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## Irony and the Modern Theatre

Irony and theatre share intimate kinships, regarding not only dramatic conflict, dialectic, or wittiness, but also scenic structure and the verbal or situational ironies that typically mark theatrical speech and action. Yet irony today, in aesthetic, literary, and philosophical contexts especially, is often regarded with skepticism – as ungraspable, or elusive to the point of confounding. Countering this tendency, Storm advocates a capacious, wide-angle view of this master trope, exploring the ironic in major works by playwrights including Chekhov, Pirandello, and Brecht, and in notable relation to well-known representative characters in drama from Ibsen’s Halvard Solness to Stoppard’s Septimus Hodge and Wasserstein’s Heidi Holland. To the degree that irony is existential, its presence in the theatre relates directly to the circumstances and the expressiveness of the characters on stage. This study investigates how these key figures enact, embody, represent, and personify the ironic in myriad situations in the modern and contemporary theatre.

WILLIAM STORM teaches dramatic literature, theory, and theatre history at New Mexico State University. He is the author of *After Dionysus: A Theory of the Tragic*, as well as numerous essays, articles, and plays. His scholarly specializations include dramatic theory and dramaturgy, the history and theory of the tragic form and sensibility, art in relation to literature and performance, and connections of science with theatre and narrative studies.

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For Deborah

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