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This new critical study of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* addresses fundamental questions of text, reception and performance. What is the definitive 'version' of *A Doll's House*: original text, translation, stage presentation, radio version, adaptation to film or television? What occurs when a drama intended for recipients in one language is translated into another, or when a play written for the stage is adapted for radio, television or film? And to what extent do differences between the media and between directorial approaches influence the meaning of the play text? Discussions of these issues include an internal analysis of the dramatic text and comparative performance analysis, framed by the biographical background to the play and its impact on dramas by Strindberg, Shaw and O'Neill and on films by Ingmar Bergman. The book concludes with a list of productions and a select bibliography.

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IBSEN  
A DOLL'S HOUSE

EGIL TÖRNQVIST  
*University of Amsterdam*



CAMBRIDGE  
UNIVERSITY PRESS

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Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge  
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP  
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011-4211, USA  
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1995

First published 1995

*A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library*

*Library of Congress cataloguing in publication data applied for*

ISBN 0 521 43386X hardback

ISBN 0 521 478669 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2004

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## GENERAL PREFACE

Volumes in the series *Plays in Production* will take major dramatic texts and examine their transposition, firstly onto the stage and, secondly, where appropriate, into other media. Each book will include concise but informed studies of individual dramatic texts, focusing on the original theatrical and historical context of a play in relation to its initial performance and reception followed by subsequent major interpretations on stage, both under the impact of changing social, political and cultural values, and in response to developments in the theatre generally.

Many of the plays will also have been transposed into other media – film, opera, television, ballet – which may well be the form in which they are first encountered by a contemporary audience. Thus, a substantial study of the play text and the issues it raises for theatrical realisation will be supplemented by an assessment of such adaptations as well as the production history, where the emphasis will be on the development of a performance tradition for each work, including staging and acting styles, rather than simply the archaeological reconstruction of past performances.

Plays included in the series are all likely to receive regular performance and individual volumes will be of interest to the informed reader as well as to students of theatre history and literature. Each book also contains an annotated production chronology as well as numerous photographs from key performances.

Michael Robinson  
University of East Anglia

## PREFACE

Since its publication over a hundred years ago Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, now generally recognised as one of the milestones in world drama, has received much attention both in the theatre, in the living-room and in the classroom. Still frequently and widely performed, there are several reasons for the play's continuing popularity. Its central theme of self-realisation is neither time- nor space-bound. Its forceful illumination of woman's position in society makes it especially relevant in periods and countries where this issue is particularly burning. Moreover, the play is exceedingly well constructed. And it contains one of the most relished female roles in world drama.

Although there is by now a comprehensive literature about *A Doll's House*, most of it deals with the play as a text for readers. Much less has been said about it as a 'text' for spectators. And yet we may assume that it was this last category of recipients that Ibsen originally had in mind.

In the present book it is this latter 'text', the performance text, that is central. How has it been fashioned by leading directors? How has it been presented in various media? How do older productions relate to more recent ones? And how do those in Ibsen's native Scandinavia – with the strong linguistic and cultural ties that exist between the Nordic countries – relate to those outside this part of the world? These are the questions that will be discussed in the present study.

In the following, I quote from Ibsen's Norwegian original – as reproduced in *Samlede Verker: Hundreårsutgave* (Collected Works: Centenary Edition) – only when this is necessary, in which case I

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also provide an English translation. Normally I quote from the translation most frequently used in British productions, that by Michael Meyer. When this does not seem wholly adequate for my purpose, I resort to a variant of my own.

There is some variation in the typography of the different textual versions of *A Doll's House*. Since such variation seems both irrelevant and disturbing, I have deemed it wise to standardise the typography as follows:

- (1) For stage- and acting-directions in the source and target texts I use italics throughout and surround them by parentheses. By contrast, there are no parentheses surrounding stage- and acting-directions in adaptations of the text and in my transcriptions of performance passages.
- (2) Figure designations inside stage- and acting-directions as well as cue designations are capitalised and printed in roman.

References to *A Doll's House* are to 'sequences' rather than pages, since page numbers would vary with almost every edition of the play, whereas sequences, once agreed upon, remain constant. Further information about the sequence reference system is found on pp. 20–1. An integral sequence scheme of the play appears on pp. 169–72.

A remark must be made on the use of tense with regard to the various formats of *A Doll's House* discussed in this book. The principle followed is that for durative (repeatable) presentational modes the present tense is used, whereas the past tense is used for non-durative modes. Thus Nora 'enters' in the play text (as well as in translations of it) and in radio, television and film versions of it, whereas she 'entered' in stage presentations. The incidental presence nowadays of durative recordings also of the last-mentioned category – in the form of records and (video) tapes – cannot change the fundamental

fact that the intended situation of reception has been that of a live performance, that is, a non-repeatable theatrical event.

Titles of non-English works are given in English translation; the original titles are added in the index.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

While working on this book, I have had ample opportunity for discussing aspects of it with teachers and students at various universities. This has meant refreshing escapes from the isolated existence of individual research. I am very grateful to scenographer Gunilla Palmstierna-Weiss for her generous information concerning the two *Doll's House* productions, directed by Ingmar Bergman, for which she made the stage design and the costumes. I am also indebted to Dr Tom Olsson, former librarian of the Royal Dramatic Theatre in Stockholm, for enabling me to check my own impressions in the theatre against a video registration of Bergman's 1989 production, as well as to Eva Block of the National Archive of Recorded Sound and Moving Images in Stockholm for helping me to some of the audio-visual material. I am especially grateful to the Board of the recently opened Centre for Ibsen Studies in Oslo for enabling me, as a guest scholar in the autumn of 1993, to profit from the services of the Centre and of the University Library.

Parts of the book have earlier appeared in the following publications:  
*Transposing Drama: Studies in Representation*, London: Macmillan, 1991, pp. 62–94;  
 'Ingmar Bergman's *Doll's Houses*', *Scandinavica*, Vol. 30, No. 1, May 1991, pp. 63–76;  
 'Ibsen ur teatersemiotisk synvinkel: Kring slutet i *Et dukkehjem*', *Studia Germanica Gandensia*, 28, and *Tijdschrift voor Skandinavistiek*, Vol. 12, Nos. 1–2, 1991, pp. 111–18;  
 'Comparative Performance Semiotics: The End of Ibsen's *A Doll's*

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*House*, *Theatre Research International*, Vol. 19, No. 2, 1994,  
pp. 156–64.

I gratefully acknowledge permission to reprint the articles in  
*Scandinavica* and *Theatre Research International*.