Society*, *A Doll's House* proved largely to be a failure on the German stages, and as such it ended what otherwise had seemed as the beginning of a breakthrough for Ibsen. Yet, before turning to the diffusion of the play it is important to note changes that were made to the play in connection with the translation, not least as they indicate what was thought to please the audience at the time, and how far even Ibsen was prepared to go in the hope of continual success in Germany.

Contrary to *Pillars of Society* only one German translation was made of *A Doll's House* when it came out. This translation was made by Reclam Verlag's translator, Wilhelm Lange, and was authorised by Ibsen. In this translation two noteworthy changes were made: the first was the change of the title from the Norwegian *Et dukkehjem* to the name of the female protagonist 'Nora'. The second was the introduction of an alternative ending in which Nora did not leave her husband and children. The change of title is significant because it gives a clue to how the translator Wilhelm Lange envisioned the play and the way in which he sought to place it in a specific tradition. By changing the title to '*Nora'* Lange would immediately have brought to mind Sardou's play '*Dora'* (1877) which was very popular at German theatres at the time.[432] Lange's change of title must also be seen in relation the fact that he, besides being the translator, was also the agent of the play, and the change of title was, therefore, a way of marketing the play to the theatres. The change of title is, thus, another indication that Ibsen's contemporary plays were appropriated to fit the pattern of the popular French plays. Besides, the popular actress Neumann-Raben, who was later to star as Nora in performances across the country, had previously had a great success in Sardou's play. These are important indications of Lange's intentions for the appropriation of the play. The change of title and the fact that Neumann-Raben was to star in the play would in any case have given the audience the impression that what they were about to witness was the performance of a Norwegian 'Dora'.

The most decisive change, however, was that Ibsen wrote a new ending for the play. Due to the absence of copyright and prompted by the suspicion that an unauthorised translation was underway Ibsen felt it better to make the changes himself than have to face a competing

[432] Moe, p. 93.

translation.[433] In an open letter to the Danish newspaper Nationltidende he explained the background for the alternative ending and how its usage was contrary to his desires.

> Immediately after the publication of *Nora* I received a communication from my translator and agent for the North-German theatres, Herr Wilhelm Lange in Berlin, saying he had reason to fear the publication of another translation or 'adaptation' of the play with an altered ending, and that this would probably be preferred by a considerable number of North-German theatres. In order to prevent this eventuality I sent my translator and agent the draft of an alteration to be used in case of necessity. In this version Nora does not leave the house. Instead, Helmer forces her into the doorway of the sleeping children's nursery, the parents exchange a few lines, Nora sinks to the floor and the curtain falls. I have myself described this alteration to my translator as a 'barbaric act of violence' towards the play. Its use is absolutely contrary to my wishes, and I hope that it will not be used by many German theatres. As long as there is no literary agreement between Germany and the Scandinavian countries we Scandinavian authors have no rights whatsoever down here, as is the case with German authors in our countries. Thus our dramatic works are constantly being violated both by translators, heads of theatres, directors and actors at minor theatres.[434]

It is evident that given the absence of copyright Ibsen felt pressured into writing the alternative ending, which despite his wishes was used at a number of theatres.

Unlike the productions of *Pillars of Society* which after its initial success at Berlin's private theatres was disseminated widely following no evident pattern, the diffusion of *A Doll's House* in 1880 falls into a set of clusters. Thus it is possible to distinguish between three groups of productions: in terms of chronology the first group of productions were in Northern Germany, the second (one production only) in Munich and the third group, a series of productions, all featuring the star actress Hedwig Neumann-Raben. In the following, I map out each of the three groups of productions before returning to a more in-depth analysis of the fate of *A Doll's House* at Residenz-Theater in Berlin, in order to investigate why the play failed.

In Scandinavia, *A Doll's House* had been a huge success and at the Danish Royal Theatre it had been Ibsen's biggest triumph to date.[435] Given the success which the play had experienced in Scandinavia, it is not surprising that the North-German theatres in the former Danish areas were fast to stage the play: in February 1880 there were two productions of *A Doll's House*: one at Stadttheater Flensburg and one at Kieler Stadt-Theater.[436] At least the Danish speaking communities in northern Germany were assumed to be well informed about the play due to extensive coverage in the Danish papers from its success in Copenhagen. In Flensburg, *Flensborg Avis*, which was a Danish paper, stated that there was no need to relate the content of the play as it had so often been mentioned in despatches from Copenhagen and so only pointed out that the ending had been changed for what was the first production in German.[437] Both the production in Flensburg and the one which followed in Kiel made use of Ibsen's alternative ending and received relatively good reviews in the local press compared to the other

[433] 'The Alternative Ending of A Doll's House', *National Library of Norway: All About Henrik Ibsen* (ibsen.nb.no, 2015).
[434] Letter: Ibsen to Nationaltidende 17 February 1880, translated in 'The Alternative Ending of A Doll's House'.
[435] HIS 7k, p. 238ff.
[436] Appendix II.
[437] Unsigned review, 'Et Dukkehjem Ved Stadttheater Flensburg', *Flensborg Avis* (Flensburg, 8 February 1880).

German productions which followed over the course of the year. Thus, it must be assumed that they in part were influenced by the reverence which existed for Ibsen in the Scandinavian press at this time.

The first production to make use of the original ending was at Königliches Residenz-Theater in Munich in March 1880. Ibsen, who still lived in the city, attended the local premiere of the production, which was also attended by members of the royal family.[438] The production featured the actress Marie Ramlo as Nora, who was later to return to the same role after the long break in Ibsen-productions. In 1886, Ramlo again played Nora in the Meininger production of the play, which was the first German production of the play in close to five years, and the first production of any of Ibsen's plays in the same period save for the court theatre of Oldenburg's production of the *Vikings of Helgeland* in 1885.[439] In 1887 Ramlo returned to Königliches Residenz-Theater to portray Nora once again.

The series of productions which held great importance for the overall success or failure of *A Doll's House* was the one in which the famous actress Hedwig Neumann-Raben (1844-1905) played the title role. In Germany, Neumann-Raben was one of the greatest stars of her time and her portrayal of Nora was greatly anticipated by those familiar with Ibsen's plays. Beginning in Dresden in April 1880 and continuing in the autumn, the famous actress starred as Nora in a series of productions across the country: at Thalia-Theater in Hamburg, Residenztheater in Hannover and finally at Residenz-Theater in Berlin.[440] The series was not one production which toured, but merely Niemann-Raaben who appeared in different productions. As Neumann-Raben's gave the most widely diffused interpretation of Nora of the early 1880s, her portrayal was crucial to the general reception of the play. Yet, the relative success or failure of the play was not only closely connected to her performance, but the fact alone that she appeared in a play was of great value in itself as her popularity would attract the audience to the productions. The Danish critic Georg Brandes, who lived in Berlin at the time and covered the production at Residenz-Theater, stated that it was her name more than that of Ibsen which had attracted the audience.[441] The presence of a star in the leading role was not only an advantage, according to Brandes, and he complained loudly that her acting was self-centred, and, what was worse, the fact that she had appeared in numerous productions with a different cast meant that rehearsals at Residenz-Theater had been cut down to only four.[442] Yet, it is clear even from Brandes' review that the audience adored her, and the German reviewers praised her interpretation of the role, as for example Lindau and Spielhagen did in their reviews.

[438] Paulsen.
[439] Appendix II
[440] The repertoire-database does not mention the production in Dresden, which is only mentioned in the introduction to *Henrik Ibsens Skrifter*.
[441] Brandes, *Berlin som tysk Rigshovedstad; Erindringer fra et femaarigt Ophold,* p. 357.
[442] Ibid., p. 360.

Failure in Berlin: 'Und dann jenes grausame, kaum unterdrückte Lachen…'

Though the productions in which Niemann-Raaben starred as Nora were not among the first productions of *A Doll's House* in Germany they stood out as important events in the reception of Ibsen's plays, not least because the final production in which Niemann-Raaben appeared was the first production in Berlin. In some circles, the production seems to have been greatly anticipated in the time before it reached Berlin. It is, however, uncertain how far expectations were extended to the general public. According to the German writer Alfred Spielhagen (1829-1911), who reviewed the play, Reclam's publication of the play had ensured that it was much talked about in literary and cultural circles before it appeared on stage:

> Nicht bloß in der specifisch literarischen. Wohin man kam — in jedem der Kunst und Literatur holden Salon — überall fand man mitten zwischen den illustrirten Prachtbänden jenes unscheinbare gelbe, "für zwanzig Pfennige einzeln käufliche" Heftchen No. 1257 der Reclam'schen Universalbibliothek mit dem Titel: "Nora. Schauspiel in drei Aufzügen von Henrik Ibsen. Deutsch von Wilhelm Lange"; und man konnte mit ziemlich sicherer Chance des Gewinnens eine Wette darauf eingehen, es werde innerhalb der nächsten Viertelstunde von irgend einer schönen oder nicht schönen Lippe der klangvolle Name der Heldin des Schauspiels ausgesprochen werden und sich daran sofort eine lebhafte Discussion knüpfen, deren Ende nicht leicht abzusehen war.[443]

The discussions which the play generated all revolved around the ethical question of Nora leaving her husband and children, and when it came to that question, Spielhagen claimed, no common ground was to be found. Yet, for the ensuing dramatic production, two things could swiftly be agreed upon:

> Die ästhetische Seite der Frage, das Kunstwerk, der dramatische Werth der Dichtung — darüber ging man sofort zu der bewußten Tagesordnung über, nachdem man zuvor einstimmig und ohne Debatte decretirt, erstens: daß an der ungeheuren theatralischen Wirkung des Stückes nicht zu zweifeln sei; zweitens: daß es in Deutschland nur eine Künstlerin gebe, welche die Titelrolle spielen könne, und das sei Frau Hedwig Niemann-Rabe.[444]

It is impossible to say how far outside the salons of the cultural elite, in which Spielhagen claimed the play was so fiercely debated, the expectations regarding *Nora* extended. Also, the critic and playwright Oscar Blumenthal stated when he mentioned the play in *Theatralische Eindrücke* (1885) that it was much looked forward to before the premiere and that he himself had been very taken with it when he read it before the first production.[445] Georg Brandes, on the other hand, gave in his report from the Berlin premiere a different estimate of the general knowledge of Ibsen and his play, stating bluntly that Ibsen was not generally known. This, he claimed, was one of the reasons why the play failed, as it had not been read by the audience beforehand.[446] In spite of the apparent contradictions between Brandes, Spielhagen and Blumenthal, the most plausible explanation is that in some circles, at least, Ibsen was known,

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[443] Friedrich Spielhagen, 'Henrik Ibsen's Nora', *Westermann's Illustrierte Deutsche Monatshefte*, vol. 49 1880-1.
[444] Spielhagen.
[445] Oscar Blumenthal, *Theatralische Eindrücke* (Berlin: Hofmann & comp., 1885), p. 105. For Blumenthal, however, the statement led to a confession that after the premiere he had made the solemn vow never again to judge a play before he had seen it staged.
[446] Brandes, *Berlin som tysk Rigshovedstad; Erindringer fra et femaarigt Ophold,* p. 357 ff.

and *Nora* was looked forward to before the premiere. Given the audience's reception of the play at the premier it is very likely that Brandes was right in stating that the audience in general was not familiar with the drama. However, one must remember that Brandes statement rested on a comparison with Scandinavia where the audience was generally well acquainted with the plays before the productions and the texts treated with a much greater reverence than was the case with the German adaptation. It should, however, be noted that neither Spielhagen nor Blumenthal approved of *A Doll's House*, and the emphasis that they put on the expectations seems in part motivated by their descriptions of the shortcomings of the play on stage.

In spite of the expectations described by Spielhagen and Blumenthal, the premiere of *A Doll's House* was a fiasco. In the weeks before it premiered at Residenz-Theater, it had been possible for the Berlin audience to follow the progress of Niemann-Raben's tour through reviews in papers and magazine, which, according to Spielhagen, had brought nothing but grave tidings for the 'Nora-Schwärmer', as he called those who hoped for a success at Residenz-Theater. Yet, a success was still hoped for.[447]

For the progress of the performance, Brandes and Spielhagen gave largely concurring accounts. The fact that the play would fail in Berlin, as the reports had said that it had done in the other cities which the tour had visited, seems to have manifested itself as the drama progressed and the lively child-wife was replaced by the emancipated Nora. It would seem that Niemann-Rabens' talent had sufficed to convincingly portray the first, but to make the transformation, which was the hotly disputed point of the time and that in a manner that convinced the audience, proved to be beyond her reach. In his review, Spielhagen described with much empathy how the Nora-Schwärmer's hope of a positive reception was dashed, as the audience grew first restless then discontent and, finally, at what should have been the dramatic climax of the play, how a horrid, barely suppressed laughter rose up and irredeemably wrecked the play:

> Eine laue Aufnahme, oder eine, deren Temperatur beträchtlich unter den hochgespannten Erwartungen blieb? Das wäre für den Nora-Schwärmer gewiß schon recht betrübsam gewesen. Aber es kam viel, viel schlimmer. Es ist das schwer zu beschreiben. Man muß es eben selbst erlebt, an seinen eigenen Nerven durchgemacht und sympathisch durchgelitten haben: diese sonderbare Unruhe, welche, erst ganz vereinzelt, ganz leise, hier und da in dem Hause entstehend, aus dem Hause aufsteigend, sich nur dem feineren, argwöhnischeren Ohre bemerklich macht, dann größere Kreise ergreift, wieder zu entschlummern scheint, um plötzlich in dem ganzen Publikum auf einmal zu erwachen — aber nun nicht mehr als schüchterner individueller Zweifel, dem Nachbar flüsternd mitgetheiltes Bedenken, sondern als souveräne, mißbilligende, verurtheilende *vox populi*. Und dann jenes grausame, kaum unterdrückte Lachen an einer Stelle, auf deren tieftragisch ergreifende Wirkung der Enthusiast gebaut hatte wie auf einen Felsen, bis er zu seinem Entsetzen bemerkt, daß unter jenem dämonischen Lachen der Granit sich in verstiebenden Wüstensand verwandelt — es war ein böser Abend, fast so bös, als wäre Einem selbst ein Stück durchgefallen.[448]

[447] Spielhagen.
[448] Ibid.

In full accordance with Spielhagen's description, Brandes also described how the audience was lost as the melodramatic intrigue with the forged signature in the first two acts changed into a solemn domestic controversy between Helmer and Nora in the third act:

> The first act was watched with unmixed pleasure until Krogstad – played in the most mediocre and melodramatic fashion – appeared on stage. From this moment the audience seemed increasingly restless, dissatisfied and disapproving; in the third act people laughed and jeered; it was at times difficult to hear the dialogue from laughter and taunting shouts. The play dragged itself to an end. Jeering and applause fought. The scorn was solely intended for the play; the applause was on the minority's part intended for the playwright apart from that which was intended for the actress.[449]

From both Spielhagen and Brands' descriptions of the audience's reactions during the course of the performance, it is evident that spectators were initially pleased with the play, but grew increasingly restless and, finally, in the third act gave in to open mockery and laughter of what should have been the drama's climax.

It seems likely that what more than anything caused the fiasco was the discrepancy between the majority of the audience's expectations of the play and the actual play. While the drama's first acts were easily understood within the framework of the comedy of manners, a genre to which the audience was thoroughly accustomed, the third act could not be. This accounts for the applause with which they greeted the first two acts and their rejection of the last, which is evident laughter and shouts. The transformation of Nora's character in the third act seems in the most surprising way to have broken with the horizon of expectations within which the majority of the audience had so far received the play. Spielhagen's own response to the transformation supports this interpretation, as he complained that it was simply not possible to understand the transformation of the characters of Nora and Helmer in the third act from what had been revealed in the first two. The fact that Nora should have lived in a loveless marriage was impossible to deduce from the first two acts as Helmer had been portrayed as a 'perfect gentleman' in these. To Spielhagen, this inexplicable transformation placed the play outside the realm of (true) art, as the drama was not in itself a contained entity, but a 'few chapters' from 'the novel' which was certainly required to explain the story in full.[450] The same objection was made by Karl Frenzel in his review: Nora of the first and the last acts was not the same person, and Ibsen had made no effort to make the transformation plausible to his audience.[451]

Brandes also dealt with disappointed expectations, though he placed the fault with the audience. He claimed that one of the reasons why *A Doll's House* failed was that the audience's taste had

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[449] Brandes, *Berlin som tysk Rigshovedstad; Erindringer fra et femaarigt Ophold*, p. 357.

[450] ‚Daß in der That "Nora" kein echtes Kunstwerk, kein in sich abgeschlossenes, sich selbst erklärendes, an und für sich verständliches Drama ist, sondern einige in dialogische Form gebrachte Capitel eines Romans, dessen Anfang weit vor dem Beginn des Dramas liegt, ebenso wie sein vermuthliches Ende weit hinter den Schluß des Dramas fällt, — ein paar Capitel, in welche sowohl aus dem Anfang als aus der Fortsetzung des Romans alles Mögliche unwillkürlich hineingerathen, von dem Dichter absichtlich hineingebracht ist, was uns — wie er hoffte — das Verständniß der schwierigen Situation, der räthselhaften Charaktere erleichtern sollte, in Wirklichkeit aber diese Situation verschleiert, diese Charaktere bis zur Unverständlichkeit entfremdet.' (Spielhagen)

[451] Karl Frenzel, 'Die Berliner Theater', *Deutsche Rundschau*, vol. 26 1881, p. 310.

been 'corrupted' by Sardou, and that from the stage it only desired to be entertained, something which brought it at odds with Ibsen's play which was all seriousness.[452] As we shall see in the following, the German reception of *A Doll's House* shared a number of similarities with the British reception of the play where Nora's transformation was also attacked in reviews. But at the Danish premiere many had also shared Frenzel's opinion that Helmer was not to be blamed as a husband and Nora's reaction both inexplicable and uncalled for.[453] Yet, in Denmark this had not hindered the public in embracing the play.

In Berlin, the failure of the third act to please the audience and the fact that most critics were opposed to what they knew was the alternative ending, made the theatre revert to the original ending, so that the play was staged with the original ending on alternate nights.[454] Yet, this did not have any effect on the popularity of the play, and only brought scorn in the press.[455] The production of *A Doll's House* at Residenz-Theater proved to be the last production of any of Ibsen's plays in Berlin in the next six years. In the provinces, two further attempts to stage *A Doll's House* were made by different companies the following year, before long the pause in Ibsen productions encompassed all of Germany. *A Doll's House* was not staged again in Germany until the Meininger's production of the play in 1886.[456] It was, however, not Nora who was to revive the general interest in Ibsen, but Osvald Alwing in the play *Ghosts*.

[452] Brandes, *Berlin som tysk Rigshovedstad; Erindringer fra et femaarigt Ophold,* p. 357.
[453] Neiiendam, *Det Kongelige Teaters Historie 1874-1922,* p. 61.
[454] Stein, p. 8.
[455] Ibid., p. 9.
[456] Appendix II.

Chapter 5: *Ghosts* – Scandal and Naturalistic breakthrough

In 1896, Alfred Kerr (1867-1948), the latest star amongst the German critics, sat down to write the pre-history of what by then had become the new German drama; he entitled the text 'Der Ahnherr' and it was a portrait of Ibsen.

> [A]m Beginn der belangvollen Entwicklung, welche das neue deutsche Drama genommen hat, steht Henrik Ibsen. Er steht dort, obwohl diese Entwicklung etwas Selbständiges geworden ist. Ihre Früchte sind nicht ibsen'sch, sondern von eigner Art. Wenn man will: deutsch. […] Er bleibt für uns ein grosser Anreger; der Ahnherr nicht eines einzelnen Dramas, aber einer ganzen dramatischen Epoche. Und wer diese Epoche auf ihre Ursprünge verfolgen will, wird nicht umhin können, die deutschen Geschicke des seltnen Mannes zu prüfen. Er wird ihre Geschichte zu schreiben haben. Bis zu dem Punkt, wo der Umschwung in Deutschland eintritt. Das ist noch nicht sieben Jahre her.[457]

What makes Kerr's article fascinating reading from the perspective of the present narrative is not that he claimed that Ibsen was the initiator of the new German drama, but that he chose to do so in the guise of the historian. The fact that Karr chose to play the historian rather than the critic and thus, on the surface at least, refrained from enforcing a specific polemic agenda is a clear indication of the transformation which the dramatic field at this point had already undergone. From Karr's vantage point of 1896, there was no longer any need to make assertions about Ibsen's greatness as a dramatist or the prevalence of the new German drama, as by then both appeared as fact. The transformation of the theatre which Ibsen's supporters clamoured for during the 1880s had been completed, and Karr could therefore fashion himself as the historian of a very recent literary revolution. The seven years which Karr mentioned at the end of the quotation, and which he identified as the turning point for German drama, was the premiere of Gerhart Hauptmann's play *Vor Sonnenaufgang* the second play to be staged by Freie Bühne in 1889. Freie Bühne in Berlin, which was dedicated to the promotion of new drama and as much a symbol of the new movement as Ibsen's plays, had had *Ghosts* as its opening play in recognition of the fact that this play had long since become the battle standard of the new movement. Karr's article, therefore, is not only telling of Ibsen's breakthrough in Germany, but is a testimony to the profound transformation which the theatrical field had already undergone at this point and the position which Ibsen by then occupied.

This chapter follows Ibsen's play and the production of *Ghosts* as the opening play in Freie Bühne in 1889. That the chapter, and therefore my investigation of Ibsen in Germany, ends with the opening of Freie Bühne, the event which Karr designated as the immediate prelude to the new German drama, is, of course, no coincidence. There was a close connection between the naturalist groups' appropriation of Ibsen's plays, the emergence of the movement, and the revival of Ibsen's plays which led to a general breakthrough in the German theatres for his plays. The opening of Freie Bühne can in many ways be seen as the decisive moment in the history of the movement as it acquired its own organisational platform, which made it

[457] Alfred Kerr, 'Der Ahnherr. Zur Vorgeschichte Des Neuen Deutschen Dramas', *Neue Deutsche Rundschau*, vol. 8 (1896), p. 697.

independent of the established theatrical market and the censorship of public performances, and it gave the movement a more distinct expression. Yet, the story of the return of Ibsen's plays does not begin with Freie Bühne but with a number of productions which culminated with the opening of the independent theatre.

Naturalism and the great generational shift of the 1880s

During the 1880s a new and self-aware generation of writers, critics and dramatists emerged in German theatre, who fiercely strove to set themselves apart from the previous generation. What brought them together in something which, at least from the outside, resembled a united movement was the fact that they were all adherers of alternative aesthetics, but very often they were merely labelled naturalists, especially by their opponents who used the term in a derogatory way. During the 1880s, various attempts were made to give the new tendencies in art a theoretical foundation, and thus to point the way for its future development, yet in its general usage the term naturalism was used to cover a variety of positions.[458] What united them more than anything was the rejection of the prevailing aesthetics; artistically, however, there were common themes. They were focused on truth and rejected the confinement of art to the idealised and the beautiful, which had prevailed in the previous generation. They accused contemporary drama of being content with merely entertaining the audience, and in theatre the popular French farces and their German emulations became a symbol of everything that was wrong with the established theatrical market. During the decade more groups played important roles in providing a framework for the individual artists and thereby provided them with the possibility of making themselves heard, though there was a distinct tendency towards more formalised groups towards the end of the decade. The organisational level of these groups varied from loose connections of friends, such as the group which soon gathered around the brothers Julius (1859-1930) and Heinrich Hart (1855-1906), whose magazine *Kritische Waffengänge* came out from 1882, to more formalised associations such as Freie Bühne which opened in 1889, which had subscribing members, its own rules and regulations and its own magazine. Of the many members of Freie Bühne the vast majority were passive consumers rather than producers of art, something which gave the association a wide popular basis.[459]

[458] In this chapter I make use of the term naturalism to single out the aesthetic movement which emerged gradually from the middle of the 1880s and for whom the reverence of Ibsen's plays was one of the defining features. Taken as an aesthetic concept, naturalism is somewhat problematic as it is used to cover a number of theoretical positions and artistic practices which differ from one another. Moe presents, I think, a very handy solution to this problem by pointing out that a definition of naturalism is best achieved through a negative definition (Moe, p. 17). The negative definition which Moe proposes is very useful as it takes into account the somewhat ill-defined character of the movement in the early period, and it makes room for the fact that naturalism was something which emerged gradually and in constant dialogue with the works of foreign authors, which were imported with the aim of creating a German naturalism. This is further complicated by the fact that in the period which I investigate the term naturalism did not have the meaning it received later, and naturalists for instance themselves did not often use the term, but wrote about realistic literature and drama.

[459] Katharina Günther, *Literarische Gruppenbildung im Berliner Naturalismus.* (Bonn: Bouvier, 1972), p. 24.

Frequently, a geographical distinction is made between the naturalists in Munich and in Berlin, and it was particularly to the naturalists in Berlin that Ibsen's plays in general and *Ghosts* in particular came to be a rallying point.[460] This was in spite of the fact that it was naturalists based in Munich who organised the first German production of *Ghosts*. In Munich the naturalists primarily organised themselves around Michael Georg Conrad's (1846-1927) magazine *Die Gesellschaft*, which came out from 1885. In Berlin there were a number of different groups which all clamoured for a new literature or drama. The brothers Hart, due to their fierce attacks on the current state of German drama, were the first to gain a wide momentum with the younger generation, and their basic ideas which they presented in their magazine were widely reiterated. Though the Harts did not fight specifically for the production of Ibsen's plays, their magazine was concerned with the fight for a new German drama. A different group that at some point engaged more specifically with Ibsen's plays was the association of young writers called 'Durch' which was active between 1886-1889.[461] The specific importance of the association Durch to Ibsen lay in the fact that one of its founding members, Leo Berg (1862-1908), published a pamphlet about Ibsen, in which he argued for the intrinsic Germanic qualities which characterised his work. Furthermore, it was former members of Durch who later organised Freie Volks Bünhe, a theatrical association in line with Freie Bühne that opened in 1890 with Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*.[462] Of greatest importance for the future canonising of Ibsen as an author was Freie Bühne, with many organising members counted among Ibsen's most active supporters.

During the 1880s, Ibsen's plays were to serve as a major source of inspiration to the German naturalists, yet the call which went up for a new literature was strongly voiced in national terms and was more than anything a call for a new national literature. Especially the Harts' criticism, which already early in the decade attracted much attention with the publication of *Kritische Waffengänge*, had a very strong national focus. According to the Harts, the drama and literature of the preceding generation was corrupted because it too freely had embraced foreign, by which they meant French, literature: the political unification of Germany had not fostered the corresponding cultural apogee they hoped for, rather, they found that the military victor had been culturally vanquished by the very people it had defeated. German theatres' embrace of the French comedies of manner and particularly their German emulations were singled out as a particular object of their scorn.[463] Yet, the Harts and other naturalists like them were not alone in adopting a strongly nationalist stance and similar positions were taken up by conservative critics. The critic Karl Frenzel, who throughout the 1880s remained deeply opposed to the new literature, also used national borders as demarcation lines to reject the plays he disliked, and in his reviews of Ibsen's plays never tired of deploring the fact that a foreign play had been chosen

[460] Moe, p. 126.
[461] Ibid., p. 150.
[462] Günther, p. 102.
[463] Lothar L Schneider, *Realistische Literaturpolitik und naturalistische Kritik: über die Situierung der Literatur in der zweiten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts und die Vorgeschichte der Moderne* (Tübingen: M. Niemeyer, 2005), p. 193 ff.

instead of a German one.[464] The dismissal of Ibsen's plays on national grounds was intensified in connections with the general moral outcry amongst conservative critics which followed the production of *Ghosts*.[465] Leo Berg was one of the people who very actively entered into the discussion which arose about Ibsen's relationship with German literature. In his pamphlet on the subject, Berg asserted that though Ibsen was not German (Deutsch) he was not foreign either as he, by his Norwegian origin, was Germanic (Germane), and what was more important than his origin was that of his world view. Thus, Berg found Ibsen's love for truth and his determinate character to be thoroughly German qualities.[466]

Appropriation of foreign literature was in other words a practice common to both sides in the aesthetic divide which appeared during the 1880s, yet it did not prevent either side from applying national arguments in their attempt to oust the aesthetic products with which they disagreed. When Ibsen's plays, in spite of the strong national focus of the naturalists, came to hold a key position within German naturalism it was due to the fact that no new German production of plays was found ready to provide a convincing alternative to the plays which dominated the theatres' repertoire. By promoting Ibsen's plays and the works of a few other foreign authors, such as Zola and Tolstoy, the objective was, partly at least, that they were to serve as role models for a future German theatre.[467]

The subject which caused the greatest rift between the naturalist and the defenders of the idealist aesthetic was the question of how, and if, the cruder sides of life should be presented in art. Defenders of idealist aesthetics insisted that art, in order to serve an ennobling purpose, should either refrain from presenting the hideous sides of life or present them in an idealised form. While many of the naturalists indeed shared the idea that art served an ennobling purpose they strongly disagreed with regard to the representation of the hideous aspects of life, which, the argument ran, might well serve a higher purpose. In relation to Ibsen, this discussion became highly accentuated when it came to the reception of *Ghosts*. The naturalists, such as Brahm in his review of *Ghosts,* claimed that for something to be art it depended on the manner in which it was presented, not on the subject of presentation.[468] The more conservatively minded critics revolted, like the Scandinavian critics before them, at the topic of the play. What could or should be the object of artistic representation, however, was not only a theoretical question, but had a legal dimension as well, as artistic productions which offended the public's feeling of morality was a matter for the censorship.

Censorship in the German Empire was in a number of ways very heterogeneous both as an institution and in its practices. Not only was there a great difference between the way in which

[464] Frenzel, 'Berliner Chronik: Die Theater'; Frenzel, 'Die Berliner Theater'; Karl Frenzel, 'Gespenster (Residenz-Theater)', *National-Zeitung* (Berlin, 11 January 1887).
[465] Leo Berg, *Henrik Ibsen und das Germanenthum in der modernen Litteratur.* (Berlin: R. Eckstein Nachfolger, 1887), p. 3.
[466] Berg, pp. 4–5.
[467] Moe, p. 117 ff.
[468] Otto Brahm, 'Ibsens Gespenster in Berlin', *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 12 January 1887.

books and theatre was censored, though this was common on a western European level, censorship was also decentralised due to Germany's federal character, which meant that at times there were regional differences in the local censors' verdicts.[469] The difference between the censorship of books and theatre arose from the fact that different procedures were applied: theatre was subjected to preventive or prior censorship (Vorzensur), which meant that all plays had to be approved by the censor prior to the first production, whereas books were only subject to punitive or 'ex post facto' censorship (Nachzensur), which meant that action was only taken after public dissemination if required.[470] Needless to say, the censorship applied to books was the more lenient form of censorship as it was less strict, but also less effective. The greater attention which censorship paid to theatre, not only in Germany but in the entire of Western Europe, was connected with the fact that it could reach the illiterate lower classes, and that the audience was a collective one that might, it was feared, be spurred into riotous action.[471] Especially in the case of censoring theatrical productions, the regional differences was a constant challenge to the German censors as the different outcome in decisions laid bare the entire system to criticism and ridicule. But more importantly, due to the difference in the censorships' approach to publishing and theatre, *Ghosts* led a double life as book and on the stage. In the German theatres it was to a large extent banned, though there were exceptions, and in print it was widely available in Reclam Verlag's twenty Pfennig edition.

Notwithstanding that it protected against a long range of political religious offences, it was primarily accusations of obscenity which led to the German censors' prosecution of plays. Accusations of exactly this offence was found to be an effective tool in keeping naturalist plays off the stages.[472] In judging what was considered to be obscene the censors, who were regular police officers, were left with a great deal of room to manoeuvre and were not required to provide a reason for the ban of a given play unless the decision was appealed. The legal framework rested on a formulation which took aim at the effect of a given book or play, defining obscenity as anything which '… causes public annoyance by grossly offending the (public's) sense of modesty and morality (Scham- und Sittlichkeitsgefühl) in a sexual sense'.[473] In the enforcement of the law attention was paid to the context of the consumption, adopting a more lenient policy when it came to what was considered better educated audiences. Thus, as I show below, the reason that Berlin's police president gave for the continuous ban on Ibsen's *Ghosts* in Berlin was that a play which aimed to show the moral decay of the bourgeois could not be shown to an audience in which members of the working class might be present.

[469] Gary D Stark, *Banned in Berlin: Literary Censorship in Imperial Germany, 1871-1918* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), p. 40 ff.
[470] Stark, pp. 2–20.
[471] Robert Justin Goldstein, 'Introduction', in *The Frightful Stage*, ed. by Robert Justin Goldstein (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), p. 6.
[472] Stark, pp. 209–210.
[473] Stark, p. 192.

The naturalists' call for a new German literature, which went up from the beginning of the 1880s, must be seen as various attempts to instigate change in the aesthetic field. These attempts to change the aesthetic field were accompanied by more earthly efforts by various groups and individuals to secure positions in the field. In this movement the appropriation of the works of foreign authors that had already proved successful abroad, such Ibsen's plays and Tolstoy and Zola's novels and dramas, played an important role in breaking through. However, it is important to note the unequal terms which the field offered the new movement as the established cultural institutions, such as theatres, newspapers and magazines and not least censorship, favoured the cultural products that catered to the established taste. Seen in this perspective the gradual formation of more formalised groups was of special importance in establishing the new movement and canonising its authors. Especially Freie Bühne and the associations which followed it, such as Freie Volks Bühne, were of major importance as they offered an elaborate institutional framework through which new aesthetic ideas could be disseminated. It is equally important to note how the generational shift which occurred in the 1880s in the long-run meant that the supporters of the new aesthetics gradually obtained positions within the established cultural institutions, something which wore down the innate resistance towards the new literature which was originally to be found in these. Thus the first production of any of Ibsen's plays at the royal theatre in Berlin, Königliches Schauspielhaus, was a consequence of the fact that the former manager of Residenz-Theater, Anton Anno, had acquired a position at the theatre as artistic manager.[474] The same was equally true for the future careers of Brahm and Schlenther.

Breaking through with Ghosts

After the failure of *A Doll's House* in Berlin in 1881 only a few attempts were made to stage any of Ibsen's plays before the series of productions of *Ghosts* were made. During this five-year-interlude Ibsen's plays still appeared in German translation in Reclam's Universal Bibliothek with the publication of *An Enemy of the People* in 1883 and *Ghosts* in 1884. However, the translations which appeared in these years did not lead to any new productions. The relative quiet which surrounded the Norwegian dramatist in the theatres was mirrored by the fact that very little was written about Ibsen, either in the form of books or in the literary journals, during this period.[475] There were, however, exceptions but not all of these pointed towards the revival of Ibsen's plays in German theatres. In 1883, Ludwig Passage, who had previously translated *Peer Gynt* (1880) and Ibsen's *Poems* (1881), wrote a biography of Ibsen which, however, was received by the poet with some reservation and had little impact.[476] That same year Georg Brandes published a long article about Ibsen in the magazine *Nord und Süd*, the first in German since he had moved to Germany, and in 1884 Otto Brahm published his first

[474] Ove Rode, 'Ibsen-Ugen I Berlin', *Politiken* (København, 17 March 1889).
[475] Fallenstein and Henning, pp. 162–153.
[476] Letter: Ibsen to Passage 16 December 1886.

articles in which he clamoured for a production of *Ghosts* following the German translation of the play. It was Brahm's articles which most clearly pointed towards Ibsen's German revival, as they marked the beginning of his involvement with Ibsen's plays. Brandes' article, however, is more difficult to place. It has often been interpreted as an important impetus to the naturalist reception of Ibsen,[477] but it has also been seen as Brandes' attempt to distance himself from and even discredit Ibsen.[478] Yet, Brandes' article was important as it served as the foundation for many of the German articles providing them with facts on Ibsen's career and interpretations of his works.

There can, however, be little doubt that Brandes' article presented Ibsen to the German public in a light which made his plays an obvious object of interest to those who were pining for change in the field of theatre. In late 1883, Brandes, who had just left Berlin after a long stay, had an article about Ibsen published in Paul Lindau's magazine *Nord und Süd*.[479] The article had already been published the previous year in a Danish periodical. Brandes' article, which was published only after he had left Germany, followed after a period during which he had refrained from writing about Ibsen, and it painted a somewhat mixed portrait of the Norwegian dramatist. Thus, Brandes both praised Ibsen for being the most modern of playwrights while at the same time he cautioned against the radical political doctrines which he thought could be deduced from his plays. The fact that Brandes did not publish anything about Ibsen during his stay in Germany has been interpreted by Erik M. Christensen as a wilful attempt on Brandes behalf to hinder Ibsen's success.[480] Following this interpretation, Brandes motivation to hinder Ibsen is allegedly to be found in the Scandinavian cultural sphere. Here his relative closeness to Bjørnson, who was still Ibsen's rival at the time, and Brandes own political ambitions in Denmark may have made it seem necessary for him to distance himself from the radical political viewpoints found in Ibsen's text, which were likely to scare off potential political allies. Though I find Christensen's interpretation somewhat tendentious when it comes to the extent to which it finds that Brandes wilfully hindered Ibsen's German progress, in my view it does, however, make an important point when it points out that Brandes warned his German readers against the subversive viewpoints which he claimed that Ibsen held and which to some extent could be deduced from the plays.

Whatever reasons moved Brandes to write as he did, his article carried a mixed message to his German readers. On the one side, it portrayed Ibsen as being the vanguard of modern writers, but on the other, it framed his individualism as being potentially subversive and a threat to the state. The latter was softened to some extent by the fact that Brandes claimed that Ibsen himself was not a revolutionary in the political sense, yet he pointed out that if his radicalism to be acted

[477] Moe, p. 100 ff.
[478] Christensen.
[479] Georg Brandes, 'Henrik Ibsen', *Nord Und Süd*, 1883.
[480] Christensen.

upon it could only lead to a capital offence.[481] This mixed message encapsulated (to the extent that it did not provoke) some of the responses with which Ibsen's plays were greeted over the next years. The message of the subversive tendencies present in Ibsen's work was picked up, either directly or indirectly, by the conservative critics, broader strata of the bourgeois audience and not least by the censorship. The portrayal of Ibsen as the most modern of playwrights may on the other hand account for some of the interest with which the emerging naturalist groups greeted Ibsen's following plays.[482]

Brandes' article served as a prelude to the first German translation of *Ghosts*, which followed in January 1884. The translation was made by Marie von Borch (1843-1895) and published by Reclam Verlag. One who beyond doubt was attentive to Brandes description of Ibsen as the most modern of playwrights was Otto Brahm. Brahm was familiar with Brandes' works, which he admired, and had already written a piece on the Danish critic in *Deutsche Rundschau* as early as 1882.[483] To Brahm, the German translation of *Ghosts* provided an opportunity to publicly support Ibsen and in his two articles, one in *Vossische Zeitung* and one in *Frankfurter Zeitung*, he boldly posed the question of what German theatre had the courage to put on Ibsen's latest play?[484] In 1886, Brahm followed up the two shorter articles with a more substantial study published in *Deutsche Rundschau*.[485] In Brahm's article one finds the radical individualism, which Brandes mentioned as potentially politically dangerous, though presented without Brandes' reservations:

> Er [Ibsen] glaubt leidenschaftlich an das Recht der starken Persönlichkeit, des Einzelnen gegenüber der Gemeinschaft, gleichviel, ob diese Gemeinschaft nun Staat, Gesellschaft, Familie oder Partei heißt; und er hat ein tiefes Mißtrauen gegen das Recht jener Ansprüche, welche der Staat an die Bürger, die Gesellschaft an ihre Mitglieder stellt, auf Kosten der stolzen und freien Entwicklung der Persönlichkeit. Er glaubt an sein Talent, ein Mensch zu sein; und er zweifelt an seinem Talent, ein thätiger Staatsbürger und eine Stütze der Gesellschaft zu sein. Er blickt in eine ferne Zukunft, welche den Bestand der Welt erschüttern, Staaten zerbrechen und vielleicht gar die Idee des Staates selbst antasten wird; aber vor der gegenwärtigen politischen Bewegung in seiner Heimath zieht er sich mit vornehmer Scheu zurück […][486]

Brahm hailed Ibsen as a visionary dramatist who managed to set a new course for art and deeply regretted the fact that the German theatres continued to overlook Ibsen's works, which he insisted could have a positive influence on German theatre.[487]

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[481] In his article Christensen pointed out a discrepancy between the German and the Danish version of the article. Where the German warned that if Ibsen's radicalism was to be acted upon it would lead to a capital offence (Todesverbrechen) the Danish merely states that it would lead to a reckless act. Christensen sees this as Brandes wilful aggravation of the German text through which he sought to kindle the fear of subversive literature, which was strong in Germany at the time. (Christensen, p. 88)
[482] Moe, p. 100 ff.
[483] Jørgen Knudsen, *Georg Brandes: i modsigelsernes tegn Berlin 1877-83* (Gyldendal A/S, 1988), p. 307.
[484] Otto Brahm, 'Ibsens Gespenster', *Vossische Zeitung* (Berlin, 2 February 1884); Otto Brahm, 'Ibsens Gespenster', *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 13 March 1884.
[485] Otto Brahm, 'Henrik Ibsen', *Deutsche Rundschau*, XLIX (1886).
[486] Ibid., 194.
[487] Ibid., pp. 219-220.

Productions of Ghosts

The standard narrative of *Ghosts*' diffusion in Germany usually begins with the dress rehearsal in Augsburg on 14 April 1886, which was the first production of *Ghosts* in German.[488] It was, however, not the first production of the play in Germany for *Ghosts* had already been brought to the stage by a touring troupe of Danish actors, which staged the play in Hamburg in 1883. The troupe, most likely Daniel Züberlein's company, had previously toured the Danish provincial towns with the play and had included Hamburg in their tour.[489] Though this the first production of *Ghosts* on German soil has generally been overlooked by the German Ibsen research, it was significant enough at the time to be mentioned by the Norwegian newspaper *Christiania Intelligenssedler*, which reported on the performance.[490] According to the coverage in the paper, the event seems to have been primarily for the benefit of a Nordic audience, however, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's son, the actor Bjørn Bjørnson (1852-1942), was reported to have been present and along with him the actors of many of the local German theatres.[491] It was further reported that the play was well received in the local papers where the hope was expressed that the play would soon premiere in German. Similar to some of the following German productions of *Ghosts*, which in their different ways were marginalised events, the production in Hamburg was characteristic of being a marginal production, which is to say that the production did not have the institutional support of the established theatres. The agency involved in the production lay with the small group of actors that undertook to stage the play, sharing some of the characteristics of Lindberg's production of *Ghosts*.

The first performance in German was organised by the young authors Felix Philippi (1851-1921) and Ludwig Fulda (1862-1939), and made possible through the help of the theatre manager in Augsburg, August Grosse.[492] Philippi later described how he himself had sought out Ibsen in Munich to ask for his permission to stage the play, and how the dramatist had been convinced that a production in Germany was impossible but allowed Philippi to try his luck at finding a theatre willing to put on the play.[493] The following production at the Augsburger Stadt-Theater was only performed once on the 14th April 1886. Due to censorship the play could not be realised as a public performance, but had to be fashioned as a dress-rehearsal. Thus, the performance was only for a specially invited audience that had to enter the theatre through a backdoor rather than through the main entrance. Though Ibsen was as good as unknown in Augsburg, the news alone that *Ghosts* was to be staged was, according to Fulda, enough to start

[488] E.g. Boettcher.
[489] Repertoire Database, 'Daniel Züberlein's Company: Production of Ghosts' <http://ibsen.nb.no/id/11163097> [accessed 14 March 2015].
[490] Unsigned review, 'Gengangere i Hamburg', *Christiania Intelligentssedler* (Christiania, 2 November 1883).
[491] Bjørn Bjørnson had his theatrical training at the Duke of Meiningen's ensemble.
[492] Moe, p. 122.
[493] Boettcher, pp. 50–51.

all sorts of rumours of the immoral nature of the play.[494] There were, however, still those who supported the production, which therefore managed to divide public opinion even before it was staged. The highly polarised reception, which also characterised the following productions, was expressed in the local papers, which reported from the production: the *Neue Ausburger Zeitung* was opposed to what was perceived as the destructive tendency of the play, while the *Ausburger Abendzeitung* praised the play, lamenting the fact that regular productions of the play were not possible.[495] The fact that the play was much debated, Ludwig Fulda noted, greatly increased the sale of the book when he reported on the production.[496] His local observations were in accordance with what can be established from Reclam's publication numbers which testify to an overall increased sale following the closed performances. In spite of the success of the Augsburger production it was not repeated. Local censorship, which had been circumvented by the loophole which involved staging the play as a dress-rehearsal, moved to ensure that it did not happen again; prompted by a request by commercial theatres in Munich it issued a public statement declaring that '…any performance of *Ghosts* on all public stages was forbidden'.[497]

The next production of *Ghosts* was staged by the Duke of Meiningen's troupe. The production of *Ghosts* which was first staged in the court theatre in Meiningen on the 21st December 1886 was intended to form part of the ensemble's tour.[498] The duke and his famous ensemble had previously engaged with Ibsen's plays, but none of the productions had proved as controversial as the production of *Ghosts*. In Meiningen, however, as in Augsburg a not insignificant part of the public was opposed to the play which by then had acquired a reputation as a very immoral play. The actor and later manager of the troupe, Max Grube, wrote in his *Geschichte der Meininger* (1926):

> I glaube nicht, daß viele Meininger die 'Gespenster' gelesen hatten; aber es herrschte die allgemeine Ansicht, daß dies Stück ein höchst unsittliches und unanständiges wäre. […] Diesmal sollte entschiedener Protest erhoben werden. Daß alle Damen zu Hause bleiben würden, verstand sich zunächst einmal von selbst; die Abonnenten verschworen sich zu einem richtigen Theaterskandal, und der nicht-abonnierte Teil des Publikums beschloß, durch Abwesenheit seine Gesinnung offen und kühn zur Schau zu tragen.[499]

According to Grube, the duke was warned of the public conspiracy and in order to make sure that Ibsen, who was invited for the premiere, should not be disgraced by an empty theatre, he decided that free tickets should be issued to everybody who was interested, and made sure that everybody employed by the court was directed to attend the production. Grube's account of the somewhat farcical manoeuvres preceding the production points to an important aspect of *Ghosts*' infamy, namely, that in many cases it did not rely on any analysis or close reading of

[494] Ludwig Fulda, 'Henrik Ibsen Und Das Deutsche Drama', *Die Nation*, 1886, 775–77.
[495] Unsigned review, 'Lokales: Gespenster', *Neue Augsburger Zeitung*, 16 April 1886; Unsigned review, 'Gespenster', *Ausburger Abendzeitung*, 16 April 1886.
[496] Fulda.
[497] Koller, p. 105.
[498] Appendix II.
[499] Quoted in Boettcher, p. 60.

the play, but on its general reputation as being immoral. The same is undoubtedly true for the play's fame as well, though these things are easily overlooked when one deals with the reception through the medium of reviews, which were usually based on more solid reflections on the play.

The inclusion of *Ghosts* in the tour of the Meininger troupe, however, only led to further two productions: one in Dresden (1887) and one in Copenhagen (1889). In Dresden the play was not prohibited by the censorship, which was by then the case in many German cities, but after the first production it was made clear that no further performances would be tolerated due to the subversive character of the play.[500] In spite of the fact that the production in Meiningen only managed three performances, it generated more publicity for Ibsen than the production in Augsburg had done. Thus, it was this production which made the French naturalists aware of *Ghosts*, and which in turn led to the production of Ibsen's plays at Thèâtre Libre in Paris in 1890.[501]

The most influential production of *Ghosts* was in Residenz-Theater in Berlin, under the direction of Anton Anno (1838-1893) and with the collaboration of a young actor from the Meininger troupe Franz Wallner who played the part of Osvald. The production at Residenz-Theatrer was, as already mentioned, an important step in rallying Ibsen's supporters in Berlin and many of the people who were later to play an important role in the dissemination of Ibsen's plays either helped in the production, attended the show, or were present at the dinner in honour of Ibsen, who was himself in Berlin for the premiere, which followed two days afterwards. In the following years, Anno played an important role in staging Ibsen's plays, not least as he was appointed manager for the royal theatre in Berlin, Königliches Schauspielhaus. As manager he oversaw the theatre's first staging of a play by Ibsen, which it did with *The Lady from the Sea* in 1889 during the so-called 'Ibsen Week'.[502]

In order to obtain authorisation from the censorship for the production, Anno initially only applied for the licence to stage *Ghosts* as a matinee on a Sunday morning intended for charity. This one production was granted, which made it the first and only production of *Ghosts* in Berlin licenced by censors before the general ban against the play was lifted in 1894. The production was a great success; more than fifteen thousand requests were made for the seven hundred available seats.[503] When Anno applied for a general licence to stage the play the day after the success of the first production, this was immediately refused.[504] The licenced production of *Ghosts* shows the apparent inconsistency of the German censorship; not only had been presented publicly on several occasions in other German cities by this time, but to deny further productions after having licenced one seems strange. In general the German censors were not obliged to justify their rejection, and in the present case they merely stated that the

[500] Boettcher, p. 63.
[501] Swanson.
[502] HIS 14k p. 708
[503] Koller, p. 110.
[504] Boettcher, p. 66.

play was unfit for public performance.[505] Later, however, when the question of the ban of *Ghosts* surfaced again in a public debate, the Berlin censors issued an explanation for the rejection of the play. Here it was argued that a production in Berlin not was to be compared with a production in a provincial town due to the heterogeneous composition of the audience with regard to class: 'Seeing that the democratic and socialist press [here] continually implies to the unpropertied classes that the moral degeneracy of the so-called higher classes is an established fact, the effect of such a theatre piece ... upon a large urban public composed of the most diverse social strata must arouse all the more serious concerns from a moral and social standpoint.'[506] The subversive character of the play, in other words, was only one aspect, another was the context in which it was placed and the conditions under which it was consumed. Seen in this light a one-off Sunday matinee did seem less dangerous than a regular production, even though this kind of reasoning made the police open to ridicule as when a paper stated that the poison of the play was less dangerous in the morning than it was at night.

The production of *Ghosts* was a highly contested event. The reception in the press was overwhelmingly negative with the exception, of course, of Ibsen's supporters who very actively praised the play in the following days. The young author Leo Berg, who belonged to the Berlin naturalist group 'Durch', characterised what he saw as the unjustly negative reception in the following manner later that same year in the pamphlet *Henrik Ibsen und das Gamanenthum in der Modernen Litteratur*:

> Man fand sie [Gespenster] "entsetzlich", "peinlich", "häßlich", machte dumme und alberne Redensarten darüber oder suchte sich von dem Eindrücke durch schlechte Witze zu befreien, suchte seinen geistigen Bankerott diesem Stück gegenüber durch einige philosophische Brocken zu verdecken, oder wenn man besonderes gutherzig war, suchte man dem schwachen Dichter unter die Arme zu greifen, indem man Verbesserungsvorschläge machte und ihm zeigte, wie er es eigentlich hätte anfangen sollen. O, sie war rührend, die Impotenz der Berliner Kritik diesem Stück gegenüber.[507]

In many of the negative reviews, the fact that Ibsen was Norwegian was used to reject the play. A review in *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* claimed that Ibsen's Norwegian play was more dangerous (gemeingefährlich) than anything that had hitherto come to the Berlin stages from France, and deplored the fact that Ibsen's plays were diffused across the world, 'like poison from the printing press', even if his play was barred from the stage.[508] Karl Frenzel in *National-Zeitung* confessed that just as he was in the habit of avoiding 'drunkards and madmen' in real life he had no desire to see them on the stage. Besides, he was convinced that only the fact that the play was written by a foreigner, and not a German, made the regular theatre-goers and the police withhold their reprobation.[509] In *Berliner Tageblatt* Oskar Blumenthal found it

[505] Ibid.
[506] Stark, p. 220.
[507] Berg, p. 27.
[508] Unsigned review, 'Gespenster (Residenz-Theater)', *Norddeutsche Allgemeine Zeitung* (Berlin, 11 January 1887).
[509] Frenzel, 'Gespenster (Residenz-Theater)'.

worrisome that the audience, with 'frantic zeal', was drawn to a play with such a 'seductively bad reputation' which revelled in 'naturalistic excesses', when Ibsen had produced a number of 'healthy plays' over two decades which had been passed over by the German theatres.[510]

For Ibsen's supporters, however, the production served as a rallying point. Ibsen himself was in Berlin for the occasion, and two days after Residenz-Theater's production his supporters gathered to celebrate the Norwegian dramatist. This gathering is of particular interest as it gives a notion of the identity of the people who the opponents of Ibsen's play often dubbed 'Ibsen Gemeinde'. The event was officially organised by *Deutsche Rundschau* though the real organisers were Brahm, who wrote for the magazine, Schlenther and Hoffory. It is difficult not to view the event in light of later developments, and the fact that Brahm and Schlenther were the originators of the gathering may in some way be said to anticipate their central role in the organisation of Freie Bühne. Besides Julius Rodenberg (1831-1914), the founder of *Deutsche Rundschau*, and the trio, a large number of actors and theatre people were present as well. In the words of Hoffory: 'Representatives of literature, art and the university, the class of civil servants, parliament, theatre and the press'.[511] In other words, a small selection of the group of people who would later be found as the passive members of Freie Bühne. Furthermore, it is quite likely that the publisher Samuel Fischer attended the production of *Ghosts* at Residenz-Theater, and that fixed the idea in his mind that he would publish Ibsen. It is possible that he attended the dinner two days later as well.[512] If he did, this would add yet another future member of the Freie Bühne steering committee to the people present at the gathering, though Fischer, Brahm and Schlenther were not yet acquainted at the time. For Fischer the production of *Ghosts* was what brought him into contact with the translator Maria von Borch, and what in turn made her change her publisher for her translation of Ibsen's new play, *Rosmersholm*, from Reclam, with which she had previously published *Ghosts*, to Fischer's new publishing house S. Fischer Verlag.[513]

From the speeches given at the gathering in Ibsen's honour one receives the impression that Leo Berg's argument that Ibsen was a Germanic and thus a kindred writer had been accepted by Ibsen's other supporters and was now reiterated. Amongst the speakers were Rodenberg and Brahm who both dwelled on some of the same arguments as Berg in their speeches. Thus, Rodenberg used the occasion to remind the gathering of the splendid tales of gods and heroes from Nordic mythology, which had a shared Nordic-Germanic origin.[514] Brahm on his side used his speech to praise Ibsen as 'the great realist of modern drama' and what he saw as a possibility for German drama to break with the influence of French theatre. According to Hoffory, Brahm ended his speech with the following words:

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[510] Oscar Blumenthal, 'Gespenster (Residenz-Theater)', *Berliner Tageblatt* (Berlin, 10 January 1887).
[511] Julius Hoffory, 'Henrik Ibsen I Berlin', *Tilskueren*, 1888, 61–70 (p. 64).
[512] De Mendelssohn, p. 78.
[513] Letter: Ibsen to Hoffory, 4 February 1887.
[514] Hoffory, p. 65.

> When Lessing in the bloom of our literature fought for the independence of German literature, he turned the nation away from the French role models and focused on Shakespeare's kindred genius. Now we have to fight against the renewed supremacy of French drama and have to turn to an author of Germanic origin who can be a helper and liberator, and who can provide us with a truer ideal.[515]

In the quotation from Brahm's speech, Hoffory gave a very clear picture of the literary geography which was being constructed by the naturalists. The aim was the construction of a new German theatre and for this a suitable role model was required. French influence was largely rejected as alien, whereas the English (Shakespeare) and the Northern (Ibsen) were emphasised as fellow Germanians and therefore a more natural, one must assume, role model for future German drama.

Freie Bühne

Following the production of *Ghosts* at Residenz-Theatre, the play was not staged again in Berlin until the opening performance of Freie Bühne on the 29th September 1889. It was Otto Brahm who, as manager, had chosen the play to signal the purpose and the direction of the theatrical association which was to become the new innovative force in German theatre. The production of *Ghosts* was an important reaffirmation of the iconic status which both Ibsen and his play had achieved at the first production at Residenz-Theatre two years previously.

As a theatrical association, Freie Bühne was inspired by the Parisian Thèâtre Libre, which had the purpose of staging, for a closed group of members, plays that would not have found their way to the repertoire of the established theatres. In this way it was similar to the Independent Theatre Society, which opened in London in 1891 and which also staged Ibsen's *Ghosts* as its first production. The purpose of organising Freie Bühne as an association was so that its plays were only open to its members and therefore was not subject to censorship. The association was divided into two groups of members: ten active members, who made up the association's controlling body, and the passive members, whose membership gained them access to the shows. Amongst the ten active members were many of Ibsen's supporters: Otto Brahm, who on the first meeting was elected manager of the organisation, Paul Schlenther, the publisher Samuel Fischer, and Ludwig Fulda, one of the initiators of the Augsburg production of *Ghosts*. Besides these already well-known people, the group counted the brothers Julius and Heinrich Hart, the critic Fritz Mautner (1849-1923). The group would also soon include the notable author Gerhart Hauptmann (1862-1946).[516]

The opening of Freie Bühne was an important step in the canonisation of Ibsen's plays because it meant that Ibsen's supporters, such as Brahm and Schlenther, greatly expanded their position in the cultural field. Due to their work as critics at various papers, most notably at *Vossische Zeitung*, they had of course already had a say in cultural life, but they had not been able to

[515] Ibid.
[516] Günther, pp. 83–84.

directly shape the repertoire of the theatres in the same way as Brahm was able to after he was elected manager of Freie Bühne and was given free reign with regards to the repertoire. Of his intention with staging *Ghosts* as the first play, Brahm later wrote:

> Ibsen hatte die Türen aufgestoßen für eine neue Kunst; nun galt es, die zu rufen und zu sammeln, die sein Beispiel aufgeweckt hatte ringsum. Aus dieser Erkenntnis ist die Freie Bühne hervorgegangen, eröffnet am 29. September 1889; und selbstverständlich standen an ihrem Eingang der Mann und das Werk, die diese Bewegung erst möglich gemacht hatten: Henrik Ibsen und die *Gespenster*.[517]

It is evident that *Ghosts* embodied the qualities which the theatrical society sought to promote: it was seen as a masterwork of the realistic aesthetic, it took up contemporary problems and as it was banned by the censorship it could not be incorporated into the repertoire of the commercial theatres. Most importantly, however, it was a play which could be used to gather the supporters of the new drama.

In *Vossische Zeitung* Theodor Fontane praised the choice of *Ghosts* as the first play for the new theatre. He found it right as it honoured Ibsen as the head of the realist school, and he found it prudent because it was a play which had already had its baptism of fire, when it was staged at Residenz-Theater.

> Die Gespenster erlebten schon vor zwei, drei Jahren eine Vormittags-Aufführung auf dem Residenztheater, damals noch unter Direktor Anno's Leitung, und erzielten einen großen, wenn auch von den Gegnern der Schule hart bestrittenen Erfolg. Mit den *Gespenstern* beginnen, hieß also nach Möglichkeit einem Theil jener Gefahren aus dem Wege gehen, wie sie jedes neue Unternehmen so gern umlauern; das Stück hatte seine Feuerprobe bereits bestanden, und dieser Akt weiser Vorsicht, der den Spott der "Bravsten der Braven" natürlich herausfordern wird, hat nicht nur meine Zustimmung, sondern erfüllt mich auch mit Hoffnung für die Zukunft.[518]

In *Berliner Börse-Courier* the innate anti-naturalist Isidor Landau attacked the production for being irrelevant. *Ghosts* had already been staged before in Berlin and was licenced in other German cities, something which he claimed meant that Freie Bühne had not managed to fulfil its intentions of staging plays that were unavailable to the public. In spite of the fact that some of the critics, such as Landau and Frenzel, still opposed the play there was general praise of the production from all sides. Even Landau compared it with the production in Meiningen three years before, and added that that was the biggest compliment the play could receive.[519] In his review, Frenzel praised the production as excellent, though he still opposed the play. Despite conflicting viewpoints Ibsen's status as the head of the new theatre was indisputable.

Part of the strength of Freie Bühne lay in its passive members. Before the first production, the number of members was already sufficient to finance the first season's repertoire, which besides *Ghosts* consisted of seven other plays. As an association it had not only managed to bring together Ibsen's supporters and those of the various naturalist and other literary groups, but also

[517] Otto Brahm, *Kritische Schriften*, vol. 1 (Berlin, Fischer, 1915), p. 453.
[518] Theodor Fontane, 'Freie Bühne', *Vossische Zeitung* (Berlin, 30 September 1889).
[519] Isidor Landau, 'Vor Den Coulissen', *Berliner Börsen-Courir* (Berlin, 30 September 1889).

a large part of the people who made up the cultural elite. Landau, though eager to pronounce the project a failure, marvelled at Freie Bühne's ability to bring together all those in Berlin who were interested in literature and art in a single association:

> Nur daß über Nacht zum Verein geworden war, was gestern noch Publikum gewesen. Und zum interessantesten Verein wohl, den Berlin jemals besessen. Da sehen wir die literarische Gemeinde der Reichshauptstadt so vollzählig beisammen, als sei der Vereinszweck so unliterarisch wie möglich — denn in Schriftsteller-Vereinen haben wir unsere Literaturgrößen noch niemals auch nur annähernd so zahlreich vereint gesehen. Da sind alle die, welche in unserer Berliner Gesellschaft das aufrichtige Interesse für Literatur und Kunst repräsentiren, da sind die verführerischsten Vertreterinnen der schönen Welt von Berlin, diejenigen, bei denen wir den Zauber der herrlichen Form erhöht sehen durch den verklärenden Schimmer eines hochentwickelten geistigen Lebens. Zusammengehöriger als jemals vorher im Theater fühlen wir uns heute, vertrauter als sonst sehen wir uns um im Kreise der Vereinsgenossen.[520]

It was the members of the educated middle class who gathered in the association: journalists, professors and lecturers, lawyers, managers and various writhers. People from court and members of the aristocracy did not find their way to Freie Bühne.[521] At the time of the first production there were around seven hundred members[522], a number which at the end of the year had risen to nine hundred.[523]

[520] Ibid.
[521] Schneider, p. 266 ff.
[522] Frenzel, 'Gespenster (Residenz-Theater)'.
[523] Günther, p. 81.

Conclusion

In the above presented narrative of the transfer of Ibsen's plays to German readers and spectators, I divided the process into three phases. The division is primarily based on the sequence in which the theatres took up Ibsen's plays, beginning with a few productions of Ibsen's historical dramas, followed by the rapid success and subsequent failure of *Pillars of Society* and *A Doll's House* respectively, and culminating in the naturalists' appropriation of *Ghosts*, something which eventually led to a general breakthrough for Ibsen's plays in the German theatres. What I have shown over the course of Part II is the agency which was involved at the different stages and different levels of the transfer, and the way in which the transfer attempts were conditioned through the cultural market, the institutions and the expectations of the audience.

The first phase saw a number of translators functioning as the agents or initiators of transfer. These were later joined by Ibsen himself, who entered the field with his authorised translations. In the theatres this was the time in which Ibsen's historical plays were taken up primarily by the provincial court theatres. It is likely that it was the dramas' topics drawn, from Norwegian history, which appealed to the court theatres that had repertoires which were already dominated by historical drama and classics. It is significant that the theatres which took up Ibsen's historical plays in 1876-1877 were the theatres at which Ibsen himself had some sort of contact, through his personal network, even though they may have been very remote. This was, of course, true for the court theatre in Munich but also for the court theatre in Dresden and in Vienna as well. The exception to this was evidently the Meininger troupe with whom Ibsen did not have a connection before they decided to stage his plays. In the case of the Meininger troupe, it is evident that Ibsen once again followed in Bjørnson's footsteps as Bjørnson had his plays staged by the Meininger troupe in 1874.

In terms of publication, none of the early translations were met with much success. This was both true for Ibsen's authorised translations, which were all published by Ackermann, and the various independent translations which were published by numerous publishers. The most durable of the independent translations were those made by Adolf Strodtmann which were later taken up by S. Fischer Verlag and reissued in the collection of Ibsen's plays. The decisive moment in the publication of Ibsen's plays was their inclusion in Reclam's Universal Bibliothek, as the cheap book series offered a framework for the translation and publication of the plays even during the times when they were absent from the theatres. Its extensive distributional system also ensured a general availability of the plays in print. A consequence of Reclam's success was that they put an end to the plurality of translations which existed during the initial period. Reclam's dominance in the field was not challenged until Fischer entered the field of Ibsen translations as part of the naturalist wave, something which offered his editions a niche. Yet, it must be stressed that Reclam's success largely, though not exclusively, was tied to the popularity of Ibsen's plays in the theatres.

In terms of theatre, I showed that the initial success of *Pillars of Society* was not due to the development of innovative aesthetics, which it has often since been claimed. Rather, the popularity of the play was primarily due to the fact that it was possible to merge it into the existing repertoire of the commercial theatres, something which only became evident from the extra textual conditions, such as the manner of staging and the repertoires of the theatres at the time. Thus, a closer examination of the context revealed that there was nothing sudden or surprising about the success of the play, as may be inferred by the tradition of interpretations dating back to Schlenther and Brahm: Ibsen's play shared many features with Bjørnson's play *A Bankruptcy*, which in the preceding years had proven very successful in the German theatres. Also, the productions of Ibsen's plays were made in the tradition in which the German commercial theatres already excelled, namely that of the French comedies of manners, and not in the later popular naturalist staging. It is evident that Ibsen's success in Germany at this stage largely depended on the previous success of his fellow countryman. It was, however, not only Ibsen's play that owed a great deal to Bjørnson, but the manner of publishing and distribution which Ibsen authorised in this period was modelled on the set-up which Bjørnson had used. Thus, the printing by Ackermann and the distribution and marketing through the association of German Authors and Composers had been pioneered by Bjørnson.

The publication of *Pillars of Society* proved to be a crucial point in the transfer history of Ibsen's plays. As the play emerged in three competing translations, it became evident that Ibsen was incapable of controlling the dissemination of his own work. As I have shown in the case of the letter to Emil Jonas, Ibsen did make an attempt to protect his claim to his play, but as he was unable to back up what he saw as his moral rights to the play with any legal rights he was unable to prevent the publication of Jonas' translation. Not only Jonas' translation, with its strong adaptation of the text, but also Wilhelm Lange's translation, which was published by Reclam, proved to be strong competitors. The Reclam edition proved to be so aggressively priced that Ibsen's own authorised translation published by Ackermann could not hope to compete with it. Subsequently, Ibsen saw no other course of action than to join forces with Lange for the publication of *A Doll's House*. The consequence was that Reclam dominated Ibsen-publications for the next decade, not only replacing Ibsen's own editions, but also the random, independently published translations which characterised the period before Ibsen entered the field of publishing himself.

In an attempt to understand the pause which followed after the successful first staging of *Pillars of Society* and the largely unsuccessful staging of *A Doll's House* I investigated in greater detail the appropriations of the two plays. Here I found that the initial success of *Pillars of Society* did not depend upon innovative aesthetic qualities, which was later emphasised by the naturalists, but from its ability to conform to the expectations of audiences by drawing on patterns and effects familiar to the popular French comedies of manners. Seen from this point of view, it became evident that *A Doll's House* flopped in the theatres because the transformation of Nora in the third act did not comply with the theatrical tradition in which it

was staged and could not be successfully integrated into the audience's horizon of expectations. The general success of *A Doll's House* when it was taken up again in the late 1880s, after the pause in Ibsen productions in Germany between 1881-1886, shows the change which the advent of new aesthetic ideas, such as those expressed in Ibsen's drama, by then had caused in the German field of aesthetics. That *Pillars of Society* also found favour with the naturalists: it was chosen as the opening play for Freie Volksbühne, which shows the strength of the play as it was capable of delivering the nuanced description of contemporary social problems for which the naturalists looked for in theatre.

It was a gradual but overall change in aesthetic ideas, which eventually paved the way for the return of Ibsen's plays, their popular breakthrough and eventual canonisation. This change was closely connected with the generational shift among critics and theatre people and which gradually took place through the course of the 1880s. To some of the people which characterised this development, such as Otto Brahm, Paul Schlenther, many of the new ideas which they promoted were built on what they saw as the innovative aspects of Ibsen's plays. Thus, to a few centrally placed people, the promotion of Ibsen's plays, a new aesthetic and their aspirations to secure a position in the cultural field all walked hand in hand at the crucial time during which they sought to establish themselves by challenging the dominant aesthetic paradigm. Instigation of ideational change and personal career building became two sides of the same coin. Yet Ibsen's plays were not only used to forward the individual careers of his champions (Brahm and Schlenther already held positions as critics at leading papers) but to initiate greater institutional changes in the field: In publishing Samuel Fischer to a large extent relied on Ibsen's plays to create what became the perhaps most important publishing house of the new literature in Germany, and in the field of theatre, Freie Bühne and independent theatres which emerged in its wake, all staged Ibsen's plays to signal their departure from the established theatre market.

In spite of the revolutionary status which Ibsen's plays acquired in during the 1880s it must be noted that his contemporary plays, with the exception of *Ghosts* which continued to be controversial, were integrated into mainstream theatre as the more ideologically charged production of the naturalists were followed by many productions by both commercial and court theatres. The interest which the progressive productions of *Ghosts* had generated brought with it a general revival for Ibsen's plays. This revival was not least a commercial revival and following the mounting interest in his plays Ibsen had the plays marketed by the theatrical agency Felix Bloch Erben. Thus the pioneering efforts on behalf of the naturalist to reintroduce Ibsen's plays were followed by a general commercial appropriation within existing structures. The professional marketing of Ibsen's plays by Felix Bloch Erben which extended to the entire established German speaking theatrical market was in stark contrast to the individual productions which had brought fame to *Ghosts*. Yet, as the aim of the naturalist groups had been to reform mainstream theatre the general popularity of Ibsen's plays was a success.

Comparing the transfer of Ibsen to Germany to the transfer to Denmark, a number of telling features emerge. First of all, the time it took Ibsen to break through in Germany was decisively longer. Despite the fluctuations in interest, it took close on 15 years after his plays emerged in print and in theatres before they became an integrate part of German theatre. Though, for publishing one may argue that this process was somewhat shorter. Another difference was the importance of the multifaceted appeal, which of his plays had and whereby they appealed to the taste of different groups, in paving the way for his breakthrough. In Denmark, Ibsen's path to the cultural market went by way of Gyldendal, a well-established publishing house, and, albeit with some delay, the Royal Theatre, the principal theatre. In Germany, the path was more complex and along the way relied on that Ibsen's plays appealed to the specific interests the court and commercial theatres. In the same way, Ibsen's eventual breakthrough was based on a combination niche-theatre and cheap editions, in other words a somewhat uneven cooperation of theatrical avant-garde and publishing big business. It is telling of the multiplicity of agents involved, that Ibsen's own contribution to the transfer process, when viewed in the larger scope, was marginal. Without the control which copyright would have granted him, the German market with its plurality of centres and hundreds of theatres and publishers was too big for one man.

Part III: Ibsen and Britain

Introduction to Part Three

In this third and final part of the thesis, I investigate the transfer of Ibsen's plays to Britain. I begin with the first English translations which appeared in the early 1870s and cover the point in time when Ibsen's plays had gained a firm hold, not in mainstream theatre but as niche productions. The final year of the investigation is 1893. By this time, all the main agents that were active, in both publishing and the theatrical productions, for the remainder of the century had entered the field and one of Ibsen's dramas had even experienced its first production by one of the big, established West End managers. The transfer of Ibsen's plays to Britain was to a very high degree characterised by the controversy caused by the production of *A Doll's House* in 1889. This production, which was the first unaltered, commercial production of any of Ibsen's plays, soon led to a general opposition to Ibsen drama in mainstream media, something which greatly increased the public awareness of Ibsen's dramas. The controversy continued with undiminished force in the years to come, and peaked around the first production of the infamous *Ghosts* in 1891 and only gradually wore off after a series of successful productions in 1893. By the time of Ibsen's death in 1906, nobody challenged his status as a major playwright.

Compared to Scandinavia and Germany, the general awareness of Ibsen's plays came late to Britain. It was not until the late 1880s, with the controversial production of *A Doll's House* and the first cheap editions of his contemporary plays, that the general public became aware of the Norwegian dramatist. This 'delay' in public reception was of lesser importance to the agents involved in the British Ibsen transfer, who all, to a smaller or larger extent, were acquainted with Norwegian and Scandinavian affairs where Ibsen had been one of the foremost authors for more than 25 years. To the wider reception, however, the late discovery had the important implication that by the time Ibsen's name became generally known, he was already to some extent an author of European renown. By the end of the 1880s, Ibsen's supporters could point to the success that his plays had experienced in Germany, amongst both critics and the wider public. In addition, Ibsen's plays had in the meantime been translated and staged in a large number of languages such as Polish, Dutch, Czech, Finnish, Russian, Italian and Hungarian.[524] Yet, what perhaps more than anything made an impression on the Britons was that Ibsen's plays were being taken up by Parisian theatres during the exact same time that they made their appearance in London.[525] This was important, for Paris was largely the place to which British theatre looked when it looked abroad at all. In Paris it was the experimental theatres which first performed Ibsen's plays. Theatre Libre's production of *Ghosts* in May 1890, which was the

[524] Jens-Morten Hanssen, 'Ibsen in Translation', *All About Ibsen*, 2010.
[525] Kirsten Shepherd-Barr, *Ibsen and Early Modernist Theatre, 1890-1900* (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1997), p. 8 ff.

first production in French, may be seen to have given the impetus to the British production of the notorious play by the Independent Theatre Society, an organisation conceived to be a British Theatre Libre.

In the vast historiography on Ibsen's plays in Britain, the transfer of Ibsen's plays to British readers and theatregoers is often presented as a 'campaign'.[526] Describing the introduction of the plays as a campaign has a number of important implications for the narrative. Thus, it draws attention to, and may be seen as a consequence of, the opposition which the plays met especially after the aforementioned 1889-production of *A Doll's House*. The notion of a 'campaign' has been found useful to highlight the fact that the theatrical productions began their life on the edge of the theatrical market, and with each new production ventured further and further into hostile territory, until finally bringing about the general acceptance of Ibsen's drama. I do find, however, that too freely embracing the notion of an Ibsen campaign tends to obscure the fact that the campaign was not directed by a single intention, which the notion seems to imply, but depended on the agency of different people. Throughout this part, I therefore seek to stress not only the different people involved in the promotion of Ibsen's plays, but also that they pursued different ends, not all of which had narrowly to do with theatre. In this respect my analyses draws on a point made by Katherine Kelly in 'Ibsen and the Outbreak of Modernism':

> ... the arrival and circulation of his [Ibsen's] plays not only transformed theatrical practice but sustained a series of counterpublics and counter-discourses aimed at the kind of reforms urged by Ibsen's protagonists. Ibsenism became both a new way of producing theatre for the citizens of London and a stage on which the citizens of London could perform and critique their new lives.[527]

What I have found useful in Kelly's framing of the appropriation of Ibsen's plays is the fact that she stresses that in many cases it transcended the narrow field of theatre. This is a crucial point, as I shall illustrate in the following, when it comes to understanding the reception and especially the controversy which the plays generated.

There were many people involved in the transfer of Ibsen's plays to Britain. The theatre critic and Ibsen translator William Archer (1856-1924) was arguably the most important person in introducing Ibsen to the British public, as it was almost exclusively in his translations that the Anglophone world from 1888 onwards encountered the plays. Archer, who was from Perth in Scotland, had family on the Norwegian west coast that in his youth he visited frequently and thereby early in his life became fluent in Norwegian.[528] Archer was also one of the few people active in the transfer who knew Ibsen personally, and from the time that he began to publish his

[526] One of the best examples of framing the introduction of Ibsen's plays in Britain as a campaign is to be found in Thomas Postlewait's *The Prophet of the New Drama - William Archer and the Ibsen Campaign*. In his book, Postlewait sets about documenting William Archer's involvement in the introduction of Ibsen's plays, something which he does very convincingly, showing how Archer was not only Ibsen's main translator but had a hand in the majority of theatrical productions from 1880 to the turn of the century. There is no reason to cast doubt on Archer's centrality to the overall transfer process, but there were other people involved in the transfer as well and for reasons other than those of Archer.

[527] Kelly, p. 12.

[528] Peter Whitebrook, *William Archer: A Biography* (London: Methuen, 1993), p. 13.

translations he was, if anybody, Ibsen's intermediary in Britain. Ibsen never went to Britain and never became proficient in English. Consequently, much of the contact which passed between Ibsen-people in the English speaking world passed through Archer and the few other Norwegian speaking agents. Besides being Ibsen's main translator, Archer was a theatre critic of steadily increasing renown and was already from the 1880s one of the most outspoken advocates for a general change in the world of theatre. Thus, he was for both the abolition of censorship, as one of the few, and the creation of an endowed non-commercial theatre, but first and foremost he was the advocate of what would be known as the new drama. When the Ibsen controversy began, it was Archer, who more than anybody else, that was singled out by the opposition from the very beginning, yet it was also he who was foremost in the defence, and who eventually held the field.

Another central person who deserves mentioning due to his pioneering efforts in the early introduction of Ibsen was Edmund Gosse. Gosse held the honour of being, as he himself later reminded the public, the first person to introduce Ibsen in print to English readers.[529] In 1871, he was on a trip to Scandinavia, and although he was a novice in the languages, the encounter with Scandinavian literature and Ibsen's recently published poems in particular was to set the direction for his career in the years to come.[530] In 1872, following his return to Britain, he published an article in *Fraser's Magazine* on Scandinavian literature, mentioning Ibsen, and in 1873, he published translations of many of Ibsen's poems and parts of the play *The League of Youth* in the magazine *Spectator*. Despite Gosse's enthusiasm for Ibsen's early plays and poetry, his promotion was met with little success and by the end of the 1870s he gradually abandoned writing about Scandinavian topics. In 1889, just before the onset of the controversy following the first production of *A Doll's House*, Gosse renewed his promotion of Ibsen with a long and influential introduction to Ibsen's contemporary plays.[531] From this point on, Gosse remained involved in the promotion of Ibsen and in 1892 he, albeit somewhat unsuccessfully, returned to translation.

It was, however, not only Archer and Gosse who promoted Ibsen's plays. Other agents or groups of agents were at different times equally active in the promotion of Ibsen's plays. They counted among them authors such as George Bernard Shaw, Henry James and Thomas Moore, and many actors, actresses and theatre people. It is characteristic of the people who publicly promoted Ibsen's plays in Britain that they either knew one another or were part of the same networks. Some of the connections were professional or political, but more often they seem to have been social and informally structured, and may be covered by Kelly's concept of 'counterpublics'. Many of the people were involved in either independent theatre or various

[529] Rem, *Henry Gibson/Henrik Ibsen*, p. 19 ff.
[530] Evan Charteris, Edmund Gosse and Norman Gullick, *The Life and Letters of Sir Edmund Gosse.* (New York; London: Harper & Bros., 1931), p. 35.
[531] Edmund Gosse, 'Ibsen's Social Dramas', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 January 1889.

forms of Socialist groups, such as Shaw, who was a well-known Fabian, and Eleanor Marx, who besides being part of socialist circles also translated Ibsen.

Some of the historiography's success of framing the introduction of Ibsen's plays as a campaign, as already mentioned, was that they started their life in Britain on the very edge of the cultural market. There were a number of reasons for the initial rejection. Seen from the perspective of Ibsen's British opponents, Ibsen was from a deeply provincial place, and many saw little reason why the London theatres should import anything from as remote a place as Norway.[532] Yet, even some of Ibsen's supporters, such as Henry James, was troubled by Ibsen's provinciality. The problem of importing Ibsen's plays was more than a matter of a small culture writing to a large one. In publishing, drama had long been a genre that people did not read, but instead went to the theatre to watch. In theatre, Ibsen's contemporary problem plays, which were those with which he was introduced to Britain, broke with the conventions of the regular West End hit. Ibsen's proponents in Britain, in other words, fought a fierce uphill battle.

In relation to my investigation of the controversy that Ibsen's plays generated, a formative point for my approach relates to the way in which the opposition to the plays has been framed in the historiography. As I show in relation to the investigation of the controversy, much of the existing literature has framed the contemporary opposition to Ibsen's plays as hysterical, ridiculous or was put down to pure inability to understand the dramas. This traditional approach has resulted in general dismissal and often ridicule of Ibsen's British opponents, whose positions have been seen as illogical, backwards and inferior. In keeping with my approach of investigating the transfer from multiple perspectives, I seek, throughout the following chapters, to challenge this understanding by investigating the positions of the opposition focusing particularly on Robert Buchanan and Clement Scott, two of the most outspoken of Ibsen's adversaries. As this marks an important departure in relation to the historiography, I return to it at the end of Chapter 3 to conclude on my findings.

[532] Rem, '"The Provincial of Provincials".'

Chapter 1: Publications

Early translations

The early translations of Ibsen's plays into English originated with a number of different translators. In this way, the process was very similar to the early translations into German, which in the early phase was also characterised by a plurality of independent translations. Following Gosse's introduction of Ibsen in *The Spectator* in 1873, he continued to write about the Norwegian dramatist and translate some of his poems for the remainder of the decade. In 1879, he collected some of his translations in a book entitled *Studies in the Literature of Northern Europe*, which besides poems included an extract from the play *The League of Youth* and dealt with Swedish, Danish, German and Dutch literature. The book had little impact on Ibsen's fame in Britain, yet it was a manifest sign that an interest of Ibsen in Britain, however peripheral, did exist. The same was true of Catherine Ray's translation of the monumental *Emperor and Galilean*, which came out in 1876. Even if Ray's translation had as little effect on the general British interest in Ibsen as Gosse's they are still signs of his potential availability to a British audience.[533] In 1880, William Archer translated Ibsen for the first time. It was *Pillars of Society*, which he gave the title *Quicksands*, and which was staged as a single matinee, but was not published. Although this shows that Archer was amongst the first who translated Ibsen, his initial work was of little consequence compared to the central role which he was to play later.

In 1882, *A Doll's House* was translated into English by Henrietta Francis Lord, under the title *Nora*, and in 1885 Lord translated *Ghosts* as well. *A Doll's House* was first published in the magazine *To-Day*, a magazine that Havelock Ellis (1859-1939) later described as 'a monthly magazine to which brilliant representatives of the new social movements, shut out from other avenues to publicity, were always welcomed.'[534] It seems that Lord's translations primarily generated interest in socialist circles, notably Eleanor Marx-Aveling and Ellis who, as I show below, first encountered Ibsen in Lord's translation. Yet even in those circles, the general interest in Ibsen's plays were limited as Marx-Aveling resolved to organise a reading of *A Doll's House* for fellow minded people proves.[535] Lord's translations undoubtedly inspired Marx-Aveling to try her own hand, and in 1888 she made her first Ibsen translation which was of *An Enemy of the People*. In 1890 Marx further translated *The Lady from the Sea* and *The Wild Duck*. Aside from her translations, both Marx and her common-law husband Edward Aveling (1849-1898) wrote about Ibsen and his plays in various contexts. Thus, they for instance quoted *A Doll's House* in their small treatise 'The Woman Question' published in *Westminster Review* in 1890, and in articles on the subject of drama and literature which appeared in the magazine

[533] Rem, *Henry Gibson/Henrik Ibsen*, p. 21.
[534] Havelock Ellis, *My Life: Autobiography of Havelock Ellis* (Chambridge, Mass.: Riverside Press 1939) pp. 195-196. Quoted in Ledger, pp. 53–54.
[535] Ledger, p. 53.

Time between 1889 to 1891.[536] This appropriation tied Ibsen's plays closer to the woman's movement, and some of the reactions from the people opposing the plays reflected this appropriation.

Eleanor Marx-Aveling's role as translator and mediator was important as she and Aveling were at the centre of the promotion of Ibsen's plays to a circle of primarily socialists and fabians. This happened already in the 1880s, and many of the people belonging to this circle were later to be found amongst Ibsen's supporters. Marx-Aveling had been introduced to Lord's translation of *A Doll's House* in early 1884 by Olive Schreiner (1855-1920), the South African novelist and new woman, who was much taken with the play. A thing that is telling of the role that personal connections played with regard to the process of creating an awareness of Ibsen's plays, especially in the early phase, is the fact that Marx, Aveling and Schreiner spent the summer of 1884 together with Havelock Ellis.[537] Ellis was later to become the editor of the publisher Walter Scott's first Ibsen-collection. By late 1885, Marx had resolved to attempt to promote Ibsen's plays to her immediate acquaintances and in the following January she invited a select group of people to a reading of Lord's translation of *A Doll's House*, in which she read the part of Nora and Aveling took Helmer's part. One of the people participating in the reading, a close friend of the Marx-Avelings, was George Bernard Shaw. Shaw, who was already a prominent Fabian at the time, was later to become one of Ibsen's more outspoken champions in Britain, especially after the publication of his book, the *Quintessence of Ibsenism*, in 1891. Yet, in spite of his participation in the reading (Shaw had the part of Krogstad), the play left no impression on him, until he saw the production in which Janet Achurch played Nora in 1889.[538]

It seems that the early translations primarily attracted a specific audience; people who were either interested in the new aesthetics of Ibsen's dramas, such as Archer, or generally the political and cultural implications of his writing, such as the people associated with socialism, fabianism and the new women. The fact that the plays had this appeal beyond mainstream culture, paved the way for the quick designation of Ibsen's audience as 'Ibsenites' when the plays gained wider attention in the press with the production of *A Doll's House*. It is, however, important to note that the label 'Ibsenite' was used to accommodate people belonging to counter-publics with different aims. Yet, it should also be noted that the early translations may have had readers who, like the young Gosse, was more drawn to the Northern exoticism found in Ibsen's poetry. One of these people was Robert Buchanan who would later be one of Ibsen's staunchest critics, but who in the early 1870s highly praised not Ibsen but Bjørnson for his historical plays.[539] Yet, as none of Ibsen's early plays were fully translated the general image in the public of Ibsen was to be determined by the contemporary problem plays, especially as

[536] Marx and Aveling's contributions to the magazine *Time* has been digitalised and can be found at: http://www.marxists.org/archive/eleanor-marx/1890/theatre.htm (Accessed 28 January 2015).
[537] Ledger, p. 53.
[538] See: Michael Holroyd, *Bernard Shaw: 1856-1898*, p. 199; A.M Gibbs, *Bernard Shaw: a Life*, p. 112. Gibbs quote Shaw for not attending to the play beyond his own lines.
[539] Robert Buchanan, 'Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson', *Contemporary Review*, 1872.

it was these that achieved visibility on the stage. Hereby the British Ibsen reception was different from the Scandinavian and the German ones as it did not include the reception of the historical dramas, which, with all probability, would have had a more benign reception in more conservatively minded circles.

The publisher Walter Scott

For publishing Ibsen's drama in Britain, the decisive year proved to be 1888. That year the Newcastle based publisher Walter Scott (1826-1910) brought out three of Ibsen's plays in the cheap edition series entitled *Camelot Classics*. The series, which had been launched in 1886, was conceived by its editor, Ernest Rhys (1859-1946), as a prose library for the people and offered books with prices beginning as low as one shilling. Not unlike Reclam's *Universalbibliothek*, it was a mix of classics and, as in the case of Ibsen, new literature, envisioned as an opportunity of self-improvement for the working class.[540] It was in this series that the volume *Pillars of Society and Other Plays by Henrik Ibsen* appeared, with a substantial preface by Ellis introducing Ibsen to new readers. Besides *Pillars of Society*, the volume included *Ghosts* and *An Enemy of the People*. Archer had translated *Pillars of Society* and revised Lord's previous translation of *Ghosts*. *An Enemy of the People* was translated by Eleanor Marx under the title *An Enemy of Society*.

Just like the productions of *Ghosts* had a decisive effect on the sale of the play in print in Germany, it is very likely that it was the British success on stage, which *A Doll's House* experienced in the spring of 1889, that stimulated the sale of Walter Scott's Ibsen. In any event, the sale of the volume so impressed the publisher that by 1889 Archer was allowed to proceed with an even more ambitious project of Ibsen translations.[541] This resulted in the publication of *Ibsen's Prose Dramas*, which appeared in five volumes, this time edited by Archer. Archer was not only the editor, but also translated most of the plays himself and revised those of others. Of the thirteen plays, which came out 1890-1891, Archer had translated seven himself and he had thoroughly re-worked Ray's *Emperor and Galilean* and Marx-Aveling's *An Enemy of the People*, which now appeared with its lasting English title. Most likely, he had had a hand in the translations of the remaining as well: *The Lady from the Sea* and *The Wild Duck* were translated by his wife Francis Archer and the last two, *Lady Inger of Osteraat* and *Rosmershold*, by his brother Charles.[542] In 1892, Archer added *Peer Gynt* in a prose translation to the series, which he had translated with his brother.

In Walter Scott's edition, Ibsen's plays sold well. According to Archer in 'The Mausoleum of Ibsen', an article in which amongst other things took stock of the published Ibsen, the shilling

[540] Rem, 'Ibsen as Book: Another British Ibsen', p. 417.
[541] Ibid., p. 418.
[542] Thomas Postlewait, *Prophet of the New Drama : William Archer and the Ibsen Campaign* (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1986), p. 49ff.

volume, which had appeared in 1888, had by the end of 1892 sold 14,367 copies and *Ibsen's Prose Dramas*, priced three and six pence each, had sold 16,834 copies.[543] In a country in which it was uncustomary to read plays, Archer was very conscious of the significance:

> Is there a parallel in the history of publishing for such a result in the case of a translated play? [...] I doubt whether any translated dramas have ever sold in such quantities. Ibsen himself must have had a very large sale in Germany; but there his plays are to be had for three pence each, while here, on an average, they cost at least three times the sum. In English publishing, at any rate, such sales are absolutely unprecedented.[544]

Publication numbers for the independently published plays are more uncertain: Thomas Postlewait claims that *The Master Builder*, translated by Gosse and Archer in 1893, went through four editions in eight years, and that *Peer Gynt*, translated by Archer and his brother Charles, went through three in five years.[545] He further estimates that the five-volume edition published by Walter Scott continued to sell well throughout the decade.

The publisher William Heinemann

By the end of 1890, a new player entered the field of Ibsen publication: the young London publisher William Heinemann (1863-1920). Heinemann's entry was significant because he, as opposed to Scott, was a London publisher who specialised in contemporary foreign literature. In terms of the prestige associated with the publisher, this was a step up for Ibsen's plays.[546] The transition from Scott to Heinemann, however, was not straightforward and involved a challenge of the position which William Archer had created as Ibsen's chief translator. More than anything, the story of the transition reflected Heinemann's innovative use of copyrights, and how his new aggressive usage allowed him to take over the publication of Ibsen's plays.

Heinemann's point of entry into publishing Ibsen was *Hedda Gabler*. Despite the fact that Archer had planned to include this, Ibsen's latest play, in the fifth volume of Walter Scott's *Ibsen's Prose Dramas*, he waived what he thought was his privilege to do the first translation to Gosse, who wished to produce a separate translation for Heinemann, and who offered Ibsen a handsome fee of £150. Quite contrary to what Archer thought had been merely a sign of goodwill, which would not impede his own translation, Heinemann, possibly without Gosse's knowledge, soon claimed to own the exclusive rights to the play. Heinemann had arranged that the proof sheets of *Hedda Gabler* were sent from Gyldendal to Gosse before the Scandinavian publication, in the same way as Ibsen had previously arranged with German publishers. For Archer, this new turn of events was unacceptable and in a vicious attack in the *Pall Mall Gazette,* titled *A Translator-Traitor. Mr. Edmund Gosse and Henrik Ibsen,* he complained that

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[543] Archer, William, *William Archer on Ibsen: The Major Essays, 1889-1919*, ed. by Thomas Postlewait (Westport Conn.: Greenwood Press), p. 48.
[544] Ibid.
[545] Postlewait, p. 51.
[546] Rem, 'Ibsen as Book: Another British Ibsen', pp. 420–421.

Gosse and Heinemann had exploited what had been a courteous gesture on his behalf, and now ruthlessly and meticulously exposed the many inaccuracies in Gosse's translation.[547]

After Archer's attack Gosse remained silent publicly, though in a private letter he sought to appease Archer.[548] Heinemann, on the other hand, wrote a public letter in which he sought to take the moral high ground. Here he pointed out that he had made binding arrangements with Ibsen, and more importantly, found a way to secure his copyrights, whereas Archer, he claimed, merely assumed that he could translate the play, given that there was no copyright agreement between Britain and Denmark. Archer was allowed to reply to Heinemann's attack, both printed 4 February, and argued his case by making it plain that the advantage which he thought he had given to Gosse had not only been grossly exploited, but was in direct contrast to their agreement and the wishes of Ibsen.

The way in which Heinemann had found to secure the play involved that he would publish the play before it was published in Copenhagen, whereby the original work and its subsequent translations were protected in the countries that had ratified the Berne Convention. To this end, he had besides the proof sheets obtained six unbound copies of the yet unpublished play from Gyldendal, and these, furnished with an English front page, he published five days before it was released in Denmark. It is evident that neither Archer nor Ibsen, or so he later claimed, had realised that the Berne Convention could be used in this way; both had only entered into the agreement because they thought that Ibsen was parting with the right to publish the translation first. Tore Rem has shown that August Larsen, the chief clerk at Gyldendal, had interpreted Ibsen's instructions to send the copies to Britain differently, and that he thought it evident that Ibsen had parted with the exclusive rights to the British translation of the play. Larsen subsequently revealed, in a confidential letter to Hans Lien Brækstad[549] (1845-1915) that he personally was deeply worried that by Heinemann's scheme the Norwegian original was now in fact published in London.[550]

As Tore Rem has already pointed out, the small skirmish between Archer and Heinemann points to a number of implications. First of all, it highlights the fact that Ibsen's plays had become, in Rem's words, 'hot property' which explains why a young up-and-coming publisher such as Heinemann was willing to go to some length in order to acquire the rights to publish them.[551] Some of the reason for the play's attractiveness from a financial point of view did not solely relate to the growing interest in Ibsen's plays, but to change in copyrights. In 1891, a copyright agreement had been made between Britain and the United States, which meant that Heinemann,

[547] William Archer, 'A Translator-Traitor. Mr. Edmund Gosse and Henrik Ibsen', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 23 January 1891.
[548] Rem, 'Hot Property: Reading Ibsen in Britain`s Fin de Siècle'.
[549] Hans Lien Brækstad was Norwegian but lived the greater part of his life in Britain where he, amongst other things, promoted Norwegian literature. As I show in relation of the productions of Ibsen's plays, he was also involved in the promotion of Ibsen's plays. (NBL: Hans Brækstad)
[550] Rem, 'Hot Property: Reading Ibsen in Britain`s Fin de Siècle'.
[551] Ibid.

by acquiring the rights in Britain, would be able to publish the play in the United States without fearing unlicensed competition. Furthermore, he also held the rights to any performance of the play both in Britain and overseas, something that again increased the play's value. To acquire copyright in the United States, however, was complicated by the fact that a copy printed using American typesetting must be issued simultaneously with the British edition. This meant in effect that Heinemann did not hold the copyright in the United States before his publication of *John Gabriel Borkman*, which was issued according to the rules.[552]

Following the publication of *Hedda Gabler*, Heinemann furthermore organised 'copyright readings' of the plays, in which the play was read publicly in a theatre.[553] This he did to secure his claim on the plays, as copyright readings were an old practice which in Britain legally counted as a publication. The readings were in Norwegian, with a separate person reading the individual parts, but involved no decoration or acting of any kind. The first reading was held on 7 December 1892 for *The Master Builder* at the Haymarket, and besides Heinemann featured Robins, Gosse, Brækstad and his wife amongst others. Following the publication of a limited number of copies in Norwegian and the copyright reading, Heinemann did not issue the English translation until weeks after the plays had been published in Scandinavia, but still held the rights to the play.

In the battle over *Hedda Gabler*, it was evident that Heinemann was ahead in the game when it came to realising what was possible under the Berne Convention. In relation to managing the international rights to the play, Ibsen and Gyldendal had behaved less than competently in their dealings with Heinemann, and had placed themselves in a precarious position by giving the rights away to the play within the entire area of the Berne Convention. Ultimately, however, Heinemann was more interested in keeping Ibsen as one of his authors than to pursuing the advantage he had gained, and was from this point onwards Ibsen's publisher in Britain.[554] The outcome was that Gosse's inaccurate translation of *Hedda Gabler* was revised with the help of Brækstad and that Archer was allowed to publish his own translation with Walter Scott later that same year. Between the two translations, Archer, albeit secretly, worked with the actresses Elizabeth Robins and Marion Lea on revising Gosse's translation for the stage. As Heinemann held the rights to *Hedda Gabler* they were obliged to use his translation for the production. Yet, following Archer's criticism of his translation, Gosse did not object to what he perceived to be a few alterations made to his translation, and his forthcomingness may have helped to mend the breach between the two translators.

Following the publication of *Hedda Gabler*, Heinemann issued all of Ibsen's new plays. For the next play, *The Master Builder*, Heinemann had himself travelled to Norway to make the agreement with Ibsen.[555]. The relationship between Archer and Gosse was reconciled after the

[552] Fulsås, 'Innledning (HIS 15k)', p. 47.
[553] Ibid., p. 45.
[554] With the exception of Archer's prose translation of 'Peer Gynt' which was published by Walter Scott.
[555] Fulsås, 'Innledning (HIS 15k)', p. 15.

incident with *Hedda Gabler*. For Ibsen the cooperation with Heinemann meant that for the publication rights he received a lump sum for each play ranging from £120 for *When We Dead Awaken*, to £200 for both *The Master Builder* and *John Gabriel Borkman*.[556] Although the fees that Ibsen received from Heinemann were much lower than the royalties which he was paid from Gyldendal, they were both higher than what he received from Walter Scott and what his German publishers paid.

Heinemann's and Archer's influence on the English Ibsen was long-lasting. Following Ibsen's death, Archer revised all earlier translations for a definitive edition for Heinemann. *The Works of Henrik Ibsen* was published 1906-1908 and containing all of Ibsen's plays from *Lady Inger* onwards in eleven volumes, but left out earlier works. For the next generation Archer's translations remained the English standard edition of Ibsen's texts before they were gradually replaced.[557]

[556] Ibid., p. 47.
[557] Whitebrook, p. 240.

Chapter 2: Ibsen and the British theatrical market

Compared to the theatrical markets of Denmark and Germany, the British market stood out by being wholly commercial, and sported none of the endowed national, court or city theatres so important to theatrical life in continental Europe. Rather, by the end of the nineteenth century, British theatre was wholly that of the actor-manager. The actor-manager was both the star and the owner of his or her (there were a few women who were managers), own theatre and was both the financial as well as the artistic manager. It was common for the most prominent actors at a certain point in their career to set themselves up as managers of their own troupe or theatre. By the end of the nineteenth century, the leading actor-managers were the owners of the luxurious theatres of the West End such as Henry Irving (1838-1905) at the Lyceum or Herbert Beerbohm-Tree (1852-1917) who owned the Haymarket.

Theatre in Britain was not only wholly commercial, but it was a business for speculation and a game of high stakes. The expenses for producing a play were high. For those who did not own their own theatre there was first of all the lease of the theatre building, then there were wages for actors and the many people working behind the curtain, and the expenses for props and sometimes costumes, though it was custom that actors provided those themselves. All of these were expenses which needed to be covered from the income of the box-office before any profit was made. In case the play did not 'catch on' the entire investment would be lost. The outlay that it took to put on a play was often too great for the manager alone and required one or more backers. In a small essay on the theatrical market in 1894, George Bernard Shaw estimated that the minimum expense for running a play in a West End theatre was £400 a week, with an upper limit of 'anything you care to spend on it', and some contemporary shows were very extravagant involving hundreds of people on the stage.[558] Yet, to the extent that a play proved successful, there was a fortune to be made.

The heavy financial strain placed on all major theatrical productions meant that rather than present a repertoire of rapidly changing titles managers aimed to play the profitable 'long run', which meant keeping the same play on the bill as long as it continued to attract an audience. The long run of a play was something which became increasingly common during the latter half of the nineteenth century, as the growth in population and tourism meant that this increasingly became possible. In 1897, William Archer explained this phenomenon by what he called 'the law of the hundred thousand'.[559] According to Archer, for a play to rank as a success at a 'good theatre' it must have run for at least 100 nights, 'to good houses', which he estimated that for theatres such as the Haymarket and St. James would be an audience of around 1000 people. Anything less, such as a play which 'dragged on for a month or six weeks', 'will be withdrawn a confessed failure.'[560] Evidently, what Archer described was highly

[558] George Bernard Shaw, 'Preface', in *The Theatrical World of 1894* (London: Walter Scott, 1894), p. xiii.
[559] William Archer, 'On the Need for an Endowed Theatre', in *The Theatrical World of 1896* (London: Walter Scott, 1897), p. xxvi.
[560] Archer, 'On the Need for an Endowed Theatre', p. xxvii.

commercialised theatre for a mass-audience, and none of Ibsen's plays in Britain ever approached anything like a long run, nor were they, save for a single instance, taken up by the West End actor-managers. The theatrical market, however, did leave room for plays that did not promise a long run. This space was the matinees. These served the function both of trying out new plays and to produce niche plays. Often a theatre could be rented for a single afternoon for £25 or £30.[561] The matinees were the way in which Ibsen's plays were first presented to a British audience, with some of the more successful productions extended and some even moved into the evening programme.

From a financial point of view, a number of Ibsen's plays had a number of advantages compared to the big productions popular at the West End. With a limited cast and only a few change of scenes required, they could be produced on shoestring budgets, which many of the early productions indeed were. Many of the problem plays could be staged with only a handful of actors and some, such as *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler*, did not require a change of scene at all, both things crucial when it came to keeping production costs down. Of the problem plays, only *Pillars of Society* and *An Enemy of the People* required mass scenes. It is impossible to determine to what extent the presence of mass scenes influenced the early British choice of plays, but it is perhaps telling that in spite of the big success *Pillars of Society* had in the commercial German theatres, it was relatively rarely taken up by independent British productions. In the case of Archer's early and somewhat ill-prepared adaptation, which went by the name *Quicksands*, the problem of the mass-scene was solved by mustering volunteers from the audience during the break.[562] It is perhaps telling that the other play which featured a mass-scene was taken up by Beerbohm-Tree, the famous manager of the Haymarket theatre, who had a reputation for directing scenes with large numbers of people. As one of the major West End managers Tree was in possession of the financial means for an expensive production that the play required.

Despite the fact that famous actor-managers were all located in the West End, they dominated the entire British theatrical markets. This was done through extensive touring of popular productions.[563] By the end of the century, the provincial theatres of Britain had to a large extent ceased to host productions of their own, that is to say that they too had ceased to be repertory theatres of the kind which still thrived on the continent. This is important as it points to the dominant position of the West End, not only of London and its suburbs, and the way in which it directly controlled the market beyond the geographical area from which it drew its immediate audience. The tours not only covered Britain, but also extended to the colonies and North America. Furthermore, the business of touring was an important part of the West End economy,

[561] Michael Booth, *Theatre in the Victorian Age* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 39.
[562] Whitebrook, p. 35.
[563] Booth, p. 56ff.

which helped to fuel extravagant productions.[564] It was, of course, not only the big productions that toured and although they did not belong to the class of famous actor-managers, Achurch and Charrington's production of *A Doll's House* was cut short by a pre-engaged tour to the Antipodes. Due to the interconnectedness of the theatrical market of the British Empire, this meant that the play was performed extensively in both Australia and New Zealand shortly after it had proven a success in London.

Besides being guided by financial concerns, all theatre in London was controlled by one of two bodies. The first was the London City Council, which licensed the variety houses, the second was the Lord Chamberlain's Examiner of Plays, which oversaw and licensed drama in theatres. In relation to Ibsen's plays, it was primarily the Examiner of Plays which was the reason of concern to Ibsen's supporters.[565] As already shown, in Germany and Denmark (apart from the Royal Theatre) censorship was a matter for the police. In Britain, however, the licensing of plays was carried out by a specialist, the Examiner of Plays. Just as it was the case with the censor of the Danish Royal Theatre, the individual taste of the Examiner of Plays was allowed wide space when it came to how to fill the requirements of the office. During the peak of the Ibsen controversy, it was Edward Frederick Smythe Pigott (1824-1895), who filled the function as censor. In the public as well as the trade, the censorship was accepted though some of Ibsen's supporters, most notably Archer, advocated for its abolishment. Of the various theatre people that appeared before the government's Select Committee on Theatre in 1892 only William Archer spoke out against censorship.

Despite the open conflict which seemed to exist between Archer and the censorship-evading association of the Independent Theatre Society, Pigott's treatment of Ibsen's plays was in effect not very harsh. In fact, none of Ibsen's plays were ever refused a licence, not even *Ghosts*, which as it was never submitted for a license was never formally denied. Pigott was, however, in line with the common opposition when it came to Ibsen's plays. According to Archer, the reason Pigott gave for not banning Ibsen's drama was that: 'all Ibsen's characters were morally deranged,' yet the plays were 'too absurd altogether to be injurious to public morals'.[566] However, due to Pigott's leniency, there were several cases where the press called for the Lord Chamberlain's office to close down licensed productions, or, as we shall see in the case of *Ghosts*, for ending the unlicensed production of the play.

[564] Tracy C. Davis, 'The Show Business Economy, and Its Discontents', in *Victorian and Edwardian Theatre* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 2004), p. 38.
[565] Davis, 'The Independent Theatre Society's Revolutionary Scheme for an Uncommercial Theater', p. 450.
[566] William Archer, 'Censorship', in *The Theatrical World of 1895* (London: Walter Scott, 1896), p. 70.

Ibsen's dramas and the actresses

> '[W]e are on the verge of something like a struggle between the sexes for the dominion of the London theatres...' (George Bernard Shaw, 'Preface' in The Theatrical World of 1894).

A pronounced feature of the British Ibsen productions of the 1890s was the role that a number of actresses played in organising the productions. This made them stand out, not only in relation to other plays in Britain at the time but also when compared to the Ibsen productions in Denmark and Germany. Although actresses universally may be assumed to have been drawn to Ibsen's complex female characters, there were dynamics specific to the British actor-manager system which may not only have hindered the general production of Ibsen's plays, but prompted actresses to take matters into their own hands if they wished to bring the roles onto the stage. In the preface to Archer's *The Theatrical World of 1894*, Shaw explained the way in which the actor-manager system held back the artistically rewarding female roles, of the type for which Ibsen's plays were known, because plays of this type offered few parts in which the actor-managers, who were predominantly male, could see themselves. This was the consequence of a system in which the manager was also the leading male actor and the function of the 'leading lady' (and the remaining cast for that matter), was to support his play. As the strong female roles in the new drama often came at the expense of a strong male part, or as Shaw points out in the quotation below, built on the subversion of traditional representations of male heroism, the plays which were attractive to actresses, as they offered strong independent female parts, were equally unattractive to the male actor-manager:

> We have at present nine actor-managers and only one actress-manageress -- Mrs John Wood. So far, our chief actresses have been content to depend on the position of "leading lady" to some actor-manager. This was sufficient for all ordinary ambitions ten years ago; but since then the progress of a revolution in public opinion on what is called the Woman Question has begun to agitate the stage. [...]
>
> Now it is not possible to put the new woman seriously on the stage in her relation to modern society, without stirring up, both on the stage and in the auditorium, the struggle to keep her in her old place. The play with which Ibsen conquered the world, *A Doll's House*, allots to the "leading man" the part of a most respectable bank manager, exactly the sort of person on whose quiet but irresistible moral superiority to women Tom Taylor insisted with the fullest public applause in his *Still Waters Run Deep*. Yet the play ends with the most humiliating exposure of the vanity, folly, and amorous beglamourment of this complacent person in his attitude towards his wife, the exposure being made by the wife herself his is not the sort of part that an actor-manager likes to play.[567]

In Shaw's opinion this led the actor-managers to reject the plays which held no desirable roles for themselves. As I show below, this view is backed up by Elizabeth Robins' description of her initial attempt to find a theatre for her 1891-production of *Hedda Gaber*, which, she related, was met with the claim that it was a 'woman's play' and that it offered no role for the actor-managers that she approached.[568] Because the actor-managers were the backbone of the West End theatre their mode of selecting plays, which was based on finding parts which offered

[567] Shaw, 'Preface', pp. xxiv–xxvi.
[568] Elizabeth Robins, *Ibsen and the Actress* (London: The Hogarth Press, 1928), pp. 15–16.

themselves the best opportunity to display their talent and which prevailed among the half score of managers, determined what plays dominated the British theatrical world.

Seen in this light, it is telling that Ibsen's plays were not produced by the established actor-managers, and the plays, which stood out due to their strong female roles, such as *A Doll's House*, *Hedda Gabler* and *Rosmersholm*, were produced by actresses who either had their own troupe or who saw no other way to stage the plays than to assume the function of actor-manager themselves. The first production of *A Doll's House*, for example, was staged by the actor couple Janet Achurch and Charles Charrington who had their own troupe in which Achurch, who played Nora, to some extent was the leading actor. The first production of *Rosmersholm* was partly organised by Florence Farr (1860-1917), who played the female lead Rebecca West.[569] The strongest example of actresses taking matters into their own hands in order to produce one of Ibsen's plays was, as I show below, the production of *Hedda Gabler* organised by the 'Joined Management' which consisted of Elizabeth Robins and Marion Lea. The two American actresses, who played the parts of Hedda and Thea in Ibsen's play, not only organised but also financed the production. Herbert Beerbohm-Tree's production of *An Enemy of the People* was the one exception to the rule that Ibsen's plays were not produced by the famous actor-managers. Tree was the manager of the fashionable Haymarket theatre, and *An Enemy of the People* ran, partly as a matinee, for a week, with Tree in the leading role as Dr. Stockmann. It is perhaps telling that Tree chose to stage a play which, somewhat uncharacteristically for Ibsen's later plays, lacked prominent female roles, but one in which he himself could play to his best advantage.

Actresses in particular were attracted to Ibsen's drama because they offered complex female roles, something that for instance Robins found rewarding to perform and which was scarce in British theatre at the time. This can also be the answer to why some of them went through the trouble of setting up productions themselves. The fact that the actresses' agency in producing the plays was not mirrored in either Denmark or Germany does not entail that actresses in those countries did not see Ibsen's roles in the same light as their British colleagues, but in both Denmark and Germany Ibsen's plays were already being performed by the established, certainly equally male dominated, theatres. Consequently, female agency was not called for in this context. What may have directed attention to the gender aspect of the British performance was the fact that Ibsen, if not before then most certainly from the production of *A Doll's House*, was labelled as a dramatist of woman's plays. This reputation seems to have been particularly strong in the British reception as it was with this play that Ibsen for the first time made his name known to the general public, whereas in Denmark and Germany other aspects of his work received more public attention.

[569] Kerry Powell, *Women and Victorian Theatre* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), p. 67.

William Archer's struggle for a new drama

Notwithstanding that Archer looked after Ibsen's interests in Britain, in terms of publishing for instance, he also had his own aims and was involved in his own projects. This is of course true for all agents involved in cultural transfer, but in relation to Archer it is perhaps more important to point out because Archer's own project may seem almost to be synonymous with that of promoting Ibsen. After his first youthful adaptation of Ibsen's *Pillars of Society*, as *Quicksands* in 1880, he consistently worked to produce non-adapted translations, which in their wording stayed close to the Norwegian original. In the instances in which he worked closely with productions he is known to have made alterations to make the text more colloquial, yet he seems to have been determined to minimize alterations.[570] In this way, Archer may easily be seen to vanish behind Ibsen's project especially when seen in relation to some of Ibsen's other supporters, such as George Bernard Shaw, who had more explicit social and political aims with their promotion of Ibsen's plays. Thomas Postlewait sums this up by stating that 'Archer said yes to the aesthetic gospel and no to the social one'.[571] In other words, Archer did have an aim, which he pursued with his translations and his championing of Ibsen's plays through articles and reviews, and that was the reformation of British theatre and particularly English drama. Understanding what this project was about, and thereby what it was not about, is essential to understanding the way in which he tackled the controversy that rose in the wake of the first British Ibsen productions.

Archer consistently pursued the same aims throughout his career. For more than four decades, he campaigned for realism on the stage, the abolition of censorship, an endowed theatre and, of course, Ibsen's plays. Already early in his career as critic, in the beginning of the 1880s, Archer published a series of pamphlets and books in which he clamoured for change in the field of British theatre. The pamphlet *The Fashionable Tragedian* (1877), co-written with a friend, one Robert Lowe, was a merciless attack on Henry Irving, the most recognised of the West End managers and the very icon of the new respectability towards which the theatrical profession strived. The pamphlet became quite notorious and initiated his attack on the theatre of the actor-manager system.[572] In 1883, he rewrote the pamphlet as the book *Henry Irving, Actor and Manager a Critical Study* (1883).

Important in order to understand Archer's vision for a new drama is his book *English Dramatists of To-Day* (1882). This book was envisioned as a guide for playwrights. It is a plea to English dramatic writers to at least rise to the level of craftsmanship found in the well-made French play, as found in the writings of Augier, Dumas fils or Sardou.[573] Yet more than the French plays, Archer advocated for a moral drama that dared to take aim at crucial and troubling aspects of contemporary life. *English Dramatists of To-Day* is not least important because

[570] Postlewait, p. 15ff.
[571] Ibid., p. xvii.
[572] Ibid., 26.
[573] Ibid., 33.

Archer here for the first time described in detail his own position. In this book, he declared that he took a 'gloomy view on the present state of the drama'.[574] This, he claimed, was not merely his own view, but one he shared with all 'high criticism'. In what he characterised as 'low criticism', the current state of drama, he found, was equally lamented, but in low criticism this led to either a sentimental yearning for past glories or a tendency to blame the import of French plays as the source of the then present state of affairs. To Archer, however, neither of the two was the true source of the problem, which he found to be the fact that there existed no contemporary British drama in the sense of a dramatic literature. English plays were made for the stage and held no literary qualities in their own right.[575]

In 1886, in an essay entitled 'Are We Advancing? (1882-1886)', Archer returned to the question of the overall state of affairs of British drama.[576] Here, Archer surveyed the developments in British drama over the course of the previous four years, since he had presented his 'gloomy view'. From the outset of the article he was explicit about the contested nature of progress which makes the ideal of drama 'a subject of unceasing controversy.'[577]

> Shall we steer for Realism or for Idealism, for culture or merely for amusement? Some would have us reverse the engines, put on full speed astern, and try back to the spacious times of great Elizabeth. Others are for ploughing steadily forward in the good old course laid down by Scribe. Some would put the helm a-starboard and make for rhythmic regions of Neo-Shakespeareanism; others would fain deviate in the opposite direction, eschewing poetry for photography. Browningism has its adherents; so has Zolaism; and even Ibsen, in these later days, is the god of a few fanatics. The great majority, bound to no sect or clique, is ready to dash off towards any point of the compass which promises pastime - "Zeitvertreib" - whether in the form of laughter or excitement.[578]

The way in which Archer framed his investigation is important. First of all because he mapped out what he perceived to be the different positions in the field of playwriting at the time. Secondly because he saw these positions as delimited from 'the great majority', which, in Archers view, cared not what it consumed as long as it was enjoyable. That Archer's position was, indeed, an elitist position is further evident from the way in which he frames the notion of progress. Thus, the question that he set out to answer was whether the theatre was 'attracting' and 'deserves to attract more and more attention from the educated and thoughtful portion of our community?'[579]

Following his overview of four years of theatrical productions, Archer ended up expressing a slight optimism on behalf of the educated theatregoer. He found that the theatre to a larger degree did attract an educated audience than previously. With regard to the plays, he was more reluctant but found that a small proportion of the plays were getting better, such as Arthur Wing

[574] William Archer, *English Dramatists of To-Day* (London: T Fischer Unwin, 1882), p. 1.
[575] Ibid., p. 3
[576] Published in Archer, *About the Theatre,* (1886)
[577] William Archer, *About the Theatre: Essays and Studies* (London: Fisher Unwin, 1886), p. 1.
[578] Ibid., p. 2.
[579] Ibid.

Pinero's (1855-1934) early comedies.[580] A slightly hopeful Archer wrote of the development which he thought to perceive, and which seems to have coincided with his own hopes:

> [I]t seems to me [...] the public is beginning to demand more and more imperatively that the dramatist shall be, not indeed a moralist (that may come later on), but an observer, and shall give in his work, not yet a judgement or an ideal, but a painting. This is, in sum my reason for believing that there is vitality in the English drama, and that, on the whole, WE ARE ADVANCING.[581]

As Archer's early writings suggest, his aim was the introduction of a serious dramatic literature in British theatres. He wished for a drama that dared to raise ethical questions and which offered an alternative to the sedatives, which he found that the public was in effect being given by the commercial theatres. This both led him, as one of the few at the time, to oppose censorship and to advocate for the creation of an endowed theatre which would have cultural rather than primarily commercial aims.[582] Yet, the theatre and a new dramatic literature, as outlined in his early writings, also marked the apparent limits of Archer's involvement in the Ibsen controversy. In his later defence of Ibsen, he defended him as a dramatist, being unwilling to enter into the social and political implications which could be drawn from his plays. That Ibsen was first of all a poet and not a philosopher, as his opponents claimed, was a point to which Archer recurred again and again in his defence of the Norwegian dramatist.

Robert Buchanan and Ibsen

Archer's attacks on the contemporary state of British drama and theatre inevitably attracted counter-attacks from critics and playwrights who neither shared his vision for the new drama nor agreed with the view he took on its present state. One of the people who early rose to the challenge was the playwright Robert Buchanan (1861-1901). Although today largely forgotten, Buchanan was one of the most productive playwrights of his time. He wrote plays of the type of which Archer disapproved, but thrived by writing for mainstream theatre.[583] Besides his work as a playwright, Buchanan vigorously took part in public debates and was known for speaking his mind and for his knack of making enemies, something he even acknowledged himself.[584] Already in 1886 he had a short scuffle in the newspapers with Archer, who in *About the Theatre*

[580] In the following years, Pinero moved more in the direction that Archer hoped and with his *The Profligate* (1889) and *The Second Mrs Tanqueray* (1893) brought the British 'problem play' to mainstream theatre. (ODNB: Archer, William; ODNB: Pinero, Sir Arthur Wing.)
[581] Archer, *About the Theatre: Essays and Studies*, pp. 99–100.
[582] Postlewait, p. 35ff.
[583] Writing his obituary in 1901, J.T. Grein summed up Buchanan's oeuvre: 'He has written more than Arthur Pinero and Henry Arthur Jones together. He has produced melodramas by the dozen, adaptations by the score, comedies in quantity; he has written in prose and in verse; he has adapted novels of the eighteenth century and his own, has rendered famous French plays familiar to English audiences; and there was a time when almost every new calendar month brought a fresh play from his pen into temporary prominence.' In Jacob Thomas Grein, 'Robert Buchanan', in *Dramatic Criticism 1900-1901* (London: John Long).
[584] Unsigned Interview, 'An Hour With Robert Buchanan', *The Echo*, 11 June 1889.

had referred to his play *Stormbeaten* as a 'prodigious piece of paste-and-size melodrama'.[585] In 1889, however, Buchanan returned with a general assault on Archer in which the latter's promotion of Ibsen played a significant role.

Buchanan's attack commenced in the article 'The Modern Young Man As Critic' published in *Universal Review* in March 1889. In the article, Buchanan not only attacked Archer and Ibsen but a number of younger writers and critics which he perceived to support the new drama, which among others counted George Moore and Henry James, Ibsen's later supporters. The attack clearly displays an underlying generational conflict between Buchanan himself and what he saw as an upcoming good-for-nothing generation, whose fecklessness would eventually undo the great temple of art which he and the generations before him had strived to build:

> It is a curious fact, not to be overlooked in the present survey, that while the critics of twenty years ago were recruited from the ranks of literary aspirants, with special gifts and ambitions of their own in other directions, and while such critics were young men of enthusiastic temperament and with minds nourished on free literature, the most boisterous critics of the present moment are recruited from the ranks of the uninspired and unaspiring, are, in other words, young men who seem never to have studied seriously or felt profoundly any literature at all.[586]

The specific attack on Archer commenced under the heading 'the young man in a cheap literary suit'. For his attack, Buchanan supplied himself liberally from *About the Theatre,* using it as ammunition against Archer, painting a picture of a critic who 'pines for a drama where there shall be no "ideals"' and found poetical and imaginative plays 'dull and uninteresting'. [587] Worst of all to Buchanan was Archer's fondness of Ibsen '… in his [Archer's] gloomy expectation of the hour when the dramatist shall be a "moralist" (which is "to come," mirabile dictu!) he turns with all the eagerness of which he is capable to the latest dramatist of Scandinavia--to Ibsen, who is "stumping" [Buchanan had earlier described as 'Zola with a wooden leg'] the North of Europe in the interests of so-called Scientific Realism.'[588]

Seen in a larger perspective, Buchanan's criticism of Archer ran along the lines of idealism versus realism. In the article, Buchanan created an opposition between art (poetical and imaginative plays) and the 'transcription of life', a term taken from Archer, of which Ibsen is the main representative and on whom he turned with the strongest disapprobation. Ibsen, Buchanan could inform his reader, 'has produced certain pamphlets which he calls plays' in which he produced 'those dreary ethical propositions which the world is now receiving *ad*

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[585] Buchanan's letter led to some digging into Archer's own youthful attempts as a playwright, most likely done by Buchanan himself, and in another letter to *Era*'s editor signed 'Inquisitor' a mixture of facts and guesswork about Archer's plays was brought to the readers' attention (*The Era* 3 July 1886). In a final letter Archer openly owned up to being involved in the unsuccessful production of 'Quicksands' (his 1880 adaptation of *Pillars of Society*) and being the author of the melodrama 'Australia' which he himself proclaimed was a play 'too bad for any audience under the sun'. (*The Era*, 10 July 1886).
[586] Robert Buchanan, 'The Young Man as a Critic', in *The Coming Terror* (London: William Heinemann, 1891), pp. 167–168.
[587] Buchanan, 'The Young Man as a Critic', p. 168.
[588] Ibid.

nauseam'.[589] It is telling of Buchanan's entire approach to Archer and Ibsen that he used the label of pamphlet for Ibsen's plays, thus excluding them from the realm of art altogether.

> It would be vain to follow our present young man through all the perversions caused by a hasty literary equipment and a morbid intellectual appetite. As the absinthe-drinker, rapidly losing the sense of taste, finds that only acrid wormwood will suit his palate, so Mr. Archer takes his Ibsen with a relish, and even thanks the gods for Mr. W.S. Gilbert. While he has not one good word for a Titan like Mr. Charles Reade, he waxes almost eloquent when his theme is a small cynic or a huge dullard. Great sentiments, great motives, great emotions, great conceptions, great language, alike repel him. By temperament and by education, he is, like his superiors with whom I have placed him in juxtaposition, wholly unimaginative and unsympathetic.[590]

Buchanan's criticism of Archer, Ibsen and the younger generation may be seen in a broader perspective than merely an aesthetic scuffle between an upcoming critic and a popular playwright. In a collection of essays entitled *The Coming Terror* (1891), Buchanan gave some indication of how he perceived his own cultural project and why Ibsen's plays, and more generally the values which he thought they represented, posed a threat to society. Politically, Buchanan saw himself facing a 'double front'. On the one hand he was against the mass-movements, such as the socialists, and on the other he was repulsed by the kind of individualism, that he for example saw expressed in Ibsen's plays, which he claimed was symptomatic of the 'anti-social morality of Egoismus'.[591]

> Falk and Nora in Ibsen's dramas, for example, are types of violent moral crudity in revolt against the 'conventions' of society. The one is a sulky provincial Byron, who, out of cowardly self-love, refuses his happiness when it is offered to him; the other is a petulant little monster, whose eccentricities are only comprehensible on the score of some obscure epileptic disturbance, and who is equally detestable when sucking lollipops or suggesting syllogisms.[592]

The charge of 'egoism' was to be frequent in connection with controversies caused by Ibsen's plays and it is therefore important to know that, for instance Buchanan, defined this as 'individuality under deceased conditions', being the result of 'morbid self-analysis' that was it to become widespread would have potentially devastating effects on society.[593] The title alone of Buchanan's collection of essays, *The Coming Terror*, was highly indicative of the way in which Buchanan thought things were going. It is important to note that Buchanan was not alone in his apprehension of the future, which is indicated by the fact that his collection of essays sold well both in Britain and the United States. Yet the best way to understand Buchanan's position is not as somebody who suffered from a general angst of modernity, which is a common interpretation of the negative reaction to the cultural and social changes of the time, but rather as one who saw himself rise to concrete challenges such as self-obsessed individuality, the 'new woman' and socialism.

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[589] Ibid., pp. 168-169.
[590] Ibid., p. 172.
[591] Robert Buchanan, *The Coming Terror* (London: William Heinemann, 1891), p. 372.
[592] Ibid., p. 373.
[593] Buchanan, *The Coming Terror*, p. 373.

Chapter 3: Productions and reception

During the 1880s and 1890s there were a number of Ibsen productions in Britain. Most of these were short-lived compared to the long run of the big West End productions. Many managed only a single or a few matinees before being taken off the bill, yet a few managed to become modest commercial successes. In terms of the English appropriation of Ibsen's plays, it is evident that it was not always the number of productions that a given play managed that determined the extent to which it contributed to make Ibsen's name known to the general public. The Independent Theatre's production of *Ghosts* in 1891 was, in spite of the fact that it was limited to two closed performances the first year, a landmark in the promotion of Ibsen's plays. It not only created the most vehement outcry from the critics in the entire history of Ibsen's plays in Britain but also sparked an unprecedented level of debate about Ibsen. In the following, I offer an account of the introduction of Ibsen's plays to the London audience. Although there were a few productions before, I only focus on the period after the production of *A Doll's House* in 1889, which for the first time made his name known to the wider public. I follow the productions through the height of the controversy with *Ghosts*, to the end of 1893 by which time the plays were well established, not as part of the commercial repertoire but as 'niche productions' for the emerging 'literary minded' theatregoer.

The Year 1889

A Doll's House was the first of Ibsen's plays to attract the attention of the public. That it was Nora's story that first made Ibsen's name known became of great significance to the following reception of his plays. Although the English reception did share many features of the play's reception in Denmark and Germany, in Britain Ibsen became immediately associated with Nora's story. However, as Ibsen did not have a reputation as a playwright in Britain this soon labelled him as a writer of 'woman's plays', if not, as some thought, an ardent advocate for the new woman. The fact that Ibsen in Britain was not known for his historical drama, his drama of ideas or his poetry, but first became the object of public interest through a somewhat controversial play, very likely stressed the political implications of his drama.

A Doll's House

A Doll's House was first produced at the Novelty Theatre on 7 June 1889. It was the actor-manager Charles Charrington (1854-1926) and his wife Janet Achurch (1863-1916) who were behind the production, and during the spring they had approached William Archer about a new translation of the play for the stage. The effect of involving Archer in the production was that he took an active part in the preparations, which ran throughout the month of May. According to Thomas Postlewait, Archer functioned as a literary adviser to the production, attending

rehearsals, working closely with the actors and guiding them, and in this way filled a position not 'unlike our modern directors', something which was uncommon at the time.[594] It is important to note Archer's very active part in the preparations and the attention he paid to the direction of the play, as it was a function that he would later fill again, especially during his long cooperation with Elizabeth Robins, which lasted throughout most of the 1890s. From the perspective of agency, it is equally important to note the fact that it was Achurch and Charrington, rather than Archer, who took the initiative to produce the play. It is uncertain what moved the couple to settle on the production of one of Ibsen's plays. A possible explanation could be that Charrington had starred in Alec Nilson's *The Scarlet Letter* the previous year, a play written specifically for him; 'Alec Nielson' being the pen name of Edward Aveling. The connection with Aveling may also explain the origin of Charrington's later interest in socialism as Aveling was a founding member of the Socialist League and the Independent Labour Party.[595]

To produce *A Doll's House* was anything but a safe bet on success, and the venue which could be afforded, The Novelty Theatre, was not exactly one of the first-rate West End theatres. Archer claimed that it was '…a house utterly unknown to the majority of playgoers […] hidden away in a by-street on the very confines of theatrical civilization'[596] and looking back, Elizabeth Robins, who witnessed the production, described it as 'dingy' with a 'dingy audience'.[597] Even at the Novelty Theatre *A Doll's House* was not deemed sufficiently likely to attract a full audience and thus fit for the evening bill, and was consequently staged as a matinee. Initially it was booked for six days, though as the success of the play became evident the period was extended.[598] In fact, the week's engagement at the Novelty was only financed because Charrington and Achurch had bound themselves to do a two year tour of the Antipodes and mortgaged their salary.[599] Not everything, however, worked against the play's success. Already in 1889, Achurch was an actress of some renown and Charrington's career as an actor seemed to have gained ground in the time leading up to the production of *A Doll's House.*[600]

Despite the fact that *A Doll's House* premiered at a theatre which was not even full, the production was pronounced a success in the newspapers and soon gained momentum. The day after the premiere, the *Morning Post* reported: '*The Doll's House* [sic] was voted a success […] the call for the author was so genuine and protracted that Mr. Charles Charrington was compelled to acknowledge the favour bestowed by intimating that Ibsen would at once be

[594] Postlewait, p. 41.
[595] Bernard Ince, 'An Early Pioneer of the New Drama: Charles Charrington, Actor-Manager and Fabian Socialist', *Theatre Notebook*, 2010, 130–59 (p. 132).
[596] Archer, 'The Mausoleum of Ibsen', p. 91.
[597] Robins, p. 8.
[598] Ince, p. 133.
[599] *Bernard Shaw Collected Letters 1874-1897*, ed. by Dan H. Laurence, vol. 1 (London: Max Reinhardt, 1965), p. 215.
[600] Ince, p. 130ff.

communicated with.'[601] The promise resulted in a telegram being sent to Ibsen announcing the play's success. Even Clement Scott consented the day after, albeit in an unsigned review, that it had been a success, pronounced everything 'well done', the translation that of a 'scholar', the play 'perfectly mounted' and the acting 'really remarkable'. Noting that '[n]ot even Ibsen or Mr. Archer could have desired a better Nora than Miss Janet Achurch, who entered into her difficult task heart and soul…'.[602] The fact that the production was received as a success meant that it could be moved from the afternoon to the evening schedule. Three weeks of uninterrupted performances, with eight performances a week, followed and the success only ended on 29 June as the Charringtons, despite their efforts to postpone their tour, had to set out for Melbourne. An interview with the actress in the *Pall Mall Gazette* upon their departure concluded, 'seldom has any actress had a more brilliant 'send off' than that which the creation as the English Nora Helmer has supplied to Miss Achurch'.[603]

Many critics had been present at the premiere and they made sure that the event resounded in the media not only the day after but in the time to come. Already a week after the premiere, the theatre magazine *The Era* talked of a new 'dramatic craze', stating that the 'Ibsen boom', which they for some time had believed to be immanent, had now finally occurred.[604] The London correspondent of the North Devon Journal informed his provincial readers:

> Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian poet-novelist, is just now the most-talked-of literary figure of the age; magazine articles and newspaper notices have followed one another with a frequency which have almost suggested that Ibsen's dramas have become "the fashion" in literature, and not to know anything about them is to write yourself down as an ignoramus…[605]

By July Archer could conclude in the *Fortnightly Review*: 'If we measure fame by the mileage of newspaper comment, Henrik Ibsen has for the past month been the most famous man in the English literary world.'[606]

Many critics, however, strongly opposed *A Doll's House*. Although Clement Scott, the chief critic at the *Daily Telegraph*, had initially given the production a favourable review he soon turned on the play. In a long article in the magazine *Truth*, to which he also contributed on a regular basis, he now attacked the play. Scott's attack, which was echoed in other reviews, shared a number of features with the early reception of *A Doll's House*'s in Denmark and Germany, and although Scott has required a reputation for being very harsh, in effect he did not promote arguments that cannot be found in the Scandinavian or German reception. In Britain, however, without the backdrop of Ibsen's earlier plays, *A Doll's House* was narrowly seen as propagating the creed of the new woman, and what became an important feature of the reception was that Nora was seen as the prototype of the new woman. Especially the fact that Nora was

[601] Unsigned notice, 'Novelty Theatre', *Morning Post*, 8 June 1889.
[602] Unsigned notice by Clement Scott, 'A Doll's House', *Daily Telegraph*, 8 June 1889.
[603] Unsigned, 'Nora Helmer off for the Antipodes', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 5 July 1889.
[604] Unsigned notice, 'Dramatic Crazes', *The Era*, 15 June 1889.
[605] Unsigned notice, 'Literary Notices', *North Devon Journal*, 13 June 1889.
[606] William Archer, 'Ibsen and English Criticism', *Fortnightly Review*, 1 July 1889, p. 30.

seen as the new woman incarnate made the reception complex, as she was used as a proxy to attack the new woman in general. Yet, the reception must be seen in this light if one is to account for some of its features, which otherwise appear illogical, such as the fact that Nora was both charged with being a failed fictional character and being treated as if she was one of the new woman of flesh and blood. In the review in *Truth* it was Nora the new woman that Scott set out to expose, fashioning her a complete past from the little information given in the play: 'Now what, after all this fuss, is the true story of Nora Helmer? She is the child of a fraudulent father, badly brought up, neglected at home, bread in an atmosphere of lovelessness, who has had no one to influence her in her girlhood's days for good.'[607] With this background, Scott moved on to describe her shortcomings as a wife, which all led him to conclude that Nora, basically, was an 'undesirable companion' for any man. 'She misknows everything. She is all heart like cabbage, and affectionate as many spoiled children are: but she does not know the value of money, the virtue of truth, or the penalty of criminal action.'[608]

The sketch that Scott gave of Nora served to shift blame from the failing marriage from Helmer to his wife. In their final quarrel, Scott pointed out, it was Helmer who apologised whereas Nora's conduct was both 'unreasonable and unnatural'. 'Her husband appeals to her, but in vain. He reminds her of her duty: she cannot recognise it. He appeals to her religion; she knows nothing about it. He recalls to her the innocent children; she has *herself* to look after now! It is all self, self, serf! This is the ideal woman of the new creed'.[609]

Scott was not the only critic who in Nora saw the expression of unwholesome teachings. In a letter to the editor printed in *Pall Mall Gazette* carrying the expressive title 'Is Ibsen "a Zola with a Wooden Leg?" ' Robert Buchanan re-entered the field. Unlike Scott, Buchanan did not seek to rehabilitate Helmer, but held all the play's characters to be equally disagreeable. Not surprisingly Nora fared no better in Buchanan's interpretation as she had in Scott's, as she was singled out as the author's mouthpiece.

> The husband changes first, from a masterful man of business into a male shrew, from a male shrew into a bully and a coward; after posing as highminded and lofty-souled the physician touches the fringes of sensuous degradation; the gloomy cashier disappears in a cloud of hazy sentiment; and as for the heroine, the Doll herself, she is transformed from a chattering young hussy of criminal proclivities into a sort of Ibsen in petticoats…[610]

According to Buchanan, the 'cynicism' of the play undermined any moral one might have hoped to have gained from it, and he was convinced Nora, as well as a close study of Ibsen's other works, would soon transform even the strongest supporter of the women's cause 'into an ardent and retrograde advocate for the Suppression of Women'. '[A]ccording to the

[607] Clement Scott, 'A Doll's House', *Truth*, 1 June 1889, pp. 19–22.
[608] Ibid.
[609] Ibid.
[610] Robert Buchanan, 'Is Ibsen "a Zola with a Wooden Leg?"', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 11 June 1889.

Scandinavian, to become a thinking being and a free agent is, so far as women are concerned, to be as rectangular and pragmatic, as dingy and unsympathetic as the dramatist himself.'[611]

Although Buchanan's attack was partly directed against Archer, it prompted a reply from Shaw, who in the title enquired 'Is MR. Buchanan a Critic With a Wooden Head?' Shaw's reply, written in his characteristically flippant style, carried two points.[612] The first was that English critics with Ibsen had been presented with a once in a lifetime chance that most of them had gravely missed, comparing it to the music critics' rejection of Wagner. The second point had to do with Shaw's taste in theatre, and how it was not catered for by the established theatres:

> I represent that section of the community which is almost cut off from the enjoyment of dramatic art because theatrical managers refuse to provide entertainment for it, and insist on providing entertainment for Mr. Buchanan. Mr. Buchanan's plays bore me; and his views do not interest me in the least: I had grown out of them before I was born. […] I say, since I have held my peace under all this provocation, why cannot Mr. Buchanan do the same when, for once in a way, I get a chance of seeing a play which suits me?[613]

Shaw was, however, not more puzzled about Buchanan's attack than to answer the question himself, indicating that the attacks were not only prompted by Buchanan's inability to comprehend Ibsen's plays, but also by the fear that they in time would make his own plays redundant.

> In conclusion, let me say that I do not blame Mr. Buchanan for fighting Ibsen as Krogstad in "The Doll's House,"[sic] declares that he will fight for his position at the bank—"fight as if for life itself." There are many people who have never admitted any merit in Wagner's music; but they cannot stand Donizeti's operas after it, for all that. […] The London playgoer has now seen a play of Ibsen's acted. I do not claim that he likes it—perhaps he is only pretending—but let him just try a Buchanan play after it![614]

Shaw's comment that Buchanan was fighting for his position in the same way as Krogstad, a clerk in Ibsen's play who is about to be sacked but fights to retain his position in the bank, is, I think, an indication of the fact that Shaw had a good grasp of the power struggle underlying the particular arguments and accusations brought forward during the debates. In this respect, his response differed from Archer's, who had his eyes on the specificities and again and again over the course of the controversy would compile the criticism and seek to refute the individual accusations levelled at Ibsen's plays.

It is important in order to understand the personal aspect of the debates that Scott and Buchanan gave Archer a very prominent position in their reviews of *A Doll's House*. The very first words in Scott's review in the *The Daily Telegraph* were: 'Mr. William Archer and the Ibsenites have had their grand field-day.'[615] In spite of the fact that the production was organised by Achurch

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[611] Ibid.
[612] George Bernard Shaw, 'Is MR. Buchanan a Critic With a Wooden Head?', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 13 June 1889.
[613] Ibid.
[614] Ibid.
[615] Clement Scott, 'A Doll's House', *Daily Telegraph*, 8 June 1889.

and Charrington, although with substantial help from Archer, it is clear that in Scott's mind the roles were reversed. In the closing of his review Scott wrote 'Mr. William Archer has done his work so admirably, and those on the stage have so ably assisted him, that it would be a pity if their devotion to their "master" were not recognised.'[616] Evidently, the way of framing the Ibsenites as a cult with Ibsen as the 'master' and Archer in what would be the role of high priest was already taking form. As already mentioned, Buchanan also referred to Archer several times in his letter in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, but he had already attacked him in his piece 'The Modern Young Man As Critic', which had been printed in March that same year. It was not that other reviewers did not mention Archer, but when they did it was largely due to his role as a translator, they did not, as Scott and Buchanan did, single him out as the chief culprit of an undesirable turn in British theatre.

In the historiography on what has been called the 'Ibsen controversy' there are a number of articles which, each in their way, point to the complexity involved in accounting for the strong negative reaction to the performance of Ibsen's plays which emerged in the wake of *A Doll's House*. In the article 'Pandemic and Performance: Ibsen and the Outbreak of Modernism', Katherine Kelly points out how many critics created what she terms a 'mimetic link' between the play, the actors and the audience. 'Hostile critics (the majority from the 1880s to the 1890s) claimed a mimetic link between Ibsen's fictional characters, the performers personating them, and the audiences watching the personation.'[617] In the article, Kelly uses the term to account for the fact that many of the negative reviews were concerned with describing not only the drama's fictional characters but also the actors, and particularly the actresses, and the audience in detail. What in my view makes Kelly's view particularly important is that it breaks with the interpretations which limit the search for plausible reasons for the reaction to the performances or the plays themselves. In the reviews of *A Doll's House*, comparisons between Achurch and Nora were not made, yet this became, as we shall see, a feature in the reception of later Ibsen productions. It seems evident, however, that such a connection was established between Nora and the so-called new women, some of whom, such as Eleanor Marx and Elisabeth Robins and undoubtedly many others, are known to have attended the production.

Kelly's notion of a mimetic link also offers some possibility to account for the way in which the British reception differed from the Scandinavian and German reception. As the play in both Scandinavia and Germany was integrated into established theatre there were neither any attacks on the actors nor on the audience. The actresses who portrayed Nora were usually the leading actresses of the theatres and there is nothing which suggests that performances were not attended by the theatres' regular (bourgeois) audience. In other words, neither actresses nor audiences could be singled out, as was the case with the British productions, where critics increasingly attempted to frame Ibsen's audience as a cult of Ibsenites. In addition, the fact that Ibsen was an unknown author placed fewer constraints on the critics. It made them freer to

[616] Ibid.
[617] Kelly p. 24-25

single out Ibsen as a writer of womens plays and claim, in one way or another, that Nora was in fact an 'Ibsen in petticoats' promulgating an 'unlovely creed' of women's emancipation.

The Year 1891

1891 was a year that brought a plurality of productions, yet it also brought with it an escalation of the controversy. No new productions had immediately followed the Achurch and Charrington production of *A Doll's House*, neither in 1889 nor in 1890, save for a single matinee of *Pillars of Society*. The year 1891, however, was to bring the appearance of four new plays by Ibsen that had never appeared in Britain before: *Rosmersholm*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Lady from the Sea* and *Ghosts*.[618] On top of these four, a new production of *A Doll's House* was made and there was a staging of Act IV of *Brand*.[619] The productions of *Hedda Gabler* and *Ghosts* were of greatest importance: *Hedda Gabler* because it experienced a success which rivalled that of *A Doll's House* two years before, and *Ghosts* because it was the first play to be produced by the brand new organisation of the Independent Theatre Society. As it had been the case previously, the productions were strongly contested in the press. The reactions to *Ghosts* in particular reached new levels of disapproval and condemnation, which was echoed in many newspapers. 1891 was also the year in which the ridicule of Ibsen and his plays took off in earnest, with the first great theatrical spoof, J.M. Barrie's (1860-1937) *Ibsen's Ghosts, or Toole up to Date* which ran in the Vaudeville Theatre, starring J.L. Toole (1830-1906) one of the great low comedians of the time. Ibsen's drama also became a steadily recurring feature in the comic magazine *Punch*, which throughout the year offered their readers their comic re-writes of the plays.[620]

The year, however, was also important in terms of the agency behind the productions. The people behind the shows of 1891 were, together with Achurch and Charrington, the ones that continued staging Ibsen's plays throughout the decade. Central to the Ibsen productions of the 1890s was Elisabeth Robins, who together with Merion Lea organised *Hedda Gabler*. Besides her work in organising the production, Robins was to give life to many of Ibsen's biggest female roles throughout the decade. Another important series of productions was hosted by the Independent Theatre Society. The Independent Theatre Society was a theatrical association headed by theatre enthusiast Jacob Thomas Grein, and like Freie Bühne in Berlin it emulated Parisian Theatre Libre. Although headed by Grein, Independent Theatre Society relied on a number of well-known Ibsen supporters, such as Shaw and Archer, for work behind the scenes. Another prominent Ibsen production was the British premiere of *Rosmersholm* produced by the actress Florence Farr. Farr later acted in productions of Ibsen's plays, but her 1891-production

[618] Appendix III
[619] Appendix III
[620] Tore Rem, '"Cheerfully Dark": Punchian Parodies of Ibsen in the Early 1890s', in *Anglo-Scandinavian Cross-Currents* (Norwich: Norvik Press, 1999).

of *Rosmersholm* only managed two performances. Finally, Charrington and Achurch returned from the Antipodes and made a production of *The Lady of the Sea*, which was translated by Eleanor Marx-Aveling and directed by Edward Aveling. Thus, the year also offered a continuity of the agency.

The Independent Theatre Society's production of *Ghosts*

In February 1891, the Independent Theatre Society was founded by Jacob Thomas Grein who was Dutch born, but a naturalised British citizen and theatre enthusiast who took part in the theatre debates of the times.[621] Grein was not the first in Britain who had clamoured for a theatre that could provide an alternative to the commercial theatres of the actor-managers; it was one of the popular topics of the time. Different models had already been suggested with repertory companies, subscription seasons for elite audiences and unification of amateur clubs.[622] As we have seen, Archer had for a long time advocated for an endowed theatre. The naturalist writer George Moore had, in his review of the French Theatre Libre's production of *Ghosts* (*Les Revenants*) in 1890, called for a British Theatre Libre.

> Why have we not a Theatre Libre? Surely there should be no difficulty in finding a thousand persons interested in art and letters and willing to subscribe five pounds a year for twelve representations for interesting plays. I think such a number of enthusiasts exist in London. The innumerable articles which appear in the daily, weekly, and monthly press on the London stage prove the existence of much vague discontent, and that this discontent will take definite shape sooner or later seems more than possible.[623]

Since 1889, Grein had himself advocated for a new theatre in a series of articles published in *Weekly Comedy*, a magazine for which he wrote. One of the articles was expanded into a leaflet, co-authored with one C.W. Jarvis, entitled *A British Theatre Libre, A Suggestion.* In the suggestion, Grein outlined his vision for the theatre which would not be constrained by censorship and narrow commercial interests, the aim of which he saw as to strengthen the British production of plays. It was in Grein's mind to be a greenhouse and testing ground for native playwrights, so that the British actor-managers did not have to go abroad to import plays that had already been tested and proven successful. For as Grein explained, the first consideration with British managers was not the artistic side of things but the financial:

> Theatrical managers in this country are nothing if not conservative, and the first question with them is not, will this prove an artistic success, but will it prove a financial one. Therefore they are unwilling to go outside the beaten track; they cling to the traditional, well-worn formula, which sends the public home in a satisfied mood; a dramatic formula in which reality, likelihood and possibility are thrown over-board in order to reach the happy ending, without which no play - so they say - can hope for financial prosperity.[624]

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[621] Schoonderwoerd, p. 106.
[622] Tracy C. Davis 'independent theatre society' p. 448
[623] George Moore, *Impressions and Opinions* (London: David Nutt, 1891), p. 226.
[624] Grein 'A British Theatre Libre, A Suggestion' (1889) quotation in Schoonderwoerd, pp. 100–101.

In his proposal, Grein did not doubt that what had been possible in France was possible in Britain as well. For the success of the enterprise he, like Moore, thought that the financial aspects would be easily overcome through subscriptions and voluntary contributions, claiming that 'no formidable sum of money was needed [...] say £2000.'[625] To reach the sufficient numbers of subscribers and thereby financing the endeavour, Grein first of all hoped for the 'the united sympathy of the press, which never withholds its aid, when a good cause is at stake...'.[626] Contrary to the hopes and expectations of both Moore and Grein, however, the united sympathy of the press was, as later events clearly showed, not to be had on that occasion and financing the Independent Theatre turned out to be no mean feat.

Long after the Independent Theatre Society had ceased to be, Grein himself gave an overview of the meagre pecuniary resources on which the endeavour had started. In advance of the founding, Grein had himself received £50 from the Royal Subsidised Theatre in Amsterdam to be 'used in the interest of art in England' and a further £30 from the translation of an English play, and '[w]ith these gigantic sums, in the wake of Antoine of Paris, I founded the Independent Theatre.'[627] It was not only a meagre beginning, but the Independent Theatre was also poorly patronised. At no point did the number of subscribers exceed 175 and an annual income of £400 a year.[628] The subscription fee for a season consisting of five plays was £2 10s.[629] In spite of the fact that the inaugural production of *Ghosts* had been well attended, the Independent Theatre only managed a second production, which was of Zola's *Thérése Raquin* in October, because it received additional financial support from a number of subscribers. Seen in relation to some of the other free theatres, such as Antoine's Theatre Libre or Freie Bühne, Independent Theatre was, and continued to be, a small undertaking. By comparison, Theatre Libre is claimed to have had more than fifty thousand subscribers during its lifetime (1888-1896)[630] and Freie Bühne had, as we have already seen, more than nine hundred subscribers at the end of its first year. The strained financial conditions left its mark on the productions of the Independent Theatre. Productions had to be done cheaply and this meant scenery and props were at times very poor.[631] The same was the case with the actors, who in many cases were amateurs, such as Alice Austin Wright who played Mrs. Alving, and times for rehearsing were cut short. The consequence was that though the Independent Theatre was innovative as a

[625] Ibid.
[626] Ibid.
[627] J.T. Grein 'Stage Society News' 25 January 1907, quoted in Mario Borsa, *The English Stage of To-Day* (London: John Lane, 1908), pp. 99–100.
[628] Ibid., p. 100.
[629] Unsigned notice, 'An English Theatre Libre', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 14 March 1891.
[630] Robert Justin Goldstein, *The Frightful Stage* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2009), p. 289. It is possible that the different ways of counting subscribers account for the very high number in Theatre Libre. In the case of Independent Theatre, subscribers could bring guests. At the production of *Ghosts* 3,000 people attended two performances, dress rehearsal and premiere, in spite of the low number of subscribers.
[631] Schoonderwoerd, p. 121.

theatrical organisation it offered very little in the way of a new aesthetic approach compared to the other British Ibsen productions, most of which were very well rehearsed.

Despite its shortcomings, the Independent Theatre's production of *Ghosts* proved to be a landmark in British theatre history. In a letter to Charles Charrington, at this point still in the Antipodes, Shaw gave an account of the production and the subsequent outcry in the papers. Though Shaw began by proclaiming the production a 'most terrible success', it is evident that the production was not as well made as it might have been. Of Mrs. Wright, who played Alving, he stated that she acted relying on the 'conventional stage method' in the final scene, which, Shaw remarked, 'only proved, interestingly enough, that it cannot be done in that way'. The actress cast as Regine, Shaw found, was 'not the right sort of girl for the part' and Osvald he found had only managed to come across as 'unspeakably unnatural'. The actor playing Engstrand, however, was in Shaw's description 'capital'. Of the subsequent reactions in the press Shaw stated:

> Next day there was the devil to pay in the papers. Scott, with my God Almighty rankling in him, went stark raving mad, and produced not only a column of criticism but a leading article (in which Sir Edwin Arnold probably had a hand) in which he compared an Ibsen play to "a dirty act done publicly," "an open drain," and so on, demanding that that the Independent theatre should be prosecuted, suppressed, fined, and the deuce knows what not. Most of the other papers followed suit; and now the royalty people are afraid to let Grein have the theatre again.[632]

The reactions to *Ghosts* have gone down in theatre history as one of the great scandals of its time. Grein himself claimed later that no fewer than five hundred articles had been printed in connection with the inaugural performance.[633]

One of the problems of approaching the strong reception of *Ghosts* in the Independent Theatre today is that the historiography to a large extent has interpreted the event along the lines which Archer laid down in his own response to the reception in the article 'Ghosts and Gibberings'.[634] In the article, Archer, with a good deal of wit, made a compilation of the abuse hurled at the play in the press over the course of the first weeks after the production. The effect of the compilation was that he managed to make the response appear ridiculous, when all the most vicious outcries followed one another, but he also managed to show how the criticism appeared inconsistent. In the article, Archer for instance showed how Clement Scott contradicted himself in various, albeit unsigned, reviews and public letters, and was able to quote him for evidently conflicting statements about Ibsen such as: 'Nobody can doubt the cleverness, the genius, the analytical power of the "master"' whilst claiming that *Ghosts* 'might have been a tragedy had it been treated by a man of genius. Handled by an egotist (!) and a bungler, it is only a deplorably dull play.'[635] 'Now, which are we to believe', Archer asked, before settling the matter by quoting Scott in a third capacity, as writing in the magazine *Truth*, who '…writes of "the Ibsen

[632] Letter: Georg Shaw to Charles Charrington 30 March 1891. In *GBS Collected Letters* vol 1, p. 286-291
[633] J.T. Grein 'Stage Society News' 25 January 1907, quoted in Borsa, *The English Stage To-Day*, p.100.
[634] See: Davis, 'The Independent Theatre Society's Revolutionary Scheme for an Uncommercial Theater', p. 448.
[635] William Archer, 'Ghosts and Gibberings', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 8 April 1891.

dust-bin" and exclaims: "Literature forsooth!"'.[636] Another of Archer's highly persuasive points in the article was that some of the objections to the play was based on the detailed descriptions of Oswald's illness, often expounded at length in reviews, details which Archer could point out were actually not part of the play but must have originated in the 'critical imagination' of the critics.

It is difficult to say what effect Archer's response had at the time. It is well-known that both Henry James and George Bernard Shaw took great pleasure in it; Shaw so much that he included it in his book *The Quintessence of Ibsen,* and thereby helped to prolong its fame.[637] Thomas Postlewait sees Archer's article as a landmark, the point at which Archer got the upper hand in his struggle with Scott.

> By compiling this lexicon of abuse, Archer not only mocked the opposition's ridiculous judgements, thereby revealing just how mindless and fearful the attacks on Ibsen were, but also rallied Ibsen's supporters. The critics rather than the production became the issue. In accomplishing this, Archer nullified Clement Scott's power as the critic of the largest newspaper. From this point forward, Scott's influence on the London stage, especially on its future direction, declined as Archer's grew.[638]

There is no doubt that Archer's article, at least from a present day perspective, does a very good job at carrying home its point, and it is this point that has been taken over in the historiography on the reception. Archer's way of framing the reception as 'hysterical', or in other words irrational and out of bearing with an adequate response to the play, has not only been taken over by Postlewait but has largely been accepted by the historiography which deals with the episode.[639]

The great loser in the historiography, both in relation to *Ghosts* as well as later, is Clement Scott. It is his reviews from the *The Daily Telegraph* which are usually singled out in the historiography when the 'ridiculous attacks' are to be exemplified. This is, of course, not without reason. Scott was one of the fiercest opponents of the production, and who in a number of articles, both before and after the production, attacked *Ghosts* and the Independent Theatre. Yet, part of the reason, one suspects, is that he was the one singled out by Archer in 'Ghosts and Gibberings'. In the historiography, Scott not only lost the battle for the theatre, but his perspective, which he shared with the majority of critics, has subsequently been denied the right

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[636] Ibid.

[637] Michael Egan claims that: 'Following Archer's attack in the *Pall Mall Gazette* the critics lowered their voices a little; at least they stopped calling for the public prosecutor.' (Egan, p. 15) It quite possible that Egan is right with regard to the lowering of the voices, yet he seems to be unaware of the fact that following *Ghosts*, Grein submitted every subsequent play to the Lord Camberlain's office. (See below).

[638] Postlewait, p. 63.

[639] See for instance Katherine Kelly's *Pandemic and Performance*, (p. 21.): 'Clement Scott's hysterical response to the play has been quoted *ad nauseum…'*. Michael Egan claims that Archers article, 'the most famous short piece of polemic to come out of the Ibsen controversy", was a collection of the "hysterical obloquy levelled at the author of *Ghosts*'. (Egan, p.1.) Thomas Postlwait writes of Archer's collection in 'Ghosts and Gibberings': 'Nothing quite illustrates the ridiculous nature of the opposition to Ibsen's plays as this little master piece. […] This display of the critics' foolishness was a far more powerful defence of Ibsen than any review that Archer could have written in praise of the production' (Postlewait, p. 63).

to be taken seriously and even into general consideration. The question is, therefore, if we take it that Scott and the other critics were not irrational, what then motivated his reaction to the play and its mode of production as the first play at the Independent Theatre?

Part of the justification for rejecting Scott's view of Ibsen has been found in the fact that he himself by the end of the century acknowledged his defeat in the controversy.[640] In the preface to what was to become his legacy as critic he wrote:

> The Ibsen reaction, with its unloveliness, its want of faith; its hopeless, despairing creed; its worship of the ugly in art; its grim and repulsive reaction, regret it as we will, is a solemn and resistless fact. At the outset some of us, conscientiously and in the interests of the art we loved and had followed with such persistency, tried to laugh it out of court. But the time came when the laugh was on the other side. I own it; I admit it.[641]

Yet seen in the original textual context the quotation of Scott's concession was more ambiguous as it has been made out to be, and was part of a general regret that the times had changed and that art now also had changed its tack:

> We may ascribe it to the change of tone and thought at our public schools and universities, to our godless method of education, to the comparative failure of religion as an influence, to this, that, or the other. But there it is. We cannot get away from it. Society has accepted the satire, and our dramatists of the first class have one after the other broken away from the beautiful, the helpful, and the ideal, and coquetted with the distorted, the tainted, and the poisonous in life. Any appeal to them in the name of art is vain.[642]

Even seen in the light of his final concession, Scott was an idealist and his opposition to Ibsen's plays was based on the introduction of the ugly into dramatic art. In this respect, he was in line with many of the conservative critics in both Denmark and Germany, and in this regard there was nothing exceptional about Scott's views. Yet, as it has already been shown, Scott was, despite his general opposition to Ibsen's drama, on several occasions more than ready to acknowledge the effectiveness of the plays on stage or the that they in many cases led to remarkable acting.

The moral outcry against *Ghosts* brought up many of the accusations which had been levelled at Ibsen and his plays before. There were, however, factors which made the production of *Ghosts* stand out: thus, it was from the outset labelled as Ibsen's most notorious drama, it dealt with the taboos of syphilis and heredity and it was the first production at the Independent Theatre Society. Each element alone might have warranted a scandal, put together they seemed sure to cause one even before the curtain rose on the first act. Each of these elements may be seen as providing a perfectly good excuse, that is to say not wholly irrational one, for a strong counter-reaction in the press: first, the Ibsenites were seen as a subversive cultural movement, and while that was a general claim, the first production of what was the most notorious play of the movement would have been a good occasion to oppose it. Secondly, syphilis and heredity

[640] See for instance: Egan, p. 4.
[641] Clement Scott, *The Drama of Yesterday and To-Day* (London: Macmillan, 1899), p. x.
[642] Scott, *The Drama of Yesterday and To-Day*, pp. x–xi.

were controversial issues which, as I have already shown, had given rise to controversy in both Scandinavia and Germany. Dealing with syphilis, which in itself was frightening and posed a big social problem at the time, was complicated by the discussion of whether it should be allowed, even to be referred to, on stage.[643] References to syphilis was a taboo across Europe, and therefore, what may have made the British rejection of the play stronger was very likely the fact that Ibsen did not yet hold an established position in English literature, something which placed fewer constraints on the reception than in other countries. The third point relates to the manner of production, the fact that the Independent Theatre explicitly sought to circumvent, thus openly challenge, the established order. Due to Ibsen's play's connection with the establishment of alternative theatre, it is highly relevant to take a closer look at the strand in the reception which took up this question.

The view that it was the way of staging, just as much as it was the play itself, that set off the media blitz has been promoted by Tracy C. Davis.[644] Davis makes a strong point about the Independent Theatre's circumvention of censorship, accounting for some of the outcry by showing that it hinged on the question of the legality of the theatre's organisation, which was much debated in the press. Not least Scott and the *Daily Telegraph* pursued the issue, already the day after the premiere, doubting the legality of the Independent Theatre.[645] But Scott soon moved from mere doubting to asserting the illegal nature of the thing:

> They all of them-men and women alike, Ibsenites and socialists-know that they are doing not only a nasty but an illegal thing. It was open to the Lord Chamberlain to interfere, but he wisely left them all alone to wallow in "*Ghosts*" and to break the law. All who took part in the performance of "*Ghosts*" were liable to a fine of £50. Miss Kate Santley [the proprietor of the theatre], if the Act of Parliament means anything, loses her licence for permitting "*Ghosts*," for the performance of which play money was as much taken as it is for a subscription to the Italian Opera in the season.[646]

Part of the story is, however, that Scott three days before the premiere had contacted the Lord Chamberlain's office to have the production closed, but the office chose not to interfere with what they claimed was a private production.[647] Scott was not the only one who was disappointed with the Lord Chamberlain's decision not to interfere. This view was expressed in *The Era* on 21 March 1891, which not only claimed that the Lord Chamberlain had neglected his duty, but proceeded to pointed out what ought to have been done, warning the people who had taken part in the production that they rendered themselves liable to heavy penalties:

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[643] After indicating that the critics were overreacting, Peter Thomas makes the very straight forward argument about syphilis, and the horrible disease's bearing on the lives of the audience: 'Because inherited syphilis is one of the play's themes, *Ghosts* was anathema to middle-class Victorian moralizers. How many of them, one wonders, had relatives who suffered from the contemporary malady of 'general paralysis of the insane', which was tertiary syphilis, or inherited syphilis, by another name.' (Peter Thomas, 'The New Drama and the old Theatre' in *The Cambridge History of British Theatre*, vol. II, p. 405-421)

[644] Davis, 'The Independent Theatre Society's Revolutionary Scheme for an Uncommercial Theater'.

[645] Unsigned, 'Editorial', *Daily Telegraph*, 14 March 1891.

[646] Clement Scott, 'The Ibsen Folly', *Truth*, 19 March 1891, p. 601.

[647] Rem, *Henry Gibson/Henrik Ibsen*, p. 164.

> While, however, a Lord Chamberlain exists, and is entrusted with the control of our theatres, we think we have a right to call upon him to do his duty. That duty, we take it was neglected [...] The Lord Chamberlain [...] should have forbidden such a representation to take place in a theatre under his control and, being defied, should have set the law in motion to punish the offenders.[648]

The pressure exerted on the Independent Theatre in the press was not in vain. Faced with the possibility of losing its licence, the theatre that Grein had used for the productions of *Ghosts* decided to abandon further cooperation with the Independent Theatre.[649] This left Grein without a theatre and it proved impossible to find another which was willing to sublease its building to the association as long as they produced unlicensed plays. The consequence was that out of the plays that the Independent Theatre produced only *Ghosts* was staged without a licence form the Lord Chamberlain.

Hedda Gabler

Of the productions of 1891, *Hedda Gabler* was a key performance due to the success it experienced, but also proved central from the perspective of women's agency in promoting Ibsen's plays. As already mentioned, *Hedda Gabler* was produced by the actresses Merion Lea and Elizabeth Robins. Of the two, Robins proved to be the central agent as after her success in the role of Hedda she proceeded to stage other Ibsen plays. However, Robins' early career prior to her involvement with Ibsen's plays is also telling of the conditions which most actresses faced in late nineteenth century London theatre and may serve as a backdrop for her involvement.

In 1888, when Elizabeth Robins arrived in London, she was already an experienced actress. Born in Kentucky in 1855, she had tired of the trying life of a poor actress; on tours with the stock company 'Boston Museum' and other troupes, she claimed she had played some three hundred roles in various plays by the time she went to London.[650] Yet, her American career had suffered after she had secretly married a fellow actor, George Parks, from the company and as a consequence was dropped from the troupe. Park's intended that Robins, as a married woman, would retire from acting, but Robins was anxious to continue her career and took up acting with other companies. Their marriage became increasingly unhappy and financially strained, and eventually ended when Parks took his own life by hurling himself in the Charles River weighing himself down with a piece of stage armour.[651] Following her husband's premature death, Robins wished to leave the country and agreed to accompany a friend on a trip to Norway. Her friend was, by strange coincidence, the widow of Ole Bull, the famous Norwegian violinist, who more

[648] Unsigned notice, 'Theatrical Gossip', *The Era*, 21 March 1891.
[649] John Russell Stephens, *The Censorship of English Drama 1824-1901* (Cambridge; New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980), p. 143.
[650] Angela V. John, *Elizabeth Robins: Staging a Life*, (kindle edition) (The History Press, 2013), loc. 837 ff.
[651] Ibid., kindle loc. 930 ff.

than thirty years previously had hired Ibsen for the job of artistic manager for Bergen theatre.[652] After spending the summer in Norway, and learning a little Norwegian, Robins went to Britain.

Once in London, Robins sought to launch her career anew, which was no easy task as she was completely unknown in Britain. Chance would have it that Robins very early in her stay became acquainted with Oscar Wilde, who took it upon himself to help her. Initially, Wilde's help consisted of little more than disapproving of the parts which Robins were offered and on which she based her hopes, but eventually he ventured to introduce her to Tree at the Heymarket Theatre.[653] Beerbohm-Tree, like Wilde, appeared quite willing to help Robins, yet all Robins' dealings with the famous actor-manager would turn out to be disappointments. Already at their first encounter, Tree mentioned 'a play which was being written for him', which contained a 'woman's part that he had foreseen would be difficult to cast' – 'an unconventional part'.[654] Beerbohm-Tree's indications that here could indeed be a way in for Robins was enough to get her hopes up and make her stick to her resolution of staying in London. Much to her distress, however, the part never materialised. After much uneasy waiting on Robins' part, she was informed that the plans to produce the play, which turned out to be Henry Arthur Jones' *Judah*, had been dropped. Aside from a smaller part in a play and to be the understudy of Mrs Tree, who was the leading actress of the Heymarket Theatre, Robins' acquaintance with Tree did not bring her the possibilities for which she hoped. In the same way, her friendship with the influential Wilde never led to anything which might further her career. Although it is a personal story, Robins' struggle to find work in London was symptomatic of the difficult conditions which most actors and actresses faced. In terms of employment, it offered little security and even the poorly paid jobs were few and far between. For Robins more substantial work eventually came in the form of parts in run-of-the-mill melodramas, such as in the adaptation of the sentimental children's novel *Little Lord Fauntleroy* or *The Sixth Commandment*, Robert Buchanan's adaptation of *Crime and Punishment*.[655]

Robins encountered one of Ibsen's dramas for the first time when a friend took her to see *A Doll's House* in 1889. Not having heard of Ibsen beforehand, the performance amazed her, and the experience initiated Robins' long involvement with the Norwegian dramatist.[656] Initially, Robins had her mind set on producing *Ghosts*. An impulse for the project had come from the Norwegian Hans Brækstad, who tirelessly worked to promoted Scandinavian culture in Britain, and who at the time tried to put together an 'Ibsen Fund' to back the production of one of his plays. Brækstad had approached Robins and suggested she play the leading role in a play, preferably *Ghosts*, and help in preparing the production.[657] Though Robins had had her qualms about the play to begin with, she was eventually won over by the idea after reading about the

[652] Ibid., kindle loc. 1099.
[653] Powell, p. 152ff.
[654] Elizabeth Robins, *Both Sides of the Curtain*, pp, 27-28, quoted in Powell, p. 155.
[655] John, kindle loc. 5482.
[656] Robins, p. 9.
[657] Postlewait, p. 54ff.

successful production at Theatre Libre. After she had made up her mind about producing *Ghosts*, her first move was to approach Tree to inquire whether he would be willing to assist her by lending the Haymarket for a matinee production. Tree was forthcoming about the project, but as Robins related later in *Both Sides of the Curtain*, she soon realised that he envisioned himself in the role of Oswald. She found this idea absolutely ridiculous, but kept it to herself. Yet, Tree had one more condition for his involvement and that was that Archer, being the chief expert on Ibsen, should be consulted in connection with the production. It was therefore with a production of *Ghosts* in mind, and on Tree's request, that Robins first contacted the critic who was to play a major role in her life. The two met for the first time on 10 June 1890 to discuss Robins' proposal for a production. The meeting must have been successful, for already the same night Archer sent Robins a letter in which he outlined a possible cast for the production. At this time, however, the plans to produce *Ghosts* all came to nothing, as it turned out that Brækstad did not manage to find the means for his 'Ibsen Fund'. Yet, the connection between Robins and Archer was to have a great significance for the Ibsen productions to come.

In *Ibsen and the Actress* (1928) Robins gave an account of the initial steps which she, together with Marion Lea, took to bring *Hedda Gabler* to the stage:

> It was Marion Lea who first saw the opportunity in *Hedda Gabler* and invented our going to see Mr Heinemann, the publisher, to get the acting rights. That settled (provisionally to our finding a producer), we undertook to see the managers; but they were more difficult of access, so we wrote to them. We saw them ultimately and tried to persuade them that their indifference and their loathing were equally mistaken. We failed.[658]

According to Robins, it was Lea who ventured the idea that they themselves should produce the play. The problem, however, was that neither of them had funds for the project, and they had no backers. Eventually, they found a way to finance the play themselves: '... Marion had a jewelled bracelet and I [Robinson] had a small treasure that I could throw in the pot'.[659] With these things as security, they were able to borrow £300, and on this lean budget, they were able to take Vauduville Theatre for one week of matinees.

Robins and Lea's 'daring' attempt to produce *Hedda Gabler* as a self-financed production was advertised in an interview with the actress-managers on the front page of the *Pall Mall Gazette* on 20 April, the day of the premiere. To the actresses the interview presented an opportunity to influence the way in which the play was framed in the press. It is evident that they were concerned that the production was to be dismissed as another Ibsenite production, as they began the interview appealing not to be 'put down as "Ibsenites"':

> The interview was initiated by an "anxious petition" from Robinson and Lea not to be "put down as Ibsenites!". "Because we don't cut our hair short, and we don't wear green bed-gowns, and we don't rebel against baulked individuality, and that sort of thing. We don't, really". [660]

[658] Robins, p. 15.
[659] Ibid., p. 16.
[660] Unsigned Interview, 'The Latest Ibsen Experiment', *Pall Mall Gazette*, 20 April 1891.

The interviewer, who was evidently sympathetically inclined towards the production, hastened to add that he could see they 'did not' wear green bed-gowns, and in the interview he mused 'whether anybody ever did', and if the image of the Ibsenite was not all due to the *Daily Telegraph*.[21] Another hindrance that Robins and Lea faced in the interview was not due to the *Daily Telegraph*, but to Archer, who in the *Pall Mall Gazette*, in connection with the play's publication, had pronounced the play 'the most gloomy of Ibsen's works - worse, even, than *The Wild Duck*.'[661] To this the duo insisted that though the play is 'full of pessimism' it is relieved through 'sparkle and wit and humour' and passages 'brimming over with comedy'.[662]

The interview with Robins and Lea is telling of the difficulties which a production of Ibsen's plays faced at this point. The stereotype of the Ibsenite, in this case as the unwomanly 'new woman', and the general accusations of Ibsen's 'gloom', this time with Archer as the source, were pitfalls that had to be avoided if the production was to become a success outside the narrow audience which was already dedicated to Ibsen's plays. In spite of Archer's attention to detail and his recent rebuke of Gosse for his inaccurate translation of *Hedda Gabler*, he himself introduced a small but important omission in the play to the same effect, and removed the references to Hedda's pregnancy given in the first act. The omission was successful to the extent that Hedda's pregnancy did not become a topic in the reception, neither was the omission generally noticed. Only Scott in his review suggested that the play had been somewhat whitewashed, noting not only the removed references to the pregnancy but also that the 'suggestive thoughts' of judge Brack were kept in the background. 'The "master" was not allowed to talk exactly as he did at the outset', claimed Scott.[663] Yet, that the omission was required shows how the fact that Ibsen's dramas challenged established gender roles was to thought to be especially toxic to the play's general success.

The reception of *Hedda Gabler* in the press was mixed. There was much praise of the production, especially the acting, but in many newspapers the reviewers saw the play in light of the recent staging of *Ghosts* and focused on what they considered to be the plays preoccupation with pathology. A prominent feature of the reception, not least seen in relation

[21] An anonymous article under the heading 'Ibsenism' printed in *Freeman's Journal* 30 April 1891, the reader is given the following description of Ibsenites and Anti-Ibsenites who the reviewer can tell apart from one another, and were found in the foyer of the theatre: 'Even in the vestibule of the theatre one saw the signs of war. Animated and bitter discussion went on between groups of persons who were evidently critics; sneers were exchanged freely. You could tell which side was which among the partisans from their appearance; that is to say, you could certainly tell the Ibsenites. This lady, for example, with the short hair, the pince-nez glasses, the yellow neck, the powdered face, the sage-green velvet gown hanging loose, amorphous folds and held to her spare form by an æsthetic [sic] sash of peacock blue - she is without doubt an Ibsenite. You can perceive she is entirely "emancipated," and has arrived "at development" and you for one feel that, so far as you are considered, emancipated and free she shall remain.'

[661] Unsigned Interview, 'The Latest Ibsen Experiment'.
[662] Ibid.
[663] Clement Scott, 'Hedda Gabler', *Illustrated London News*, 25 April 1891, p. 551.

to Shaw's description of the genders' battle for the stage, was the reviews' description of Hedda as a strong female protagonist, the like of which was rarely seen in contemporary British drama. To some reviewers Hedda's character was swiftly explained by declaring her insane, for others, such as Scott, she was both fascinating and unsettling by the way in which she departed from the Victorian womanly ideal.

One of the newspapers that strongly recommended the play was *Derby Daily Telegraph*. Its London correspondent, who by the time of the review had been to the production twice, proclaimed it a success and claimed: 'Miss Elizabeth Robins and Miss Marion Lea, have in their own persons done more to convert the heathen to the Ibsen cult than all the articles for or against ever written'. The correspondent found that in the hands of the actresses Ibsen became 'not merely acceptable, but eminently presentable on our stage' and that they have done much to 'whitewash' Ibsen 'from the mud which was thrown at him on the recent production of *Ghosts*'.[664] Also, *The Era* featured another of the predominantly positive reviews in which it recommended 'hostile critics' to 'hide their heads, and even if they do not apologise for their past irreverence should in the future keep silent'.[665] Here, as in the majority of reviews, both positive and negative, it was the acting of Robins and Lea that persuaded the reviewer of the drama's merits.

In the press, the play was also greeted with the opposition which one had come to expect of an Ibsen production at this time. In *The Times*, for instance, Ibsen was again charged with being a scientist rather than a dramatist, concerned with pathology, who brought 'Hedda Gabler's insanity' before the audience.[666] Hedda, the reviewer claimed, 'is manifestly a lunatic of the epileptic class'.[667] The view the Hedda was in fact insane was echoed in *Spectator*:

> *Hedda Gabler* is the incarnation of intense selfishness, bordering upon madness; her morbid self-love and vanity have slowly developed into a dangerous mental disease, and finally transform her into a lunatic) of homicidal tendencies.[668]

In *The Times* the pathological elements made the reviewer agreed with what he found to be a general claim, namely, that the play was more acceptable than the previous ones. This he explained was 'the necessary consequence' of Hedda's madness, which 'precludes all discussion of the heroine's actions upon ethical grounds'.[669] Yet, notwithstanding the fact that the play was thought to be more acceptable viewing the play was still a pastime that the reviewer would rather forego:

> It has neither tears not laughter in its composition, being in its essentials merely a grim, gloomy exposure of the vanity, the pettiness, and to some extent the fatalism of human life. To conceive of

[664] Unsigned review, 'Hedda Gabler', *Derby Daily Telegraph*, 22 April 1891.
[665] Unsigned review, 'Hedda Gabler', *The Era*, 25 April 1891.
[666] Unsigned review, 'Hedda Gabler', *The Times*, 21 April 1891.
[667] Ibid.
[668] Unsigned review, 'Hedda Gabler at the Vaudeville', *Spectator*, 25 April 1891.
[669] Unsigned review, Hedda Gabler, *The Times*, 21 April 1891.

> the Ibsen drama gaining an extensive or permanent foothold on the stage is hardly possible. Playgoing would then cease to be an amusement and become a penance...[670]

The question of Ibsen's plays in relation to art was taken up in *The Saturday Review*, which asserted that 'if it [the providence of art] be to elevate and refine, as we have hitherto humbly supposed, most certainly it cannot be said that the works of Ibsen have the faintest claim to be artistic.'[671] Like the reviewer of *The Times*, *The Saturday Review* proclaimed that *Hedda Gabler* was better than the previous plays by Ibsen: 'It is free from the mess and nastiness of *Ghosts*, the crack-brained maunderings of *Rosmersholm*, the fantastic, shortsighted folly of *The Doll's House*...' Though the reviewer was quick to point out that this did not amount to a recommendation.

Even the most spiteful of the reviews, however, agreed on praising the acting. In a signed review printed in *Illustrated London News* Clement Scott came as close as ever to recommending one of Ibsen's plays. Following only a few introductory remarks, which served to invoke Ibsen's reputation for morbidity and gloom, Scott found much to praise: 'The audience was spellbound' he noted, the text had been 'carefully and conscientiously revised' and acting was 'a triumph of intellectual acting'.[672] For Robins' acting Scott was, like many others, all praise, but it was a praise which for the actress came at a price. Scott seems to indicate that Robins' success at portraying an unsympathetic role was somehow suggestive of her own character. Of Robins we learn that she has 'approached her task with artistic glee', that '[t]he character grew under the influence of the actress', observations, which seem innocent enough, but which are followed by a more explicit conclusion:

> ...Miss Elizabeth Robins has done what no doubt she fully intended to do. She has made vice attractive by her art. She has almost ennobled crime. She has stopped the shudder that so repulsive a creature should have inspired. She has glorified an unwomanly woman. She has made a heroine out of a sublimated sinner. She has fascinated us with a savage.[673]

When Scott confided: 'It is said there are such women in the world. There may be, but thank God they are the rare exception, not the rule!'[674] Readers may have wondered of whom he was thinking. This is, of course, suggestive of the editorial in *Daily Telegraph* in which it was claimed, most likely by Scott, that the Ibsenites were 'infecting the modern theatre with poison after desperately inoculating themselves and others.'[675] The way in which Scott framed Hedda Gabler may be understood through the term used by Kelly of the 'mimetic link' established between the role, the actress and the audience. In the case of Scott's reception of *Hedda Gabler* a very explicit connection between Robins and Hedda was established, which despite the praise of her acting with which it was mingled, was not very flattering to Robins who became imbued

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[670] Ibid.
[671] Unsigned notice, '(Notice)', *Saturday Review*, 25 April 1891, p. 498.
[672] Clement Scott, 'Hedda Gabler', *Illustrated London News*, 25 April 1891.
[673] Ibid.
[674] Ibid.
[675] Unsigned, 'Editorial', *Daily Telegraph,* 14 March 1891.

with all of Hedda's callous and malice. Scott's review was also indicative of the danger which he perceived in the production of Ibsen's plays, namely, that its worldview would be infectious. People already infected would pass it on to the audience, a risk which only grew when it was performed by an actress as persuasive as Robins.

The Year 1893

Like 1891, the year 1893 proved to be decisive to the promotion of Ibsen plays. Not only for its number of productions, but also for the growing acceptance of Ibsen's drama. The popularity of the shows proved that they attracted an audience beyond the small group of Ibsenites which hostile critics, such as Clement Scott, had repeatedly claimed were the only people to which the plays appealed. To this effect most notably Beerbohm-Tree's production at the Haymarket spoke, as it was the first production of an Ibsen play by a major actor-manager.[676] In spite of the fact that the attacks continued, 1893 has been defined as a turning point in the British reception of Ibsen's plays. After 1893, there followed a gradual acceptance of Ibsen's drama and a decline in frequency and ferocity of the attacks.[677]

The year saw three new productions and a number of revivals, two of which proved to be major theatrical events. The first was Elizabeth Robins' production of Ibsen's latest play, *The Master Builder* (1892), which was met with some of the same success as *Hedda Gabler*. The other was Herbert Beerbohm-Tree's *An Enemy of the People* at the Haymarket. Besides the production of *The Master Builder*, Robins organised a series of productions based on subscription, which for two weeks ran a repertoire of four plays: *Rosmersholm*, *Hedda Gabler*, *The Master Builder* and Act IV of *Brand*. Robins starred herself in all of these. *Brand* was yet another British premiere, but the play had proven too expensive to stage in its totality, given the limited funds from the subscription.[678] Furthermore, the year saw a revival of *A Doll's House* by Achurch and Charrington and the Independent Theatre Society returned with its production of *Ghosts*.

The Master Builder

Perhaps the most important production of the year was *The Master Builder*. Like *Hedda Gabler*, the play was produced by Elisabeth Robins, though this time in cooperation with the actor Herbert Waring, as Marion Lea in the meantime had returned to the United States. However, before bringing on board Waring, Robins had taken the play to Tree at the Haymarket, as she

[676] Postlewait, p. 113.
[677] See, for example, Rem, *Henry Gibson/Henrik Ibsen*, p. 26 and Egan, p. 3. Egan writes of the end of the controversy: 'For three or four years, say between June 1889 and June 1893, the argument was genuinely bitter and in the balance. Thereafter, following the triumph of Beerbohm Tree's *An Enemy of the People*, it died gradually away until by the turn of the century Ibsen's genius was universally acknowledged.'
[678] Postlewait, p. 112.

had done when she first intended to produce *Ghosts*. Like on the previous occasion, Tree was inclined to produce the play, but on the condition that he was to play the leading role of Solness and that the play be lifted out of its 'sordid provincialism' by making the people English and the Master Builder a sculptor.[679] To this Robins could not agree. Eventually, Waring took the part as Solness and the play was not produced at the Haymarket, but at the Trafalgar Square Theatre, being partly financed by a secret backer whom Waring brought along.[680] What made the production of *The Master Builder* similar to *Hedda Gabler* on an organisational level was not only that it was planned and financed by the actors, or partly financed, but due to Archers involvement in the preparations.

In *Ibsen and the Actress*, Robins publicly acknowledged Archer's big part in shaping the production:

> Standing guard over Ibsen's interests, at every rehearsal, notebook in hand, a kind of Recording Angel setting down our sins of omission or commission, was William Archer. Nothing escaped him, from the slightest inflection of voice, the significance of the smallest gesture or most fleeting expression, up to the crescendo of a climax or the capital crime of the smallest alteration of the text – nothing escaped his notebook.[681]

It was, however, not only this production that Archer helped shape, and Archer and Robins together were a great driving force in the staging of Ibsen's plays in Britain. As already pointed out in connection with *A Doll's House*, Archer's practice of attending rehearsals and coaching, if not directing the actors, which Robins here describes in connection to *The Master Builder*, he is known to have carried out in connection with many of the productions with which he was affiliated. According to Postlewait, Archer in this way had a hand in not only *A Doll's House*, but also Grein's *Ghosts* and to a lesser degree, Florence Farr's *Rosmersholm* from 1891.[682] It was, however, especially the productions organised by Robins, with whom he had a longstanding and very well hidden relationship following his involvement in *Hedda Gabler*, which he directed in this way. Thus he directed, or co-directed with Robins, besides *Hedda Gabler* and *The Master Builder*, the play *Little Eyolf*, produced in 1896, before they entered into a more formalised cooperation by founding New Century Theatre Co. that produced *John Gabriel Borkman* in 1897. The collaboration between Robins and Archer lasted until the end of the century when Robins returned to the United States, but did not include Ibsen's last play, *When We Dead Awaken*, which was translated by Archer and published in 1899.

Notwithstanding the fact that the reception of *The Master Builder* followed to the old patterns of attacks and defences, Ibsen's overall standing in the field of theatre was slowly ascending. The plays were still met with fierce resistance, and for *The Master Builder* it was primarily the play's symbolism which offended the opposition and led reviewers to proclaim the play

[679] Robins, p. 40.
[680] Postlewait p. 102
[681] Robins, p. 42.
[682] Postlewait, p. 11ff.

completely incomprehensible.[683] The production gave Archer the opportunity to add to his compilation of abuse from the press, which he published as 'The Mausoleum of Ibsen' in which he followed his earlier pattern.[684] Yet, as Egan has pointed out, even in the negative reception there were trends which pointed towards the abandonment of mere abuse and towards an attempt to understand the play.[685] The reviewer in *Spectator* addressed the controversy arguing that it was impossible to attempt criticism of Ibsen and at the same time ignore the on-going battle.

> One cannot remain blind to the fact that the Norwegian dramatist is regarded by a small section of the reading public as one of the greatest writers of the day, almost, indeed, as a prophet with a divine message, and by another—and rather larger section—as a half-crazed imposter, whose writings, if they have any meaning at all, can only be looked upon as the lamentable ravings of criminal lunacy… [686]

The reviewer claimed that he could not in 'good faith' believe some of the hostility against Ibsen. For though some of his critics should 'abhor both his matter and his method is more than possible; that they should fail to discover any meaning in the man at all, and can really look upon his plays as sheer drivelling rubbish, is hardly credible.'[687]

> It is useless to deny that the man is possessed of a strange dramatic force and intensity, a weird and startling imagination, and an unrivalled power of laying bare and dissecting the evil side of human nature, or the accidental disease of a single human soul; and not only that, but that he has also the secret of presenting the problems of human doubt and misery in such a form as to arrest irresistibly the attention and set to work the imagination of his readers.[688]

Though this argument was not shared by other critics it encapsulated the direction of future criticism pointed to by Egan that though it was still possible to dislike Ibsen's plays and disagree with his proponents, it became increasingly difficult merely to dismiss him as a raving lunatic.

An Enemy of the People

In many papers the reviewers went out of their way to explain that though *An Enemy of the People* was a play by Ibsen, it was not what was expected by the notorious Norwegian.

> Those who had no previous acquaintance with Ibsen's *The Enemy of the People*, and who saw that play at this theatre yesterday afternoon, cannot have failed to experience a sensation of surprise, for the name of Ibsen in this country has hitherto been associated with work which is full of enigmas and obscurities, intelligible only to the elect, and here we have a play which everybody can understand.[689]

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[683] Ibid., p. 108.
[684] Archer, 'The Mausoleum of Ibsen'.
[685] Egan, p. 21.
[686] Unsigned review, 'Ibsen's Last Play', *Spectator*, 4 March 1893.
[687] Unsigned review, 'Ibsen's Last Play'.
[688] Ibid.
[689] Unsigned review, 'An Enemy of the People', *The Times*, 15 June 1893.

Even Archer may be seen to affirm this interpretation, claiming the play to be no more than a 'well-made play' in the true sense of the word, which he thought showed that Ibsen 'could rank not only as a great dramatist but as a skilful playwright.'[690] Yet, this was taken as clear evidence that Archer thought less highly of this than Ibsen's other plays. The fact that the play was not thought to be 'obscure' was then used in reviews to account for the claim that the Ibsenites did in fact dislike the play, and the *London Standard* could report 'It is understood that the disciples of Mr. Ibsen have no great opinion of the play, which has to them the demerit of being at least comprehensible…'[691] This was a notion which was also developed in *The Times*.

As already suggested in connection with *The Master Builder*, it is evident from the way in which *An Enemy of the People* was reviewed that Ibsen by this time was in the process of gaining a status no matter what the individual reviewer thought of his plays. One example is to be found in the magazine *Theatre*'s review of the play, in which the reviewer stated: 'It is not very often that an actor improves upon his author when the latter is a genius. But Mr. Beerbohm Tree has done it.'[692] Despite referring to Ibsen as a 'genius', it is evident that the reviewer himself was no Ibsenite, claiming that the drama in itself was 'rather tedious', and found the seriousness of Ibsen's plays dull. This notwithstanding, the somewhat equivocal use of 'genius' must still be seen as a step up from Clement Scott who only two years previously had flatly declared Ibsen to be a 'bungler'.[693] This is evident from the improvements, for which he commended Tree, which were all aimed at making the play less severe by introducing a comic or tragic-comic element.

> Stockmann becomes such a simplehearted, big-souled fellow, that the history of his hopeless fight and inevitable downfall assumes the look of a political contest—in which when the fight is done, hands are shaken, friendships renewed, and hard words and knocks forgotten.[694]

The effect of the alterations seems to also have been that the social criticism was mollified, yet this does not appear to have troubled the reviewer. Rather, he thought that the tragic-comic elements lessened 'the "suburbanism" of Ibsen, as it is called', by way of which he referred to the general charges of suburbanism that he found 'would become the more pronounced by the vigorous application of grey earnestness'.[695]

Tree's production at the Haymarket may be seen as yet another landmark on the road to a general acceptance of Ibsen's plays and the eventual consecration. It had been one of the opposition's recurring claims that Ibsen's plays would fail when confronted with an ordinary audience. With Beerbohm-Tree's production it was proven that that was not the case. During the month of June the play was performed seven times, first as a matinee and then moved into

[690] William Archer, 'An Enemy of the People', in *The Theatrical World of 1893* (London: Walter Scott, 1894), p. 165. Originally printed in the magazine *The World* 21 June 1893.
[691] Unsigned review, 'An Enemy of the People', *London Standard*, June 1893.
[692] Unsigned notice, '(Notice: An Enemy of the People)', *Theatre*, 1 July 1893.
[693] Archer quoting Scott in: Archer, 'Ghosts and Gibberings'.
[694] Unsigned notice, '(Notice: An Enemy of the People)'.
[695] Ibid.

the evening schedule. It had passed its test, even though it did not amount to a long run, and Tree kept it in his repertoire. In his review of the play, Archer made a point of the fact that Ibsen for the first time had been taken up by one of the big actor-managers, and related that he who was held to be 'a notorious Ibsenite' had to be congratulated that 'Ibsen [had] at last received the sanction, not to say consecration, of the acceptance at the hands of an actor-manager'[696] Yet for this, Archer claimed, he did not care 'a jot'. Ibsen, he claimed, had not suffered from the lack of actor-manager patronage, save perhaps in pecuniary profits.[697] Given his long struggle for a new drama and a theatre beyond one guided by commercial interests, it is hardly surprising that Archer thought that Ibsen could do without the actor-managers, and in a sense he was right.

Neither Tree's production of *An Enemy of the People*, nor the success of the proceeding niche productions, led to any commercial breakthrough for Ibsen's plays in British theatres. There was a large distance from the British breakthrough to the way in which Ibsen and his plays were celebrated in Scandinavia and the boom in the productions of the commercial and established theatres in the late 1880s in Germany. Rather, Ibsen's plays continued for the remainder of the decade to be niche productions organised by people on the edge of the theatrical market, such as Robinson, Achurch and Charrington, Grein and Archer himself. Where Ibsen's plays triumphed was in paving the way for a literary English drama and the continual existence of niche theatres prepared to produce these. But first and foremost, the theatrical productions, though successful in their own right, paved the way for the breakthrough of Ibsen's plays in print.

The Ibsen campaign, the Ibsen controversy, and publishing

The struggle to bring Ibsen's plays to the stage in London was, as we have seen, a series of parallel yet independent undertakings, which to a large extent involved a number of the same people in shifting constellations. Viewed in a grand scope, it makes sense to talk of a campaign, and certainly the contemporary oppositions had no qualms about grouping everybody who had even the faintest connection with Ibsen's plays under one heading and accusing them of being Ibsenists. Yet, in terms of agency it is evident that what has been considered a campaign was more a series of theatrical productions which only had in common that they shared Ibsen's plays and differed from what was usually staged at the West End theatres. The individual productions should also be considered in connection with the other projects in which the principal agents were involved and the specific context in which they originated and not merely a campaign for Ibsen. The importance to stress the plurality of perspective in the Ibsen campaign occurs because it differs from the very convincing way in which Postlewait, in the *Prophet on the New Drama*, has displayed Archer as Ibsen's chief 'campaigner'. With great skill Postlewait has shown the way in which Archer, besides being the main translator and arguably the most fervent

[696] Archer, 'An Enemy of the People', p. 162.
[697] Ibid.

campaigner for Ibsen in the press, also had a hand in a large range of the most successful Ibsen productions of the nineteenth century. Archer's involvement should, however, not obscure the involvement of other agents nor the fact that Archer's vision of Ibsen and the new drama was not the only factor which advanced the movement known as the Ibsen campaign.

In terms of staging Ibsen's plays, it is important to note that many of the performances were the result of the agency of a small number of people and groups of people, who worked together in various constellations. William Archer, as already mentioned, had, in one way or another, a hand in most of the productions of the 1880s and 1890s. Besides being the translator and reviewing many of the productions, he played an active role behind the scenes rehearsing with the actors and in some cases filling the function of a modern day director. Janet Achurch and Charles Charrington were a pair with lasting importance to the early introduction of Ibsen's plays not only in Britain but in the British Empire. After the initial success of *A Doll's House* in London they staged the play a number of times throughout their tour to the Antipodes. After their return to Britain, the couple sought to revive the play over the next decade. Achurch also appeared in the role of Nora a number of times both in London and on tours.[698] After the first production in which Charrington had appeared in the role of Dr. Rank, he began to play Helmer to his wife's Nora. Though Achurch became famous as Nora she appeared in other Ibsen plays such as The *Lady from the Sea*[699] and *Little Eyolf*.[700] Contrary to Achurch, Charrington seems only to have appeared in the Independent Theatre Society's production of *The Wild Duck* (1897) besides the productions of *A Doll's House* he did with his wife.[701]

Elizabeth Robins was, together with Janet Achurch, one of the most important British Ibsen actresses of the nineteenth century. Already before Robins' production of Hedda Gabler, she had appeared in two early productions: in a one-off matinee of *Pillars of Society* at Opera Comique in July 1889[702], which featured W.H. Vernon in the role as consul Bernick, and she played Mrs Linde in Marie Fraser's unsuccessful attempt to revive *A Doll's House* in January 1891.[703] Following the landmark production of *Hedda Gabler* in April 1891 she went on to organise the first production of *The Master Builder* in February 1893,[704] a revival of *Rosmersholm* in May 1893[705], and produced the fourth act of *Brand* in July that same year. In November 1896 she organised the first production of *Little Eyolf*[706], a production which brought

[698] Achurch played Nora both at the Royalty Theatre in March 1893, (Repertoire Database), and in connection with various other tours which is evident from an interview that she gave to the *Dundee Courier* during a tour with the Independent theatre company. Here she stated: 'I have played Ibsen nearly all around the world and have always had a good audience'. (Unsigned Interview, '(Interview with Janet Achurch)', *Dundee Courier*, 3 August 1897.)
[699] Repertoire Database: http://ibsen.nb.no/id/11158425. (Accessed 28 March 2015)
[700] Repertoire Database: http://ibsen.nb.no/id/27697. (Accessed 28 March 2015)
[701] Repertoire Database: http://ibsen.nb.no/id/74075. (Accessed 28 March 2015)
[702] Repertory Database: http://ibsen.nb.no/id/11141953. (Accessed 28 March 2015)
[703] Repertoire Database: http://ibsen.nb.no/id/11116178. (Accessed 28 March 2015)
[704] Repertoire Database: http://ibsen.nb.no/id/35086. (Accessed 28 March 2015)
[705] Repertoire Database: http://ibsen.nb.no/id/42519. (Accessed 28 March 2015)
[706] Repertoire Database: http://ibsen.nb.no/id/27697. (Accessed 28 March 2015)

her together with renowned Ibsen actresses such as Janet Achurch and Florence Farr. The last British premiere which she produced was *John Gabriel Borkman,* which premiered in May 1897.[707] In this play she again played opposite W.H. Vernon, with whom she had acted with in *Pillars of Society* in 1889. Robins great significance in promoting Ibsen's plays lay not only in the fact that she, as Hedda Gabler and Hilde Wangle in *The Master Builder*, embodied some of the most celebrated of Ibsen's characters and, thus, convinced even opponents such as Clement Scott that Ibsen's plays could indeed be performed on the British stages with success, but in the great organisational effort which lay in bringing these plays to production.

The history of the Ibsen controversy

In the historiography on the Ibsen controversy there has been a tendency to perceive it from the perspective of the winning side, taking over the view that the people opposing Ibsen's plays were hysterical, ridiculous or simply incapable of understanding the plays. At this point in the thesis, it is easy to recognise a pattern in how paradigmatic shifts in the cultural fields were so successful that previously dominant positions were either repressed (Clemens Peters in Denmark) or seized to qualify as valid positions, and were framed as an inability to comprehend, as in the cases of Scott, Buchanan and the conservative German critics. This mode of framing the opposition already happened at the time as Archer's articles illustrated, for instance. As I have already shown, the very strong outcry in the press which followed the production of *Ghosts* has in the historiography almost exclusively been interpreted as an overreaction. Although the view is dominant, it has a very weak explanatory power, and in some instances this has led to alternative or supplementing explanations being looked for.[708] The underlying problem with the notion has, however, not been addressed.

In keeping with my approach, where I apply multiple perspectives on Ibsen's way to a breakthrough, I will argue that the view of Ibsen's opponents as hysterical, ridiculous and backwards should be abandoned altogether. It is unproductive from a multifaceted perspective to look at the moral outcry and the critics who opposed Ibsen in this way because the illogical connotations, which have been attributed to reactions, have served to justify the dismissal of them as historical agents worthy of analysis. It is important to note, as I have already shown, that this was the impression which Archer very efficiently conveyed in the series of articles in which he compiled the worst instances of abuse levelled at Ibsen's plays. In these articles, Archer aimed to show the inconsistency of the accusations, a famous example being the visual

[707] Repertoire Database: http://ibsen.nb.no/id/25404. (Accessed 28 March 2015)

[708] This view, however, has been challenged by Sara Jan who has argued that 'The "passionate horrors" (as Shaw put it) evoked by *Ghosts* cannot be explained by ignorance and prudery alone, but resulted from the play's satiric relevance and accuracy, its power enhanced by its theatrical context.' (Jan, p. 160-161). Tracy C. Davis, in relation to the *Ghosts* production, has also challenged the notion that it was not the critics ineptness to understand Ibsen which caused the outcry, but was supplementing explanations for the moral outcry which greeted *Ghosts*. See Kelly.

horrors that some critics in their review claimed to have witnessed, which, Archer showed, were actually not in the play. In later defences for Ibsen, such as the essay 'Henrik Ibsen: Philosopher or Poet?' (1905), he sought to refute the claim that Ibsen promoted any form of doctrine in his plays. In both instances, Archer constructed a rather narrow context for the 'proper' understanding of the plays, one, it should be noted, closely connected to his own usage of Ibsen, but which did not allow for the (not necessarily illogical) inferences of the audience nor other usages of Ibsen's plays. Seen in a larger context than the one that Archer allowed for, however, the frequent accusations of immorality, socialism and feminism appear more well-founded.

Furthermore, it must be remembered that Archer's perspective on Ibsen's plays was not the only perspective available at the time amongst Ibsen's British supporters and some of them, such as George Bernard Shaw, were quite ready to turn the plays into an ideology and spread the gospel. In the essay 'The Real Ibsen', which appeared in 1906, long after the controversy of the 1890s had subsided, Archer looked back at what he conceived to have been the misconceptions of Ibsen's plays and found that some of the fault did indeed rest with Ibsen's supporters:

> Nor must I omit to mention among sources of misunderstanding the facile hero-worship of those who saw in *A Doll's House* a sort of Woman's Rights manifesto, and hailed Ibsen as the preacher of a social, one may almost say social-democratic, gospel. I am the last to deny that Ibsen has in some measure suffered from ignorant enthusiasm, as well as from ignorant obloquy.[709]

A first step in transcending the perspective offered to us by Archer is to acknowledge that there were different usages of Ibsen's plays at the time. Just as Ibsen's supporters were attracted to Ibsen's plays for different reasons, the critics who opposed them did so for various reasons, and only some of them had narrowly to do with the plays. This is where Katherine Kelly's aforementioned concept of counter-publics becomes useful, because it points to the link between the artistic and the socio-political which co-existed in the Ibsen movement.[710] Drawing on the enlarged context proposed by Kelly, it therefore becomes possible to view the plays as more than a way of transforming theatrical practices, though I have identified this as Archer's project, but that they were also important in sustaining larger counter-discourses. Keeping in mind that this was part of the plays' significance in Britain in the 1890s is crucial when it comes to understanding the reactions to Ibsen's plays. This notion I find is supported by an observation made by Michael Egan, who as I have shown was otherwise quick to dismiss Clement Scott's position, but who also realises the need for further explanations of the controversy.

> It is this, [Ibsen's attack on established institutions 'posing disturbing questions and demanding a 'troubled response'] to my mind, which underlies the fear experienced by many of Ibsen's contemporaries, which accounts for what I described earlier as their apprehension that the future of civilization itself might be at stake. He appeared to threaten the destiny of their modern bourgeois

[709] William Archer, 'The Real Ibsen', *International Monthly*, 3 February 1901.
[710] Kelly p. 12, Notwithstanding that Kelly carries an important point, she generally forms the assumption that Ibsenism was one specific thing, rather taking her own idea of counter-publics as a point of departure I think that multiple usages of Ibsen's plays is necessary.

> world by challenging its central ideologies and institutions. This is why he was repeatedly accused of socialism.[711]

I think that Egan is right in diagnosing the underlying fear in the response to the plays. Yet, rather than tracing the root of the fear to an 'Ibsen who appeared to threaten', which I think reflects his somewhat presentist perspective, one only needs to point to many of the agents who promoted Ibsen's plays to find people who most certainly challenged well-established institutions. In other words, there was nothing 'seeming' about the challenge of the socialists, the new women, the fabians and the young critics in their 'cheap literary suits'. When Ibsen was seen to be a determined socialist was it not least because his dramas were used by determined socialists such as Marx, Aveling and Shaw? Furthermore, for critics such as the 'infamous' Scott and Buchanan, the challenge from the critics and playwrights amongst Ibsen's supporters was a personal threat to their position in the cultural field to the extent that it involved the risk of being ousted by the younger generation. Seen in this light it is not so very strange that they, like Shaw described it, in the same way as Krogstad would 'fight for their position in the bank – fight as if for life itself.'[712]

[711] Egan, p. 13
[712] Shaw, 'Is Mr. Buchanan a Critic With a Wooden Head?'.

Conclusion

The transfer process

The thesis has analysed the dissemination of Ibsen's drama to Denmark, Germany and Britain from the perspective of cultural transfer theory. The scope of the investigation has in each case been the time from the first transfer to the time Ibsen's plays were established as a permanent part of local theatre. The focal points of the analysis have been the agents who took part in the transfer process, the cultural markets (book and theatre) by which the drama was appropriated, and the local cultural fields into which they were integrated. The way in which the case studies followed each other described the gradual diffusion of Ibsen's plays and reflected a chronological progress both in relation to the overall transfer process and in Ibsen's work. In the following, I will attempt to conclude on some of the key elements across the three case studies, before returning to the theoretical framework to inquire how the insights from present investigation may be used to develop the theory. Here I analyse the question of why transfers take place seen in the light of the notion of superiority, to be found in some accounts of cultural transfers, versus the versatility that may be argued to drive the transfer of Ibsen's plays. Finally, I return to the theoretical dichotomy of centre and periphery and analyse it in relation to the insights gained from the study of the transfer of Ibsen's plays.

Ibsen's dramas and cultural markets

In relation to explanations that tend to focus on the plays' successful dissemination due to a presupposed aesthetic superiority, it is important to note that the book markets and the theatrical markets were decisive in shaping the transfer of the drama. In his research on Ibsen in Britain, Tore Rem has, as noted above, demonstrated the significantly different lives that Ibsen's plays led as book and as theatre. My investigation has shown that this was true for the Scandinavian and German book markets as well. It must, however, be observed that there were marked differences in how the markets in the three countries operated in relation to Ibsen's drama. Much of the difference was down to the question of whether the plays were protected by copyrights, but some were related to the different market structures, such as for example the wholly commercial British theatre market, and the plays inclusion in the popular cheap edition series outside Scandinavia.

There were many implications of the existing copyright legislation: most notably in regard to publishing, it limited the number of publishers in the places in which copyrights were in place, which was the case amongst the Scandinavian countries and in Britain after Heinemann started publishing Ibsen's plays before they came out in Denmark. To Ibsen the fact that his work was protected by copyrights when it was published by Gyldendal was of decisive importance to his

career. It meant that he personally was able to capitalise on the success that his plays experienced as books across Scandinavia, something that enabled him to work fulltime as an author. This income from Gyldendal was therefore crucial and continued to be so for a large part of his career. This income was first supplemented more substantially after the Scandinavian theatres started to remunerate his plays according to the rate offered native drama, as we have seen in connection with the Danish Royal Theatre. For Ibsen first the general absence of copyright agreements and later the absence of any effective way to use copyrights abroad meant that throughout his career he primarily relied on Scandinavia to sustain him financially.

Comparing the cultural markets across the three case studies makes it possible to discover differences in the cultural markets, which conditioned the transfer of Ibsen's plays. The theatrical markets in the three case studies were especially different. One of the most pronounced difference was the absence of publicly endowed theatres in Britain. This may have narrowed the overall aesthetic outlook of the theatres, as the financial risks involved in the running of a theatre were high and something which breaking with convention would only increase. It may be seen as symptomatic of the British market that many of the people who backed the Independent Theatre Society and who knew continental theatre, such as William Archer, campaigned for an endowed theatre. It should, however, be noted that in both Denmark and Germany the same criticism was levelled at the endowed national and court theatres which were charged with being aesthetically stagnant, by people such as Schlenther and Brandes. In addition, the theatrical market of Copenhagen proved something of an exception due to the sole rights to perform serious drama held by the Royal Theatre. Though the monopoly was broken at times, also in connection with Ibsen drama, this profoundly shaped the transfer.

With regard to the theatrical diffusion some overall patterns emerge when the three case studies are compared: the first is that none of Ibsen's historical dramas were produced by British theatres before the turn of the century. On the whole Ibsen's early plays were the more vulnerable part of his oeuvre and proved less capable of being taken up abroad. There may have been a number of explanations for this: Ibsen's early work may have been viewed as aesthetically weaker and the topic may have been found to be less appealing to the groups of people involved in producing Ibsen's plays. Furthermore, the historical dramas were more demanding to stage in terms of costumes and decorations and most often required a larger cast than did the contemporary problem plays, which proved successful. Nonetheless, a number of the historical dramas such as *The Pretenders* and *The Viking of Helgeland* were staged in both Denmark and Germany. In Germany, the historical dramas were primarily produced in the brief space of time between their appearance in translation in 1876 and the publication of the very much more popular *Pillars of Society* in 1878. It is also noteworthy that while the historical dramas were staged by provincial court theatres, *Pillars of Society* was produced primarily by commercial theatres. This pattern in the German theatrical market in the early appropriation of Ibsen's plays may be down to the fact that Ibsen's historical plays appealed to court theatres' more conservative repertoire of historical drama and the production of classics. It should,

however, be noted that many German court and city theatres took up the same plays as the commercial theatres as Ibsen's popularity grew.

Of all of Ibsen's plays, the productions of *Ghosts* in the small free theatres, which followed in the wake of the creation of André Antoine's Parisian Theatre Libre, most visibly contributed to the development of the theatrical markets. Though the model in both the case of Freie Bhühne and the Independent Theatre Society came from Antoine's theatre, it was the production of *Ghosts* that initiated the construction of both the German and English theatres and which became a symbol of the movement. Although the particular associations were met with varying degrees of success and did not last in the long-run, they were important ways of voicing a discontent with the limitations in the theatrical market in terms of commercialism and censorship, which was taken up by other avant-garde or niche theatrical undertakings. Even though the difficulties of bringing *Ghosts* to production in Denmark did not spawn an independent theatre, the circumstances surrounding August Lindberg's production were in many ways similar to those which productions faced in Berlin and London. From the success of Lindberg's production it also became evident that there indeed was an audience for this new radical turn in dramatic art. In this way, Lindberg's production may be seen as part of the movement that pushed for a liberalisation of the theatrical market in Copenhagen, and which culminated in the abolition of the Royal Theatre's monopoly in 1889. To sum up, it may be said that *Ghosts* in all three case studies contributed to a greater differentiation of the local theatrical markets, as well as gathering an audience which sought a theatrical experience radically different from what was otherwise offered. In this way, the free theatres' productions of *Ghosts* may be seen as forerunners for avant-garde theatre as well as theatre with an explicit social and political agenda of such playwrights as for example Gerhart Hauptman and George Bernard Shaw.

The transfer process and agency

Throughout the investigation of the dissemination of Ibsen's work, a guiding question has been who were the agents of the transfer? As I have shown over the course of the thesis, the process involved in the transfer required a variety of functions to be filled, which were all important in successfully bringing Ibsen's drama to a new audience. The agency behind the transfer, however, has to some extent been seen to vary across the three case studies. Part of the difference in agency depended on what functions proved crucial in a local context to initiate a successful transfer at a specific time. Thus, agency was not only required to transfer Ibsen's drama to the respective cultural markets, but also in order to ensure that they were successfully integrated into the local fields of culture. The number of agents involved in the transfer has also been seen to vary across the cases. The number of agents involved depended on factors such as copyright, which excluded competing transfers, and a factor such as the number of competent translators. Before I turn to a brief overview of the prevailing strands of transfer, one must

remember that the many transfer attempts which for various reasons remained unsuccessful and therefore apt to be forgotten, were also part of the history of the transfer of Ibsen's plays.

The transfer to Denmark stands out in relation to the transfer to Germany and Britain as Ibsen, most notably together with Bjørnson, was active in the process. It hinged on securing Ibsen's affiliation with Gyldendal and the eventual admittance of his plays to the Royal Theatre. After Gyldendal became Ibsen's publisher, Frederik Hegel became Ibsen's primary middleman not only by publishing his work, but also in assisting Ibsen by mediating between him and Danish theatres. Compared to Germany and Britain, Denmark stands out as it was the only one of the three countries in which Ibsen had the possibility to fully control the rights to his works. Despite the success which Ibsen's reading dramas experienced in print and the close ties between Danish and Norwegian culture, a relatively high degree of resistance to stage the plays should be noted on behalf of the Royal Theatre. Initially, the resistance took the form of a refusal to stage Ibsen's plays and later in relation to remunerating him for the production of his works. The resistance of the Royal Theatre did not reflect the general outlook of the general audience, but was an expression of the views of a very small number of key agents who controlled the Danish national stage. In this respect, it reveals how key agents given the right conditions may efficiently resist cultural transfers. The steps he took towards securing the transfer of his plays to Denmark was arguably Ibsen's most forceful action in securing a larger audience for his plays and must be seen in contrast to later appropriations of his work, which largely relied on other people's agency.

The transfer to Germany was more complex than the one to Denmark. The need for translation and the absence of copyrights meant a proliferation of agents involved in the process. The first attempts to introduce Ibsen's dramas in Germany were unconnected, originated outside Ibsen's control, and were generally unsuccessful. The one exception was Adolf Strodtmann whose more successful translations were part of his broader attempt to introduce Scandinavian culture to Germany. Ibsen's own attempt to promote his own plays in Germany quite possibly followed a specific opportunity to have his plays produced in Munich, which arose through the personal network he acquired after he moved to the city. In publishing, the most efficient dissemination of Ibsen's plays was made by Reclam Verlag, something which soon eclipsed Ibsen's attempt to market his own plays. This transfer, I have argued, should not be seen as a specific transfer of Ibsen's dramas, but as being part of a more general commercial appropriation of Scandinavian literature for the company's cheap edition series. Similarly, Ibsen's first great theatrical success with *Pillars of Society* may be seen as a continuation of Bjørnson's success with his play, *A Bankruptcy*. A specific appropriation of Ibsen's work was made by the German naturalists who claimed them to be aesthetically superior and saw them as pointing out the direction for the future of German drama. The agency of naturalists such as Brahm and Schlenther, but also the publisher S. Fischer Verlag, became accentuated due to the resistance with which Ibsen's plays, particularly *Ghosts*, were met. Even though the naturalists' promotion

of Ibsen's dramas was primarily a niche undertaking, it fostered a general popular interest in Ibsen's plays which was supported through the mainstream book and theatre markets.

The agency involved in the transfer to Britain was more narrowly focused than the transfer to Germany. Though the appropriation of Ibsen's plays was not restricted by copyrights, only a relatively limited number of translations emerged, and the early attempts to introduce Ibsen through articles were limited. What is significant about the English transfer is that Ibsen was not more than nominally involved and that the effective transfer attempts all originated outside mainstream theatre. Despite the fact that the theatrical appropriation of Ibsen's works involved a considerable number of agents who each was involved in various productions, the appropriations that followed the production of *A Doll's House* in 1889 has largely been framed as a single campaign for the promotion of Ibsen's plays. In my investigation of the agency involved in the theatrical appropriation, I have stressed both the individuality and the interconnectedness of early productions. Though there indisputably were people, such as William Archer, who were central to the promotion of Ibsen's drama, the general interconnectedness must be seen as due to the fact that many of the people who were interested in drama outside mainstream theatre, and who at various times converged in the production of one of Ibsen's plays, belonged to relatively few interconnected social circles. Thus, the Ibsen boom in theatre may be seen as a local London phenomenon, which branched out through tours and the surprising interest in Ibsen's published dramas.

Cultural transfers: superiority and versatility

In the three case studies we have seen that countless agents were part of the transfer of Ibsen's plays, but why transfer anything in the first place? Despite the fact that this is a central question to all investigations of cultural transfers, relatively little is written on it compared to the abundance of reflections on the process of transfer and the problems of how it can be delimited.

In some of the theory on cultural transfers, one finds the notion that transfers are motivated by what is perceived to be a 'gap' in the receiving culture and the notion that the object of transfer is superior to what already exists in the receiving context.[713] These notions are absolutely fundamental to understanding transfers, yet they are potentially open to reproducing the problem of presentism, which I have repeatedly encountered in the literature on the reception of Ibsen's drama. Here the view has been that Ibsen's plays were superior to the drama which already existed in the given context, such as the commercial English plays. As I have shown in connection with the British reception of Ibsen's dramas, the view that they were superior was already promoted at the time, yet when they are taken over in the historiography they become

[713] See for example: Philipp Ther, 'Comparisons, Cultural Transfers and the Study of Networks: Towards a Transnational History of Europe', in *Comparative and Transnational History: Central European Approaches and New Perspectives* (Berghahn Books, 2009), pp. 207–208; Middell, 'European History and Cultural Transfer', p. 26.

presentist, to the extent that the other views that existed at the time are not presented. The same is potentially the problem with the notion of a 'gap' in the receiving context. Here the fact that something prevailed in a long-term perspective is used to indicate that it was inherently superior. In relation to the early dissemination of Ibsen's plays these problems are especially pertinent due to the subsequent canonisation of his work. Both the canonisation processes and a dominant modernist perspective have to a large extent obscured the fact that the dramas' superiority is something which depended on the victory of a certain perspective and not necessarily an intrinsic quality of the plays.

If for a moment we bracket the notion that Ibsen's drama was successful because it was aesthetically superior to local drama, it becomes possible to be aware of other avenues to successful transfer. One of these has to do with what may be termed the versatility of Ibsen's work. By the versatility of Ibsen's drama I aim at both the fact that Ibsen's drama underwent a considerable change in terms of topic and aesthetics, and that many of the plays easily lend themselves to diverse forms of appropriation. Looking at the key moments in the transfer history of Ibsen's plays it becomes clear that the notion of superiority did not always enter into the reasons for the transfer. Rather, the plays were at times transferred or successful because they catered for an existing demand. As we have seen, Ibsen's first play with Gyldendal, *Brand*, was only published because it was taken to be a historical drama, and therefore in a popular and well-known genre. Another example, as mentioned above, was that *Pillars of Society* was popular because it emulated a well-known success. These important moments in the transfer history tend to be overlooked in respect to the instances in which Ibsen's plays broke with expectations, of which his introduction in Britain is largely emblematic.

The transfer history of Ibsen's drama as outlined in the three case studies presents evidence that the dissemination of Ibsen's plays was a gradual process: Ibsen's overall status was built up over time and his status as an author depended on the various successes that his plays experienced. This is significant when seen in light of the change that Ibsen's dramas underwent throughout his career and, thus, the success he experienced in his own lifetime cannot be claimed to belong to one superior form. Also, the commercial appropriation of his work was a process involving the creation of ties with publishers, translators and theatres, which could set a precedent for further appropriation. It is of course important to note that Ibsen's status as a great dramatist and the commercial appropriation of his plays, though interconnected, were characterised by a number of different dynamics. Ibsen's status as a recognised author was more fluctuating, whereas especially the publication of his plays proved a consistent element in the transfer in all three countries once established, despite ups and downs in immediate popularity. Yet, it may be claimed that even Ibsen's standing as an author displayed some form of continuity. In this context it is worth noting that his Danish, or more generally Scandinavian, success was initially built on the historical plays and more particularly his drama of ideas, that is to say, works which later played only a secondary role when it came to securing his wider fame. Yet, Ibsen's earlier plays, for example *Brand*, continued to sell well in Gyldendal's

edition long after Ibsen had moved on to realism and symbolism, indicating that the early plays continued to be important to the reception of Ibsen's work.

In Germany Ibsen was introduced through his historical plays. Though it may be claimed that this was a phase in the transfer which was eclipsed by the success of his contemporary plays, there are a number of conditions which indicate that this was not entirely the case. The first is the fact that idealism and its adherents did not vanish simply because naturalism experienced some success towards the end of the 1880s. People such as Ibsen's friend the author Paul Heyse, who preferred Ibsen's early work, continued to work in that tradition, and large parts of readers and theatregoers continued to approve of their work. The fact that Heyse won the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1910 shows that idealism continued to be an influential literary tradition, despite having been discredited by the avant-garde and some cultural elites. Another important indication that the versatility of Ibsen's work played a role in his overall popularity was that the historical drama and the drama of ideas continued to sell well in both Scandinavia and Germany during Ibsen's lifetime. A third indication, though in a larger perspective, is that in Germany during the first decades of the twentieth century, the play *Peer Gynt* overtook both *Ghosts* and *A Doll's House* as Ibsen's most popular drama in Reclam's Universalbibliothek.[714] These examples show that a notion of versatility rather than superiority should be the foundation for an account of the composite phenomenon that was the transfer of Ibsen's plays.

Centre and periphery reconsidered

At the outset of the thesis I proclaimed that Ibsen was an extraordinary author; what more than anything made him stand out was that his drama was transferred from the periphery to the centre. Following the investigation of the transfer it is still possible to maintain that it was an extraordinary feat, yet the movement initially framed as a motion from the periphery to the centre no longer needs the inexplicable force of Ibsen's genius to be explained. Besides analysing how Ibsen's plays were transferred from Norway to Copenhagen, Munich, Berlin and London, to name a few of the places, the account of the transfer has, in my view, to some extent challenged the framework of centre and periphery, which initially seemed so neatly to encapsulate the transfer. Just as research has started to challenge the notion of provincial Norway, the present narrative of the transfer of Ibsen's plays to some degree does explore what may be termed the provincial parts of the centres. As Ibsen's plays arrived abroad they were rarely consecrated in the way in which we, following Pascale Casanova, may expect the centre to consecrate literature. Rather, they were often backed by the people, institutions and commercial enterprises at the centre that did not yet hold a central position at the centre. Therefore, the complex story of the transfer of Ibsen's plays can only be properly accounted for by a (moderately) complex notion of the centre, as a field in its own right.

[714] Keel, p. 143.

Throughout the transfer process, Ibsen's plays were often mediated by agents who initially may be described as the underdogs of the cultural fields. What makes the transfer of Ibsen's plays fascinating is the fact that the transfer in a number of cases may be claimed to have acted as an impulse, which helped to shift the balance of power in the local field and enabled Ibsen's promoters to come out on top. The most striking examples are perhaps the transfer of Ibsen's drama to Britain and the championing of his plays by the German naturalists. In both cases, the fierce opposition ensured that battle lines were drawn up very sharply, and may be conceived of as (principally) critics in dominant positions combating somewhat more marginalised or provincial voices. Provincial should of course not be taken too literally, yet it is perhaps telling, as Kirsten Shepherd-Barr has remarked, that Ibsen's key British supporters were anything but English: William Archer was Scottish, Elizabeth Robins and Henry James American, George Bernard Shaw and George Moore Irish, Grein was Dutch and William Heinemann from a German family.[715] Although it is impossible to generalise about how this influenced their cultural outlook, it makes it difficult to revert to a stock idea of national appropriation. Not infrequently, the agents were also marginalised in other ways that challenge the notion that they shared in what may be deemed the centre's point of view: aesthetically as supporting non-dominant positions, politically as socialist or merely by the fact of being women.

The dichotomy between centre and periphery has also been challenged by various notions of cultural community which transcended the nationalism through which the dynamic is often framed. The two prominent examples in the transfer of Ibsen's drama were, first, the cultural movement of Scandinavianism and, secondly, the cultural affinity perceived to exist between Germany and the Scandinavian countries. Scandinavianism was a factor which helped to bring over not only Ibsen, but also other Norwegian authors, to Danish publishers. Hereby it helped Norwegian authors to reconcile their nation building efforts with their aim to reach a larger community of readers. From the perspective of Danish publishers and readers, the movement undoubtedly stimulated the interest in Norwegian affairs which helped the introduction of Norwegian literature. In this way, the belief in Scandinavian cultural unity presented an alternative to a relationship which had hitherto been that of a Norwegian periphery to a Danish centre.

The perceived shared cultural origin of Germany and the Scandinavian countries was another case in which a notion of cultural affinity conditioned a relationship which may be described as centre and periphery. It is evident from the investigation of Ibsen's plays in Germany that though the notion seems to have been widespread, it was appropriated in various ways by different people in different contexts, and that by the end of the nineteenth century it existed very much like an afterthought to the notion of the singularity of the national culture. Here the most distinctive example was the German naturalists, who, despite their national agenda following the lead of Leo Berg's pamphlet, embraced Ibsen's dramas by stressing their

[715] Shepherd-Barr, *Ibsen and Early Modernist Theatre, 1890-1900*, p. 159.

Germanic qualities. Yet, though it perhaps was the naturalists who most forcefully appropriated the trope, it may be seen as a backdrop for the interest of the Duke of Meiningen as well as that of other court theatres in the Norwegian historical drama. Thus, it may be claimed that alternative notions of a shared cultural community radically shaped the way in which the transfer of Ibsen's plays were perceived, and at a number of crucial points transcended the inferiority usually ascribed to the periphery.

Finally, it should be stressed that the transfer of Ibsen's plays was part of the complex exchange of cultural products that crossed national and regional borders. The breakthroughs of Ibsen's plays was not only the outcome of one man's genius, but made possible by the agency of countless people who worked under various local conditions, in part pursuing their own ends in the process, and who were facing various forms of opposition. At the outset, I showed that Ibsen's success had largely been framed as a movement from the centre to the periphery. At this point, however, it is clear that this perspective is problematic. Although there were individual dynamics in this exchange that may adequately be described using the dichotomy of centre and periphery, the dichotomy cannot hope to encompass the complexity required to account for cultural transfers on a general level and account for why some transfers were successful and others were resisted. Furthermore, the notions of cultural centre and periphery far too often come steeped in connotations of cultural superiority and normative notions of the direction of cultural development. Accounts of cultural transfers require that a plurality of perspectives are taken into account. They need to show how transfers receive their significances through situated acts of interpretation, in relation to other cultural products, and are defined through always contested concepts such as cultural tradition, nation, and aesthetic value. As transfer history, the story of Ibsen's dramas' initial dissemination is not only an important contribution to an understanding of how they grew into their present status, but also to an overall understanding of how value is created in the field of culture.

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Appendix I: Production in Copenhagen 1861-1900

1. ***Casino Teatert***
   Production : Gildet paa Solhoug
   Opening date : 06 December 1861
2. ***The Royal Theatre***
   Production : De Unges Forbund
   Opening date : 16 February 1870
3. ***The Royal Theatre***
   Production : Kongs-Emnerne
   Opening date : 11 January 1871
4. ***The Royal Theatre***
   Production : Hærmændene paa Helgeland
   Opening date : 19 February 1875
5. ***The Royal Theatre***
   Production : De Unges Forbund
   Opening date : 10 November 1876
6. ***The Royal Theatre***
   Production : Samfundets støtter
   Opening date : 18 November 1877
7. ***The Royal Theatre***
   Production : Et Dukkehjem
   Opening date : 21 December 1879
8. ***The Royal Theatre***
   Production : En folkefjende
   Opening date : 04 March 1883
9. ***The Royal Theatre***
   Production : Vildanden
   Opening date : 22 February 1885
10. ***Dagmarteatret***
    Production : Peer Gynt
    Opening date : 15 January 1886
11. ***Dagmarteatret***
    Production : Gildet paa Solhaug
    Opening date : 02 November 1886
12. ***Dagmarteatret***
    Production : Rosmersholm
    Opening date : 28 November 1887
13. ***The Royal Theatre***
    Production : Fruen fra Havet
    Opening date : 17 February 1889
14. ***The Royal Theatre***
    Production : Hedda Gabler
    Opening date : 25 February 1891
15. ***Dagmarteatret***
    Production : Gengangere
    Opening date : 31 October 1891

16. ***The Royal Theatre***
    Production : Bygmester Solness
    Opening date : 08 March 1893
17. ***Dansk Fredsforening***
    Production : Lille Eyolf
    Opening date : 11 December 1894
18. ***The Royal Theatre***
    Production : Lille Eyolf
    Opening date : 13 March 1895
19. ***Dagmarteatret***
    Production : Fru Inger til Østråt
    Opening date : 22 November 1895
20. ***The Royal Theatre***
    Production : Hærmændene paa Helgeland (2den og 3dje Akt)
    Opening date : 03 June 1896
21. ***August Lindberg's Company***
    Production : Per Gynt - 1ste Akts 1ste Afdeling / 3die Akt. (Aases Død.)
    Opening date : 03 September 1896
22. ***The Royal Theatre***
    Production : Samfundets støtter
    Opening date : 16 September 1896
23. ***Dagmarteatret***
    Production : Brand. Et dramatisk Digt af Henrik Ibsen (4de Akt.)
    Opening date : 21 November 1896
24. ***Kjøbenhavns frie Teater***
    Production : John Gabriel Borkman
    Opening date : 17 January 1897
25. ***The Royal Theatre***
    Production : John Gabriel Borkman
    Opening date : 31 January 1897
26. ***Dagmarteatret***
    Production : Gengangere
    Opening date : 20 March 1898
27. ***Dagmarteatret***
    Production : Brand
    Opening date : 03 April 1898
28. ***Dagmarteatret***
    Production : Kærlighedens Komedie
    Opening date : 21 May 1898
29. ***The Royal Theatre***
    Production : De unges Forbund
    Opening date : 03 May 1899
30. ***The Royal Theatre***
    Production : Kongs-Emnerne
    Opening date : 15 October 1899

Appendix II: Productions in Germany 1876-1890

1. ***Herzogliches Hoftheater in Meiningen***
   Production : Die Kronprätendenten
   Opening date : 30 January 1876
2. ***Königliches Hof- und National-Theater***
   Production : Nordische Heerfahrt
   Opening date : 10 April 1876
3. ***Königliches Hoftheater Dresden***
   Production : Nordische Heerfahrt
   Opening date : 27 September 1876
4. ***Belle-Alliance-Theater***
   Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
   Opening date : 25 January 1878
5. ***Stadt-Theater Berlin***
   Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
   Opening date : 02 February 1878
6. ***National-Theater Berlin***
   Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
   Opening date : 03 February 1878
7. ***Königliches Residenz-Theater***
   Production : Stützen der Gesellschaft
   Opening date : 05 February 1878
8. ***Ostend-Theater***
   Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
   Opening date : 06 February 1878
9. ***Reuniontheater***
   Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
   Opening date : 06 February 1878
10. ***Stadt-Theater Chemnitz***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 07 February 1878
11. ***Stadttheater Magdeburg***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 25 February 1878
12. ***Herzogliches Hof-Theater Braunschweig***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 25 February 1878
13. ***Thalia-Theater***
    Production : Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 07 March 1878

14. ***Mainzer Stadttheater***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 09 March 1878
15. ***Wilhelm-Theater***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 22 March 1878
16. ***Großherzogliches Hof-Theater Weimar***
    Production : Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 23 March 1878
17. ***Stadttheater Nürnberg***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 03 April 1878
18. ***Königliches Theater Helgoland (Hoftheater-Ensemble)***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 14 April 1878
19. ***Königliche Schauspiele Wiesbaden***
    Production : Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 28 April 1878
20. ***Großherzogliches Theater in Oldenburg***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 30 April 1878
21. ***Victoria-Theater***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 17 May 1878
22. ***Großherzogliches Hoftheater zu Karlsruhe***
    Production : Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 21 May 1878
23. ***Königliche Schauspiele Hannover***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 14 September 1878
24. ***Königliches Hoftheater in Stuttgart***
    Production : Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 23 September 1878
25. ***Kieler Stadttheater***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 14 October 1878
26. ***Frankfurter Stadttheater***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 18 November 1878

27. ***National-Theater Berlin***
    Production : Die Herrin von Oestrot
    Opening date : 13 December 1878
28. ***Herzogliches Hof-Theater in Dessau***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 02 February 1879
29. ***Stadttheater Flensburg***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 06 February 1880
30. ***Kieler Stadt-Theater***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 24 February 1880
31. ***Königliches Residenz-Theater***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 03 March 1880
32. ***Thalia-Theater***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 04 September 1880
33. ***Residenztheater Hannover***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 12 October 1880
34. ***Frankfurter Stadttheater***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 30 October 1880
35. ***Residenz-Theater Berlin***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 20 November 1880
36. ***Fürstliches Hoftheater in Sigmaringen***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 13 February 1881
37. ***Großherzogliches Theater in Oldenburg***
    Production : Nordische Heerfahrt
    Opening date : 11 January 1885
38. ***Herzogliches Hoftheater in Meiningen***
    Production : Nora oder Ein Puppenheim
    Opening date : 27 January 1886
39. ***Augsburger Stadt-Theater***
    Production : Gespenster
    Opening date : 14 April 1886

40. ***Großherzogliches Hof-Theater Darmstadt***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 22 October 1886
41. ***Herzogliches Hoftheater in Meiningen***
    Production : Gespenster
    Opening date : 21 December 1886
42. ***Berliner Dramatische Gesellschaft***
    Production : Gespenster
    Opening date : 02 January 1887
43. ***Residenz-Theater Berlin***
    Production : Gespenster
    Opening date : 09 January 1887
44. ***Ostend-Theater***
    Production : Ein Volksfeind
    Opening date : 05 March 1887
45. ***Königliches Residenz-Theater***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 26 March 1887
46. ***Augsburger Stadt-Theater***
    Production : Rosmersholm
    Opening date : 06 April 1887
47. ***Residenz-Theater Berlin***
    Production : Rosmersholm
    Opening date : 05 May 1887
48. ***Süddeutsches Hoftheater-Ensemble***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 08 July 1887
49. ***Augsburger Stadt-Theater***
    Production : Nora oder: Ein Puppenheim
    Opening date : 07 January 1888
50. ***Residenz-Theater Berlin***
    Production : Die Wildente
    Opening date : 04 March 1888
51. ***Herzogliches Hoftheater in Meiningen***
    Production : Ein Volksfeind
    Opening date : 04 March 1888
52. ***Hamburger Stadt-Theater / Altonaer Stadt-Theater***
    Production : Ein Volksfeind
    Opening date : 04 April 1888

53. ***Königliches Residenz-Theater***
    Production : Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 02 July 1888
54. ***Thalia-Theater***
    Production : Rosmersholm
    Opening date : 13 October 1888
55. ***Volkstheater Berlin***
    Production : Die Burgfrau von Oestrot
    Opening date : 14 November 1888
56. ***Lessing-Theater***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 25 November 1888
57. ***Königliches Hoftheater in Stuttgart***
    Production : Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 29 November 1888
58. ***Großherzogliches Hof-Theater Darmstadt***
    Production : Nordische Heerfahrt
    Opening date : 08 January 1889
59. ***Großherzogliches Hoftheater Weimar***
    Production : Die Frau vom Meere
    Opening date : 12 February 1889
60. ***Königliches Schauspielhaus***
    Production : Die Frau vom Meere
    Opening date : 04 March 1889
61. ***Deutsches Theater***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 20 April 1889
62. ***Königliches Residenz-Theater***
    Production : Ein Volksfeind
    Opening date : 07 September 1889
63. ***Frankfurter Stadttheater***
    Production : Gespenster
    Opening date : 14 September 1889
64. ***Freie Bühne (Lessing-Theater)***
    Production : Gespenster
    Opening date : 29 September 1889
65. ***Neues Leipziger Stadt-Theater***
    Production : Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 10 October 1889

66. ***Königliches Hoftheater Dresden-Neustadt***
    Production : Die Stützen der Gesellschaft
    Opening date : 14 October 1889
67. ***Stadttheater Magdeburg***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 16 October 1889
68. ***Stadttheater Freiburg***
    Production : Nora oder Ein Puppenheim
    Opening date : 23 October 1889
69. ***Thalia-Theater***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 26 October 1889
70. ***Stadt-Theater Heidelberg***
    Production : Nora - Ein Puppenheim
    Opening date : 27 October 1889
71. ***Königliches Hoftheater in Stuttgart***
    Production : Ein Volksfeind
    Opening date : 16 November 1889
72. ***Stadttheater Mainz***
    Production : Nora
    Opening date : 22 November 1889
73. ***Stadt-Theater in Regensburg***
    Production : Nora, oder: Ein Puppenheim
    Opening date : 02 December 1889

Appendix III: Productions in Britain 1880-1900

1. ***Gaiety Theatre***
   Production : Quicksands
   Opening date : 15 December 1880
2. ***Prince's Theatre***
   Production : Breaking a Butterfly - A New Play, in Three Acts, by Henry Arthur Jones and Henry Herman, founded on Ibsen's "Norah"
   Opening date : 03 March 1884
3. ***The Scriblers Dramatic Society***
   Production : A Doll's House
   Opening date : 25 March 1885
4. ***Novelty Theatre***
   Production : A Doll's House
   Opening date : 07 June 1889
5. ***Opera Comique Theatre***
   Production : The Pillars of Society
   Opening date : 17 July 1889
6. ***Terry's Theatre***
   Production : A Doll's House
   Opening date : 27 January 1891
7. ***Vaudeville Theatre***
   Production : Rosmersholm
   Opening date : 23 February 1891
8. ***The Independent Theatre***
   Production : Ghosts
   Opening date : 13 March 1891
9. ***Vaudeville Theatre***
   Production : Hedda Gabler
   Opening date : 20 April 1891
10. ***Terry's Theatre***
    Production : Lady from the Sea
    Opening date : 11 May 1891
11. ***Criterion Theatre***
    Production : A Doll´s House
    Opening date : 02 June 1891
12. ***The Globe***
    Production : Beata - after Austin Fryers' «Rosmer of Rosmersholm»
    Opening date : 19 April 1892
13. ***Avenue Theatre***
    Production : A Doll´s House
    Opening date : 19 April 1892
14. ***Theatre Royal Brighton***
    Production : A Doll's House
    Opening date : 03 October 1892
15. ***Theatre Royal Brighton***
    Production : Hedda Gabler
    Opening date : 06 October 1892

16. ***Theatre Royal, Haymarket***
    Production : Bygmester Solness
    Opening date : 07 December 1892
17. ***Independent Theatre Society***
    Production : Ghosts
    Opening date : 26 January 1893
18. ***Trafalgar Square Theatre***
    Production : The Master Builder
    Opening date : 20 February 1893
19. ***Vaudeville Theatre***
    Production : The Master Builder
    Opening date : 06 March 1893
20. ***Royalty Theatre***
    Production : A Doll´s House
    Opening date : 11 March 1893
21. ***Opera Comique Theatre***
    Production : Hedda Gabler
    Opening date : 29 May 1893
22. ***Opera Comique Theatre***
    Production : The Master Builder
    Opening date : 29 May 1893
23. ***Opera Comique Theatre***
    Production : Rosmersholm
    Opening date : 31 May 1893
24. ***Opera Comique Theatre***
    Production : Brand (act 4.)
    Opening date : 02 June 1893
25. ***Theatre Royal, Haymarket***
    Production : An Enemy of the People
    Opening date : 14 June 1893
26. ***Independent Theatre Society***
    Production : The Wild Duck
    Opening date : 04 May 1894
27. ***Manchester Independent Theatre***
    Production : The Master Builder
    Opening date : 30 November 1894
28. ***Playroom Six***
    Production : Little Eyolf
    Opening date : 14 September 1896
29. ***Avenue Theatre***
    Production : Little Eyolf
    Opening date : 23 November 1896
30. ***Avenue Theatre***
    Production : John Gabriel Borkman
    Opening date : 14 December 1896
31. ***The New Century Theatre***
    Production : John Gabriel Borkman
    Opening date : 03 May 1897

32. ***Independent Theatre Society***
    Production : A Doll's House
    Opening date : 10 May 1897
33. ***Independent Theatre Society***
    Production : The Wild Duck
    Opening date : 17 May 1897
34. ***Independent Theatre Society***
    Production : Ghosts
    Opening date : 24 June 1897
35. ***Theatre Royal, Haymarket***
    Production : Når vi døde vågner
    Opening date : 16 December 1899