

## IBSEN IN DUTCH THEATRES AND THE SUSTAINABILITY OF NORA

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“Noraism means that a woman stands up for her rights”<sup>1</sup>

“*A Doll’s House* struck London in the year 1889 and gave Victorian domestic morality its death-blow” (Shaw, 1931, 198). This quote by the Irish playwright George Bernard Shaw illustrates how Ibsen’s works have been associated with the city – in this case London – and with the transition to a new time. In Shaw’s eyes, the London performance of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* (1879) signified the end of the old, Victorian era, where bourgeois morality reigned supreme. The previous year the Dutch author Ina Boudier-Bakker (1875-1966) had drawn a similar conclusion in her urban novel *De klop op de deur. Amsterdamse familie-roman* (Boudier-Bakker, 1930, 324).<sup>2</sup> Boudier-Bakker writes:

For the first time Ibsen’s voice was heard in Holland, distracting the attention from the great tragedy at the Dutch Theatre to Kreukniet and Poolman’s Salon de Variétés, where a new art spoke. ( ... ) It was a battle, which did not yet speak to the men and women of this time; and the first encounter with a spirit, who raised conflicts that no one had yet considered, aroused opposition.<sup>3</sup>

Just as in London, in Amsterdam, 1889 is the year that Ibsen breaks through on stage and Boudier-Bakker uses the late first staging of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* to illustrate the Amsterdam and Dutch conservatism with regard to gender roles and avant-garde art.<sup>4</sup>

The connection, which Shaw and Boudier-Bakker made between Ibsen’s play, the city and new times, the receptivity towards new ideas and attitudes – one could call it the modern, or modernity – fits into a long tradition of scholars who have

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<sup>1</sup> “Noraïsme betekent dat een vrouw opkomt voor haar rechten”. (“Volgspot” in *NRC Handelsblad*, 25 June 2012, 18.) Volgspot is published in this paper each Monday and contains selected quotes regarding the most distinctive opening nights, concerts and performances of the weekend before. The quote refers to the opening night of *A Doll’s House* staged by Maren Bjørseth and Marjolein Brouwer, students of the Theaterschool Amsterdam, as a graduation project. Thus the word “Noraism” was introduced into the Dutch language area, quite a while after it was established in China in the 1930s.

<sup>2</sup> *A Knock at the Door. Chronicle from Amsterdam*. (1930), translated into Norwegian by Liv Malling: *Det banker på døren*, 1942. While Dutch literary critics hardly paid any attention to the urban character of Boudier-Bakker’s novel (Van Boven, 1992, 93), the Norwegian literary scholar Kåre Langvik-Johannessen recognised it as an urban novel. In *Litteraturen i Nederlandene gjennom 800 år* he characterises *Det banker på døren* as a “broad Amsterdam novel” (Langvik-Johannessen, 1980, 352).

<sup>3</sup> “Voor ‘t eerst werd Ibsens stem gehoord in Holland – lokte de aandacht van de grote tragedie bij het Nederlands Toneel naar de Salon des Variétés van Kreukniet en Poolman, waar een nieuwe kunst sprak. (...) Het was een strijd, die tot de mannen en vrouwen van deze tijd nog niet sprak; en de eerste ontmoeting met een geest, die conflicten opwierp, waarover niemand nog ooit had gedacht, wekte verzet.”

<sup>4</sup> Boudier-Bakker was incidentally incorrect in saying that this was the first time that Ibsen’s voice was heard. See under the heading “A troublesome start in Amsterdam (1880) and Rotterdam (1884)”.

expressed themselves on the interaction between our urban surroundings and our culture. “We are formed by the city, and the city by us. (...) Through the city run the literary currents which lead to our own time.” These opening lines of the annual literature festival in Lillehammer in 2011 form a fine illustration of that thought. For western people life in the city represents modern life. Urban theoreticians – who approach the city from a historical, sociological, philosophical or literary perspective, regard the historical and mental city as an exemplary and symbolic space for being modern, for modernity.<sup>5</sup> The city is seen not only as a source of inspiration, but also as an exponent of our civilisation. If we build on that thought, the city becomes not only an exemplary space of modernity – being modern – but also the place where modern identities are formed, as if it was a country’s laboratory of modern man.<sup>6</sup>

The striking similarity in Shaw’s and Boudier-Bakker’s examples is that they actually transpose the symbolic function of the modern existence of the city to Ibsen’s plays: the city – London, Amsterdam – is conservative; Ibsen’s works represent the new and the modern. It is a change of perspective that makes it possible to reflect on the state of modernity in European cities – and thus in European countries - from the end of the nineteenth century onwards, based on the reception of Ibsen’s plays.

In this article I will use some of Ibsen’s plays to make a journey past a number of Dutch cities, larger ones and minor and more provincial ones, to show the interaction between the stage and the country’s receptivity towards new ideas. In doing this I will also take into account insights from translation theory and the thinking on cultural mediation, whereby cultural transmission is seen as a way of interacting: the receiving culture’s receptivity towards new ideas and new forms is crucial for the space available for innovative literature from abroad. Itamar Even-Zohar was one of the first to formulate these thoughts on the position of translated literature within the literary polysystem in his polysystem theory (Even-Zohar, 1990, 45-51). Also in historical and cultural studies, the attention for the meaning of the reception of translated literature is growing. The historian Peter Burke for instance regards the translation to be a litmus test for our insight in the cultural history of Europe. In his view the study of translations is one of the means which can give us insight into “gaps” in the knowledge and culture in different European countries (Burke, 2005, 8, 13).

What then can the staging, the transforming, of Ibsen in the Netherlands tell us about the Dutch “attitude” towards the new thoughts that were introduced by his plays? What was regarded as new and modern? What does the Dutch reception tell us about Ibsen as a world author? Four of Ibsen’s works form the starting point of my journey: *A Doll’s House* (1879), *Ghosts* (1881), *An Enemy of the People* (1882) and *Hedda Gabler* (1890).

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<sup>5</sup> i.e. G. Simmel Lewis Mumford, 1961; Jane Jacobs, 1961; Carl E. Schorske, 1963; Walter Benjamin, 1982, Joel Kotkin, 2005

<sup>6</sup> It is but one of many ways that the intellectual western human being, since the emergence of the modern city, has given this a meaningful role. See Klok, 2011, 25-26 for a brief discussion of these ideas.

### A troublesome start in Amsterdam (1880) and Rotterdam (1884)

The 1880 performance of *The Pillars of Society* (*Samfundets støtter*, 1877) in Amsterdam was the very first performance of one of Ibsen's plays in the Netherlands. The piece received good reviews in the theatre journal *Het Nederlandsch Tooneel*, in which many of Ibsen's innovative elements, such as "motivation, division of time and replies",<sup>7</sup> dramatic power and good morals, the psychology of the characters, the realistic style of acting and the stage image, were discussed with appreciation. Despite the praising words of the theatre critics, the piece was only performed six times (Van der Zalm, 1999, 108-110). Dutch audiences were not yet ready for a contemporary, realistic dramaturgy. In the 1880s, Ibsen's work was discussed more and more frequently in *Het Toneel* (the new name for *Het Nederlandsch Tooneel*), and it was associated with successful innovations in theatre in Germany and Scandinavia. His new play *An Enemy of the People* (1882) was also praised, and was soon translated into Dutch by Ida Donker, who gave it the title *Een vijand des volks, tooneelspel in vijf bedrijven* (The Hague, 1883). Performed in Rotterdam in 1884, this was the second of Ibsen's plays that the Dutch were able to see on stage. Again in a carefully staged production – Van der Zalm points out, inter alia, the improved level of acting and the natural acting style – but again without success. This time both critics and audiences were negative. The play attracted few people and was only performed twice (Van der Zalm, 1999, 110). After the 1884 performance, the productive Dutch poet, author, publisher and professor J.A. Alberdingk Thijm wrote the following in the newspaper *Amsterdammer*:

*An Enemy of the People* belongs decidedly to *le genre ennuyeux* – according to our Dutch thermometer... I do not however find the play vulgar: I recognize fully that the characters have been conceived with originality, all of them: they have been well thought-out and these are not conventions speaking. The play is readable, but it is unwatchable. It leaves one entirely dissatisfied.<sup>8</sup>

In short: although Ibsen's star was rising in the theatre journals, especially after the Dutch author Leo Simons (1862-1932), a theatre and Ibsen scholar, became editor of the magazine *Het Toneel* in 1886, the Dutch public was not ready for his new Norwegian dramaturgy. There was admiration for the content of his plays, but none for the stage performances, aside from a small circle of theatre critics. The reception of Ibsen shows that the artist still belongs to the absolute avant-garde in the Netherlands, most critics and the general public do not yet appreciate him. Compared to, for example, the Scandinavian countries and Germany the development of Dutch theatre lags behind. In his article about the Dutch opening night of *A Doll's House*, R.F.M. Boshouwers describes how in 1889 the Dutch, much later than was the case

<sup>7</sup> "motivering, tijdverdeling en repliek", as it was put in *Het Nederlandsch Tooneel*, cited here from Van der Zalm, 1999, 109.

<sup>8</sup> "*Een Vijand des Volks* behoort bepaald tot *le genre ennuyeux* – volgens onzen hollandschen thermometer.... Ik vind het stuk toch niet ordinaar: ik zie zeer goed in, dat de karakters met oorspronkelijkheid zijn opgevat; alle: ze zijn doordacht en doorwerkt en er is hier geen konventie aan 't woord. Het stuk is te lezen; maar 't is niet te zien. Het laat u volkomen onvoldaan" (Meuleman, 1931, 27).

in Germany, *finally* (my italicization) succeeded in realising a production of this Ibsen play. In addition the Dutch production had to be adapted with great effort and at a significant risk by people, who were more or less outsiders to the theatrical world, while in Germany Ibsen was delivered by the “official theatre scene”. Only in Rotterdam had the new realistic acting style of the Scandinavian theatre been emulated before. It did not help: a planned production of *A Doll's House* had not gone ahead, because the actress who was to portray Nora was unwilling to risk her career for it (Boshouwers, 1980, 45-48). The picture that Boudier-Bakker paints in *De klop op de deur* of the state of the cultural development of Dutch audiences is in other words close to reality and may have been based on her analysis of the period concerned. It is not unthinkable that this was indeed what the author did. Meuleman's 1931 study shows that there was quite some attention for the reception history of Ibsen in the 1920s and 1930s, the latter being the decade in which Boudier-Bakker wrote her novel.<sup>9</sup> This fits in with the great overall interest in Scandinavian literature in the Netherlands during this period.<sup>10</sup>

### **Ibsen's breakthrough (1889)**

How things changed with the opening night of *A Doll's House* in Amsterdam on 29 March 1889. The performance was preceded by a new wind in the Dutch theatre landscape. A group of progressive literary scholars and journalists had founded De Toneelvereniging, which aimed to stage dramatic works that were seldom performed by existing theatre companies. The first play they chose was *A Doll's House*, or *Nora* as it would become known in the Netherlands (Van der Zalm, 1999, 111-112).

It became a major success and was Ibsen's breakthrough in The Netherlands. The debate that unfolds in Boudier-Bakker's novel between the male and female protagonists over Nora's lovelessness (according to the male protagonist) or her excess of love (according to the female protagonist) for her husband and children, was all the rage in many newspapers in 1889. All the daily papers and a large number of periodicals wrote about the production (Boshouwers, 1980, 50). The realistic staging, new to the Netherlands, which had been jeered at in *An Enemy of the People* by Alberdingk Thijm five years earlier, caught on and Ibsen was seen as the “Shakespeare of modern times” (Ibsen, 2011, 259). On 8 November 1889 it was performed for the fiftieth time. Ibsen was informed and the telegram he sent to express his joy has been quoted in many publications about his Dutch reception.<sup>11</sup> From 1890 onwards *Nora* would, together with *Hedda Gabler* – often referred to in reviews as the pendant of *A Doll's House* - become one of Ibsen's most popular

<sup>9</sup> In 1931, at about the same time as Shaw's and Boudier-Bakker's statements, B.A. Meuleman presented an overview of the early reception of Ibsen in Belgium and The Netherlands up until 1930 in *Ibsen en Nederland* (1931). Meuleman listed translations, publications, quotes from reviews and letters, and utterances by Ibsen on various, often Dutch related, matters.

<sup>10</sup> See for example Grit, 1994, Broomans, 2001, 487-541 and Klok, 2010, 55-88 for illuminations in this regard.

<sup>11</sup> See amongst others Meuleman, 1931, 54; Van der Zalm, 1999, 112, 113; Ibsen, 2011, 260. In the latter publication the moment and the reason of sending the undated telegram are questioned. According to the classicist M.B. Mendes da Costa in his *Tooneelherinneringen II* it was read out on November 8<sup>th</sup> 1889 on the occasion of the fiftieth performance of *Nora* (Meuleman, 1931, 54).

works in the Netherlands, as can be seen in the following figure.<sup>12</sup>

This success is illustrative for the interest in Ibsen's plays in the Netherlands between 1890 and 1930. In his analysis of the material, Van der Zalm differentiates three periods. The years 1890-1930 were good years for Ibsen, with a peak in the 1890s. Between 1930 and 1970 we see a period of relative quiet. With one exception: productions of Ibsen show a slight revival in the mid 1950s, with the famous performance of *Hedda Gabler*, featuring Peggy Ashcroft, coming to various Dutch cities in the spring of 1955 and the fiftieth anniversary of Ibsen's death being commemorated in 1956 with a production of *Ghosts*, which toured the country. In the 1970s, the number of Ibsen productions steadily increases. And from the 1980s up until 1995, towards a new fin de siècle so to speak, Ibsen enters a new phase of popularity (as can be seen in the graph in Van der Zalm, 1999, 122). *Ghosts*, *Hedda Gabler* and *A Doll's House* are big hits. *An Enemy of the People* is in the middle bracket. Up until 1995, out of all of Ibsen's plays, *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler* were performed most frequently in the Netherlands.

This brief reception history is the background to the decision to make *Ghosts* the centrepiece of the following qualitative reception analysis. For not only was *Ghosts* the 1956 commemorative production, the (electronic) archives of the Centre for Ibsen Studies also showed that there were reviews to be found of performances in theatres all over the country.<sup>13</sup> The latter is an important factor. Scholars working within the area of reception studies see themselves confronted with the problem of finding a text corpus of good quality. In "Meten is weten?" (To measure is to know?) the pitfalls that can occur in this process and their effects on the research findings are very well set out (Linn, 2006, 36-55). In recent years more and more electronic documentation systems have become available online, but these are sometimes still under construction, such as the Historisch Krantenarchief (Historical Newspaper Archive), or like the Theater Instituut Nederland (TIN, the Dutch Theatre Institute) they are at risk.<sup>14</sup> Here, the international Ibsen bibliography, which was developed at the Centre for Ibsen Studies at the University of Oslo, plays an essential role of increasing importance. It is partly thanks to this archive that I had a text corpus of good quality at my disposal, which is so extensive that it offers a representative impression of the reception of *Ghosts* in 1956, as well as for the reception of the first performance of *A Doll's House* in Amsterdam (Boshouwers, 1980, 45). This review material made it possible to analyse the Dutch reception of the 1956 performance.

<sup>12</sup> Van der Zalm, 1999, 115. The most extensive reception study on Ibsen in The Netherlands has been undertaken by theatre historian Rob van der Zalm. In *Ibsen op de planken. Een enscenerings-geschiedenis van het werk van Henrik Ibsen in Nederland 1880-1995* (1999) he discusses the staging and the reception of Ibsen's plays in the low countries from 1880-1995. The study contains a qualitative analysis of the material and also presents an impressive description of the Dutch Ibsen reception in numbers. It enables the reader to get a quick overview of all Ibsen productions seen on Dutch stages during the period 1880-1995. In this article I gratefully make use of Van der Zalm's quantitative and qualitative analyses.

<sup>13</sup> I am very grateful to Maria Faskerti and Laila Yvonne Henriksen of the Centre for Ibsen Studies for making this material available to me.

<sup>14</sup> See: <http://kranten.kb.nl/> and <http://www.theaterinstituut.nl/>. As a result of government cutbacks on arts funding, the Theater Instituut Nederland was forced to close down in December 2012. Its unique theatre collection and library archive were moved to the University of Amsterdam library in 2013.

### Dutch audiences, Ibsen and modernity

The references to Boudier-Bakker's use of Ibsen's novel *A Doll's House* in her novel illustrate one of Ibsen's innovations for Dutch audiences: the debate on gender roles. In his analysis of the reviews of the first Dutch performances, Boshouwer insightfully explains how Ibsen's new interpretation of the role of the woman presented Dutch critics with great problems. The distance to Ibsen's characterisation of Nora was so large that it was at the expense of the appreciation of the play. While Ibsen's exposé of a household where the woman is viewed by her husband as a "cheerful, homey piece of novelty furniture", as it was put in the The Hague review,<sup>15</sup> was highly praised, the critics could not appreciate Nora's development from a naive child wife to a strong-minded, determined woman. It even had the effect that critics lost sight of part of Ibsen's modernity in regard to the theatre, such as his innovative psychological realism. The Nora character could only be understood by interpreting Nora as an ethnographic curiosity, something typically Norwegian (Boshouwers, 1980, 55). One could argue that in this way the critics kept the new gender roles temporarily at bay. This shows the tenacity of the role patterns in Dutch society at the close of the nineteenth century. It would prove to be a period of transition. Later, the debate on gender roles, especially the female factor – women getting access to new areas in society – would indeed become one of the success factors of Ibsen in the Dutch language area. Bolckmans describes Ibsen's "great female roles" as one of the reasons that his plays became so popular (Bolckmans, 124).<sup>16</sup>

For Boudier-Bakker, Ibsen's modernity lies in two aspects: the rise of a debate about gender roles in society and the rise of avant-garde art in the city of Amsterdam and in the Netherlands as a whole (Boudier-Bakker, 1930, 324, 325). With this "analysis" in her 1930 novel, Boudier-Bakker proved to have had an interesting foresight. Van der Zalm focuses on Ibsen's renewal of Dutch theatre traditions after 1880. It was a renewal in terms of, amongst other things, professionalization, of new acting styles and a realistic and specially designed decor. The directors had a new aim for a truthful reproduction of reality.<sup>17</sup> Both Van der Zalm and Bolckmans pay

<sup>15</sup> A "vroolijk, gezelligmakend fantasiemeubeltje", *Het Vaderland* (1869-1982), The Hague, 9 April 1889.

<sup>16</sup> The Dutch situation of course represents no exception, as was already shown by the quote by George Bernard Shaw and can be illustrated further by many publications. The discussion on Ibsen's emancipatory strength has, from the beginning until our time, been intense and widespread, as is also the case for Ibsen and the debate on modernity. Lou Andreas-Salomé is a good early example of this when she published *Henrik Ibsens Frauen-Gestalten: nach seinen sechs Familiendramen: ein Puppenheim, Gespenster, die Wildente, Rosmersholm, die Frau vom Meere, Hedda Gabler* in 1892. Helge Rønning's *Den umulige friheten. Henrik Ibsen og moderniteten* (2006) and Toril Moi's *Henrik Ibsen and the birth of modernism. Art, Theater, Philosophy* (2006) are more recent examples.

<sup>17</sup> Van der Zalm discusses, amongst other things translations and adaptations, decor and lighting, makeup, hairstyles, costumes, and physical appearance and acting styles. Some examples: the breakthrough of *Nora or A Doll's House* "elevated" Dutch theatre where professionalization was concerned. The decor was specially designed for the performance – by architect Springer, and ticket prices were raised to cover the costs. (Van der Zalm, 1999, 185). In addition, attention had been paid to the lighting, also a first. Ibsen meant a new way of playwriting, he created "living people, while playwrights of the French school populated their works with 'types'" (Van der Zalm, 1999, 284). Another novelty was Ibsen's way of shaping his characters, using many details spread of the entire piece (instead of in one great sweep). "It was therefore important not to miss a single word." (Van der

attention to Ibsen introducing new times by stimulating public debate. (Van der Zalm, 357, Bolckmans, 128). Bolckmans describes how this public debate refers to the issue of gender roles, in particular the issue of marriage. He distinguishes two levels of modern existence, of modernity. On the first – concrete – level this concerns criticism of gender roles in Ibsen’s era.<sup>18</sup> The second level of modernity is formed by the reflection on gender roles from a more philosophical perspective. This is about the pursuit of female identity and of different ideas of masculinity and femininity, which play a role in that process. In 1878, Ibsen writes that “a woman cannot be herself in a modern society, which is exclusively a masculine society”. Laws written from a male point of view do not suffice in Ibsen’s eyes for female behaviour (Bolckmans, 133). This second level of modernity is as relevant in our time as it was when the play was first performed in Copenhagen in 1879. For my analysis of the Dutch reception of *Ghosts* in 1956, I have extrapolated Bolckmans’ two levels as follows. Firstly, I reflect on the reception of the concrete time bound debate. Is Ibsen’s concrete criticism of gender roles in the play still regarded as relevant and contemporary? Secondly, I discuss the reception of the more philosophical and ideological aspects of this debate: is there any discussion on Ibsen’s criticism on ideas of masculinity and femininity? Finally, I include a third level: does the gender debate also play a role in a more universal interpretation of the ethical themes in the play? Is for instance the struggle of an individual – Helene Alving – against the ghosts of the past, or heredity as destiny – here in the form of a venereal disease – placed at all in a gender context by critics? In other words: do Dutch audiences (still) show an interest in Ibsen’s innovation, in his modernity in relation to a current gender debate?

### **The Dutch reception of *Ghosts* in 1956**

As mentioned, Ibsen’s jubilee production in 1956 was a production of *Ghosts* by the Haagse Comedie (1947-1988), the house company of the Royal Theatre in The Hague. Together with De Nederlandse Comedie, this company is regarded as the most important theatre company in the Netherlands at this time. In 1988, this company was transformed into the Nationale Toneel (National Theatre).<sup>19</sup> The production opened in The Hague on 29 September 1956 and subsequently toured the country in the season 1956/1957. The text used is the 1908 translation by J. Clant van

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Zalm, 1999, 284). This also applied to the plot: Ibsen’s widely known and acclaimed retrospective technique. Ibsen’s new way of playwriting posed new challenges for the performers. Up until then new productions in the Netherlands would be rehearsed five of six times. The first Dutch performance of *A Doll’s House* was rehearsed 30 times, a real break with the trend. Actors knew not only their own part, but the whole play (Van der Zalm, 1999, 284). The prevailing nineteenth century Dutch theatre conventions proved no longer adequate for Ibsen’s play. Translated into concrete features an Ibsen decor had to meet the following requirements: “Norwegian”, “realistic”, “with an eye for detail” and “atmospheric”. It would be a unique break with the trend. Van der Zalm describes how theatre companies continued to struggle with the new standard until World War II.

<sup>18</sup> The play criticizes a marriage that preserves a patriarchal society, a form of cohabitation which maintains a strict separation between a female intimate sphere and a male public sphere (Habermas). Regarding this first level, Bolckmans terms Ibsen’s play historically an instigator, a role which, according to Bolckmans in 1985, can be considered to be played-out.

<sup>19</sup> Source: [www.theaterencyclopedie.nl](http://www.theaterencyclopedie.nl), Theater Instituut Nederland (the Dutch theatre institute), accessed 15 June 2012.

der Mijll-Piepers;<sup>20</sup> Joris Diels was the director, Joop Kropff made the timeless, abstract decors. The acting style was sober and low-key; the costumes were late-nineteenth century.<sup>21</sup>

The available reviews of Ibsen's *Ghosts* in the season 1956-1957 show that the different performances manifest themselves in two ways. The opening night in The Hague on 29 September is reviewed in multiple papers all over the Netherlands. After that, the performance travels through the country and the reviews after each performance show the route *Ghosts* took, crisscrossing through the Dutch landscape. From The Hague via Leeuwarden to Groningen, then via Haarlem, Arnhem and Utrecht to Enschede and Winschoten and then via Vlaardingen to Breda and Nijmegen. There was a lot of travelling involved.

It is not too difficult to find production numbers of Ibsen's plays in the Netherlands, giving us insight into Ibsen's popularity among theatre makers. The electronic archives of the Dutch theatre institute (Theater Instituut Nederland) provide a wealth of information and search options.<sup>22</sup> The number of performances for every production and the number of tickets sold – an indication of Ibsen's popularity among theatre audiences – are harder to find, as Van der Zalm also stated (Van der Zalm, 1999, 127). Nevertheless, with the help of the review material I was able to find some information on this issue for the 1956 production of *Ghosts*. According to the critics, the play seems to have been sold-out in large and in small cities, and received ovations. The reviews further unveil that, for the critics, the central question relating to this Ibsen production was: Is Ibsen's *Ghosts* still contemporary and relevant to theatre audiences? Three trends dominate in the answers to this question. In large and small cities, the opinion is that the ideological and concrete gender criticism in the play is no longer contemporary – in this case, the 1950s – and has to be placed against the background of the late nineteenth century. In other words, in the fifties Dutch audiences no longer experience Ibsen's struggle against gender roles and Christian conventions, the double standard – as an issue for public debate, as a struggle of their own time. There is no longer acceptance for the late nineteenth century Darwinian evolutionary idea of heredity as destiny, and there is no sympathy for the tragedy of a character like Helene Alving. The conflict of *Ghosts* with the conception of what is relevant and worth debating, led to there being laughter during the dramatic highlights of the play. There is one exception: critics in Rotterdam did not see *Ghosts* as outdated, but as a remarkably topical drama about human shortcomings and human sadness. The “merciless” way in which Ibsen

<sup>20</sup> It is not generally known that Clant van der Mijll-Piepers also wrote plays herself. Under the pseudonym M. Constant she wrote, for example, *Lotos* (1892).

<sup>21</sup> Van der Zalm's reviewing of over a century of stagings of Ibsen's plays shows a number of turning points. It begins with a long first period, in which there was an aim for a truthful reproduction of reality. Thereafter, from 1928 onwards, we see stagings which deliberately place Ibsen's play back in the nineteenth century. The latter style reaches its peak with the performance of *Hedda Gabler* by Peggy Ashcroft's company in 1955, in the 'perfect' Ibsen decor: a highly detailed fin-de-siècle salon. In the 1970s, there is a new change and we see a search for other play styles in small hall productions which move in the direction of contemporary performances. The trend continues at the end of the 1980s. Actors are dressed in modern costumes, decors no longer give an active contribution to the meaning of the staging, attention returns to Ibsen's (integrally played) main text.

<sup>22</sup> See: <http://vintagecatalogus.tin.nl/>. Theater Instituut Nederland ceased to exist in December 2012. Its multimedia collection was moved in 2013 to the library of the University of Amsterdam (UvA).



“decomposed civil marriage” still has its dramatic power; there was praise for the acting and directing (Droste in *Algemeen Dagblad*, Rotterdam, 1 October 1956). The review in the *Maasbode* in Rotterdam even warns against the play. In short, the performance of *Ghosts* in Rotterdam is seen as modern and shocking because of the concrete and ideological gender criticism.

A second trend in the reception is that *Ghosts* does not function, because it has been taken out of its time. And this was regarded as a shortcoming of the production. Because precisely when *Ghosts* could be seen as a time image, without topicality, like a documentary with “an aroma of mildew” (Adri Laan in *Het Vrije Volk*, Amsterdam, 17 October 1956), the play becomes interesting - as was stated. We see this trend in many reviews all over the country. In this reception there is little to no appreciation for the director’s experiment with a modern décor. It was felt that it clashed too much with the use of the nineteenth century costumes – with a sober acting style, it was felt that it should have been played with more “compassion”. The general opinion was that by modernising the play, its “essence” had been lost. Within this second trend, the translation is also mentioned. It is striking to note that the “old” translation by J. Clant van der Mijll-Piepers is seen as annoyingly outdated. I call it a remarkable statement, taking into account the wish for a “historical” performance. This “historical” performance clearly did not include the language. The audience regarded the “historical” translation as alienating.

The third trend in the reception is outnumbered and mostly found in the capital reception in Amsterdam and nearby Haarlem. Jan Spierdijk in *Nieuws van de Dag* and H.A. Gomperts in *Het Parool* are the spokesmen for this third trend. The reaction here is mainly that neither Ibsen, nor *Ghosts*, is outdated, and that “Helene Alving’s desperate struggle against the ghosts of the past” is timeless. Ibsen’s “normal language” adds to the timelessness of the theme. Amsterdam and Haarlem also agree on the general view that Ibsen should not be taken “out of its time”. It is precisely the setting in rural, backwards Norway at the end of the nineteenth century, which gives the play its strength. Or, as a critic from Haarlem put it: “The eternal values of the play lie in the local character, just as is the case in *Madame Bovary*.” (*Haarlems Dagblad*, 15 October 1956). The common ground for the reception in Amsterdam and Haarlem is that a lot of background information is given about the author and the play. In this sense there is a repetition of what happened in the Netherlands when *A Doll’s House* was staged in 1889: the critics focus on the local character of the play, on the geographical distance. And in 1956 they also focus on the distance in time. A link to a contemporary debate is scarcely made.

There is no easy answer to the question of the Dutch public was receptive to Ibsen’s modernity in the fifties. The performance of Ibsen’s *Ghosts* definitely led to a public debate, not in the least because of the director’s decision to combine the old (text and costumes) and the new (decor and acting style). The dominant question in the public debate seemed to be whether or not Ibsen had a beard, not whether or not Ibsen had to be seen in the context of former times. If I let go of the debate about the performance’s form and focus on the reception of the contents of the play, we see a consensus that *Ghosts* is an outdated play, especially on the level of concrete social criticism. It is even a reason to reject a modern performance of Ibsen. On the other hand, there seems to be a call for a modern text: the historical translation is rejected.

On the second level of modernity – the level of incest, hereditary diseases and euthanasia, the battle against ghosts from the past – the critics in Amsterdam and Haarlem are most receptive to Ibsen’s modernity. It is remarkable that in all cases, the critics ask for a staging of *Ghosts* in a historical setting. It is as if the Dutch public just as was the case seventy years previously with Nora in *A Doll’s House*, holds off a contemporary debate about the themes in *Ghosts* by asking for geographical and ethnographical distance. It indicates that the Netherlands of the 1950s was not bursting with, or open for wide public debate.

### 1970-2012: Ibsen revisited

Twenty years later, times have completely changed. A quantitative analysis of the performance numbers shows that Ibsen’s popularity has grown since the 1970s, an upward trend that has clearly continued in the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Appendix I gives an overview of the Dutch productions after 1995. Compared to the Ibsen productions in the Netherlands between 1880 and 1995, the past 17 years show a remarkable shift. *Ghosts* and *Hedda Gabler*, the big hits in the statistics, are comfortably beaten by *A Doll’s House*, which was performed almost twice as often between 1995 and 2012. The trend that *An Enemy of the People* is only performed once per decennium at the most, has continued.

After 1995 *A Doll’s House* has been Ibsen’s biggest hit in the Netherlands, a conclusion amplified by the fact that the prominent Dutch company Toneelgroep Amsterdam (Theatre Company Amsterdam) will mark their 25th anniversary with this play in 2012 (opening on November 9) under the direction of Tibaud Delpout. A translation by Karst Woudstra is used. In the second half of 2012 in Groningen another interesting experiment was added to the staging of Ibsen in the Netherlands. The Belgian dramatist Sarah Moeremans, artistic director of the Noord Nederlands Toneel (North Netherland’s Theatre), went on a quest for the topicality of “Henrik Ibsen’s body of ideas”. In five theatre salons “theatrical preliminary examination” is done into the “emancipation of the woman”<sup>23</sup>. In other words, Moeremans connects Ibsen’s ideas directly to the emancipation of women. In her salons Moeremans shared experiences with her guests and collected topical narratives which led to a performance titled *Crashtest Ibsen* in April 2013. The play being crash tested was *A Doll’s House*.

The next biggest hit in the Netherlands, after *A Doll’s House*, is *Hedda Gabler*, followed immediately by *Ghosts*. Other plays by Ibsen, including *An Enemy of the People*, are performed far less frequently. Dutch theatres are mostly interested in Ibsen’s women, and this trend is highlighted by the 1998 production *Vrouwen van Ibsen* (Ibsen’s Women; about Nora, Hedda, Rita, Rebekka and Helene) by Onafhankelijk Toneel, under the direction of Mirjam Koen and by the production *Ibsen3* (about Nora, Hedda and Ellida) staged by the Belgian company De Tijd in 2008. All these new stagings are modern performances.

It is remarkable that old translations by J. Clant van Mijll-Piepers and Margaretha Meijboom are once again in fashion.<sup>24</sup> It looks as if the directors are

<sup>23</sup> Cited from the invitations from the Noord Nederlands Toneel for these theatre salons, dated August 31st and October 25th 2012.

<sup>24</sup> Or perhaps the use of the “old” translations is less remarkable than it seems: both translators

attracted by Dutch versions that are as close to Ibsen's text as possible, also in terms of time. Based on reviews it also looks as if Dutch audiences respond with enthusiasm to these experiments and do not shy away from alienating translations. An extensive discussion of the qualitative analyses of the reception of Ibsen's plays after 1995 goes beyond the scope of this article. I therefore confine myself to a number of points which, with regard to the period 1930-1970, indicate a break in the trend.<sup>25</sup> The reviews of *Vrouwen van Ibsen* (1998 "Ibsen's women") show that the Dutch critics did not doubt the modernity and relevance of Ibsen's female roles for one moment. This play, an experimental collage of fragments from five of Ibsen's dramatic works, combined with quotes from Lou Andreas-Salomé's 1892 study on Ibsen's women, is, according to Koen, about "women who are trapped between the conventions of that time and their desire for freedom".<sup>26</sup> It is a position which at the beginning of 1998 is hardly different from how it was over one hundred years earlier. The Amsterdam *Volkscrant* worded it as follows: "Although the image that women had to meet with in the nineteenth century was more specific than now, this image still reflected in the shards of our time".<sup>27</sup> Less positive reviews are not about any datedness of Ibsen, but always about the form, critics have no appreciation for this "crash course on Ibsen", which is too fast-paced and has too little depth (*NRC Handelsblad*, 20 March 1998). Much appreciated are the sober, modern staging and the acting style. According to the Dutch critics, Koen carefully constructed portraits of women who are torn between their own desires and conventions and commitments, thus showing a dilemma of all times. For Salomé, Ibsen's women were objects of study, and mirrors, for Koen and the Dutch critics, over one hundred years later, this is still the case. The director Mirjam Koen also does what Ibsen himself had predicted: she goes her own way with his female characters. Ibsen's sustainability is clearly connected to his visionary views on the changing gender roles.

With *Noura/Nora*, a multicultural production of *A Doll's House* staged by Onafhankelijk Toneel in 2002, director Gerrit Timmers created a performance in Arabic – with Dutch subtitles – with actors from the Tensift company from Marrakech. One of his goals with this staging was to make the theatre attractive to

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produced texts which can be categorised as classics. Clant van Mijll-Piepers' translations between 1907 and 1908 of Ibsen's *Love's Comedy* (1862), *Pillars of Society* (1877), *The Wild Duck* (1884), *Little Eyolf* (1894), *The Lady from the Sea* (1888), *When We Dead Awaken* (1899), and meant the start of the famous Dutch publishing house Meulenhoff. Founder Johannes Marius Meulenhoff (1869-1939) tried to find publishers for these texts by Ibsen, which he thought should also be published in Dutch. He could not find a publisher and decided to do it himself (Funke, 1995, 50, 51).

<sup>25</sup> For my observations I made grateful use of the material in the archives of Onafhankelijk Toneel in Rotterdam. Artistic director Gerrit Timmers allowed me generous access to this archive, which I visited on June 29th 2012. I also had the opportunity to speak briefly with director Mirjam Koen about her production *Vrouwen van Ibsen* (Ibsen's Women). My thanks to both of them are great. Sadly, Onafhankelijk Toneel has, just like the Theater Instituut Nederland, been affected by rigorous government cutbacks on arts funding. The company's complete subsidy has been cut and it had to cease its activities as of January 1<sup>st</sup> 2013 (*NRC Handelsblad*, Amsterdam, 28 September 2012, 22).

<sup>26</sup> "over vrouwen die klem zitten tussen de conventies van die tijd en hun verlangen naar vrijheid" (*Volkscrant*, Amsterdam, 6 March 1998).

<sup>27</sup> "Al was het beeld waaraan de vrouwen in de 19<sup>de</sup> eeuw moesten voldoen specifieker dan nu, toch weerspiegelt dit beeld zich nog in de scherven van onze tijd" (*Volkscrant*, Amsterdam, 19 March 1998).

audiences from different ethnic backgrounds. In the Dutch reception a positive response dominates, with appreciation for the transformation of the play to a well-off Moroccan environment in the Netherlands. Relatively little attention is paid to the fact that with this play *Onafhankelijk Toneel* introduces new audiences from ethnic minorities to the theatre. Only one critic mentions the busloads of Moroccan women flocking to see the performance. Besides reviewing content and form, critics comment the debate that the play evokes. There is appreciation for the emancipatory content; the inner struggle of the modern Moroccan woman is thought to be clearly portrayed. A remarkable achievement for a late nineteenth century Norwegian author, one could say. Another critic mentions how Noura comes on stage in a fashionable western dress and leaves the house in traditional Moroccan attire, without attributing any meaning to this observation. Apart from the observations regarding the external form elements, there is surprisingly little attention of the performance's deeper layer of multicultural aspects. The *commedia dell'arte* character of the performance and the accessibility of the theatrical metaphors, whereby the Moroccan Nora's doll's house is literally collapsing around her – when Noura goes inside, the front door falls off its hinges, when she switches the lights on, the lamps fall from the ceiling – is with two exceptions not placed in a framework of two (theatre) cultures meeting each other.<sup>28</sup> This last element would be an interesting subject for further research, as the performance's *Reactieboek* (comment book) also gives the idea that this clash was bigger than the reception shows. Congratulations from a visitor from Agadir on this amazing musical, point in that direction. In addition this comment book offers the possibility to say something about the reactions of the audience, something that can normally only be done indirectly through occasional comments in reviews. Enthusiastic comments in Dutch, Arabic, English and French intermingle; the gauntlet for further discussion is taken up. There is also a “government review” of *Noura*: in a write-up about the performance in *Uitleg*, a publication by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Sciences, it is presented as a successful example of multiform cultural activities, a spearhead of Dutch immigrant policy at the time.<sup>29</sup>

### **A breakthrough of women directors and the sustainability of Nora**

The large interest in Ibsen's women does not mean that their central position is reflected in the Dutch productions of his plays. Neither does the fact that almost all his Dutch translators from the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century onwards are women. The latter - the high proportion of women in Ibsen's cross-national transmission – illustrates and underlines the findings in research on the process of literary transfer. More recently, the focus in translation theory has gone both to the importance and the mechanisms of cultural transmission. Without the activities of many dynamic women as cultural transmitters, the process of literary transfer and cross-national interaction

<sup>28</sup> “Het OT plaatst *Nora* van de Noorse schrijver Henrik Ibsen in een Marokkaanse setting. Als een van de weinige gezelschappen in Nederland plaatst slaagt het OT erin ongeforceerd twee culturen op het toneel te zetten”. (The OT (Independent Theatre) places *Nora* by the Norwegian author Henrik Ibsen in a Moroccan setting. As one of few theatre companies in the Netherlands the OT succeeds in putting two cultures on stage without it seeming contrived; *Haarlems Dagblad* 11 May 2002); “Vooraf interessant als botsing tussen theaterculturen” (Especially interesting as a clash between two theatre cultures; *Rotterdams dagblad*, 20 April 2002).

<sup>29</sup> *Uitleg*, nummer 8, 22 May 2002, 10-19.

would have been totally different and the outcome of the transfer would have shown quite another literary landscape.

When it comes to the directing of Ibsen's productions in the Netherlands the opposite is the case, here women are conspicuous by their absence. Only twice in the century between 1880 and 1980 was there a female director. It looks as if there is a change occurring now. From 1980 until 2012, we see the number of women directors increasing. Teuntje Klinkenberg directed *A Doll's House*, (GLOBE, 18 October 1986), Joanna Bilska directed *Ghosts* (Stichting de Jungle, 1 February 1989), Mirjam Koen directed *De vrouwen van Ibsen* (Ibsen's Women) (Onafhankelijk Toneel, 1998), Nienke Römer directed a student performance in Arnhem (2000), Manon van Gelder directed *A Doll's House* (Toneelgroep Adodvs 2009), Marit Eggen directed *Hedda Gabler* (Nationaal Toneel 2008), Maren E. Bjørseth directed a student performance of *A Doll's House* in Amsterdam (June 2012) and finally Belgian dramatist Sarah Moeremans directed a production titled *Crashtest Ibsen* (April 2013) which she prepared in the form of five Theatre Salons in Groningen in the autumn of 2012. This really is a break with the trend. It is a remarkable phenomenon, and it will be interesting to compare the urban reception of these "female" Ibsens with those of their male colleagues. One could say that after one hundred years, modernity seems to have reached the *staging* of Ibsen's plays in the Netherlands.

Two recent examples show how Ibsen's topicality and the increasing number of female directors in Dutch theatres is still growing and culminates with *A Doll's House*, the motto of this article already pointing to this. In 2012 Norwegian Maren Bjørseth and Dutch Marjolein Brouwer, students of the Theaterschool Amsterdam (The Amsterdam Theatre School) staged *A Doll's House* as their graduation project. The production opened at the International Theatre School Festival in Amsterdam in June 2012 and was awarded with the ITs Ton Lutz Award 2012. The praises of the performance were sung and it was enthusiastically received by, among others, the critic Kester Freriks, because of the social commitment it expressed. "Theatre as theatre should be: surprising, involved, imaginative and sensuous." Bjørseth and Brouwer's Nora is a character from our time, fighting for understanding, love and independency. Entirely in the tradition of Ibsen one could say. Bjørseth introduced a new word for feminism into the Dutch language: *Noraïsm*. The second example is the previously mentioned Belgian dramatist Sarah Moeremans, who links Ibsen's body of ideas directly to the emancipation of women, as we have already seen. In her theatre salon she asked women of all ages and from different social groups about their present-day experiences as women. How very alive Nora is in the Netherlands was illustrated once again by the favourable review of a production about the life of the famous Dutch folk singer André Hazes (1951-2004), which opened on 11 November 2012. In the review the female lead, who leaves the marriage, is described as 'a modern Nora from Ibsen's *A Doll's House*'.<sup>30</sup>

In other words: between 1995 and 2012 Ibsen's gender criticism and his "theatrical women" are relevant and still very much alive. Just as in the period 1890-1910 they capture the imagination of theatre makers the most. They experiment with Ibsen's female characters, they create a multicultural performance with Nora, and they try new ways of creating a production by engaging the public, the possible

<sup>30</sup> *Volkskrant*, Amsterdam, 13 November 2012.

future audience, in the making of their staging in the form of theatre salons.

### Conclusion

Let us turn to answering the questions poised in the introduction: What then can the staging, the transforming, of Ibsen in the Netherlands tell us about the Dutch “attitude” towards the new thoughts that were introduced by his plays? What was regarded as new and modern? What does the Dutch reception tell us about Ibsen as a world author?

A qualitative and quantitative reflection of Ibsen on Dutch stages in the period from 1880 to 1970 shows a wavelike movement. Research into the reception of Ibsen, supports the claim by Boudier-Bakker in her Amsterdam novel. Prior to 1890 the Netherlands lagged behind other European countries such as Germany, France and the Scandinavian countries in terms of cultural development. With the production of *Nora* a new era arrives. After a flying start in the form of the breakthrough of *A Doll's House* and a growing appreciation for Ibsen as a social reformer, particularly concerning entrenched (gender) conventions, Dutch audiences in the period 1930-1970 do not seem to be able to place Ibsen's plays. Ibsen is hardly performed on Dutch stages. A qualitative analysis of the revival by way of the jubilee performance of *Ghosts* in 1956, shows that the urban debate concerns mostly the expiry date of Ibsen. With one exception the play was described as outdated and not current, critics only saw the possibility to interpret *Ghosts* as a historical play. Dutch audiences see themselves as modern and post-Ibsen. At the same time critics were not so modern that they were receptive towards the experiment of the director, actors and decor designer with a modern Ibsen (low-key play, symbolical decor) combined with a (costume) reference to the past. The alienating effect that this had was rejected. Just like the alienating effect which was achieved by using a historical translation. Dutch audiences desired tradition and “normal” language, not innovations. Both in the case of *A Doll's House* in 1889 and of *Ghosts* in 1956 Dutch audiences hold off a contemporary debate by focusing on geographical and ethnographical distance. Insights into the workings of cultural exchange make me state that Dutch audience in the fifties were conservative in intellectual and artistic regard and not receptive to new theatre or ideas, not even where it concerned Ibsen.

When it comes to the period 1970-2012, the conclusion that presents itself is that present-day Dutch theatres and their audiences seem to be mostly interested in Ibsen's theatrical women, be it his female characters or the relatively new phenomenon of women directing his plays. It is remarkable that *A Doll's House* appears to be current on multiple levels. It has been chosen by students of advanced theatre schools as their graduation project, it has been adapted as a performance for young adults, and it has been used as a multicultural project – the Dutch Independent Theatre cooperating with a Moroccan company performing the play throughout the Netherlands - and it has been the subject of a theatrical experiment in the form of creating a staging with the help of theatre salons. Tracking Ibsen on the Dutch stages shows us the current multicultural society, which is underlined by the performance of *A Doll's House* in the Netherlands by a foreign – Spanish – company in the recent period. It also shows the increasing number of women directors in Dutch theatres and the fact that they do exactly what Ibsen predicted: they go their own way with his

dramas. Their experiments with his texts are moreover highly appreciated in the Dutch cities and show a renewed interest in public debate, re-establishing the discussion that was aroused in the first period of staging Ibsen in the Netherlands. The experiments with Ibsen's "old" female characters by his "new" women directors form a most important ingredient of his modernity and sustainability, both where content (feminism = noraism) and where form are concerned. It is these women who confirm Ibsen's position as an author of the modern world. At least as far as the Dutch public is concerned.

Last but not least: whether it concerns the content, the form or the direction: in all these respects the modernity of Ibsen appears to be founded upon the debate on gender roles, which his plays – *A Doll's House* in particular – and specifically his theatre women – both female characters and women directors –, have evoked in the Netherlands between 1988 and 2012, it would seem, with heightened effect. In a society which perceives itself as emancipated to such an extent that no special attention for role patterns or gender quota are deemed necessary, this can be called a surprising conclusion.

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### **Biographical note**

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### **Summary**

In this article I reflect on Ibsen's laborious road to the Dutch stages to display the reciprocal influence between innovating theatre plays and the process of a modernizing society. In doing this I take into account insights from translation theory and the thinking on cultural mediation, whereby cultural transmission is seen as a way of interacting: the receiving culture's receptivity towards new ideas and new forms is crucial for the space available for innovative literature from abroad.

Tracking Ibsen on the Dutch stages shows a wavelike movement. Research into the reception of Ibsen supports the claim by the Dutch author Ina Boudier-Bakker (1875-1966) who used the late first staging of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1889) to illustrate the Amsterdam and Dutch conservatism with regard to gender roles and avant-garde art. Prior to 1890 the Netherlands lagged behind other European countries. With the Dutch production of *A Doll's House* a new era arrives. After a flying start and a growing appreciation for Ibsen as a social reformer, particularly

concerning entrenched (gender) conventions, Dutch critics in the period 1930-1970, do not seem to be able to place Ibsen's plays. A qualitative analysis of the revival by way of the jubilee performance *Ghosts* in 1956, shows that Dutch audiences hold off a contemporary debate by focusing on geographical and ethnographical distance. It indicates that in the fifties this audience was intellectually and artistically conservative. Tracking Ibsen on the stages after 1970 shows us the current multicultural society; it shows us a renewed interest in his female characters, which culminates with Nora. It shows us an increasing number of women directors in Dutch theatres, also in advanced theatre school performances. Present-day Dutch theatres and their audiences seem to be mostly interested in Ibsen's theatre women, be it his female characters or the relatively new phenomenon of women directing his plays. Their experiments with his texts are highly appreciated and show a renewed interest in public debate, re-establishing the discussion that was aroused in the first period of staging Ibsen in the Netherlands. The experiments with Ibsen's "old" female characters by his "new" women directors form a most important ingredient of his modernity and sustainability, both where content (feminism = noraism) and where form are concerned. It is these women who confirm Ibsen's position as an author of today's world.

**Keywords/ nøkkelord**

Cultural transfer, urban theory, Ibsen in the Netherlands, theatre women, modernity.

*Appendix I***Ibsen on Dutch urban stages between 1995-2012***Ghosts*

**5 productions**, Dutch companies (1996, 1998, 2000, 2004, 2011 [German director])  
Next to those mentioned here, the performance *The Women of Ibsen* [about Nora, Hedda, Rita, Rebekka and Helene) by Onafhankelijk Toneel, under the direction of Mirjam Koen (Rotterdam, 1998).

*Hedda Gabler*

**6 productions**, Dutch companies (1996, 1998, 2003, 2006, 2008, 2011)  
Next to those mentioned here, the performance *The Women of Ibsen* [about Nora, Hedda, Rita, Rebekka and Helene) by Onafhankelijk Toneel, under the direction of Mirjam Koen (Rotterdam, 1998) and by the production *Ibsen3* (about Nora, Hedda and Ellida) staged by the Belgian company De Tijd in 2008.

*A Doll's House*

**10 productions**, of which 1 Spanish, 1 with actors from the Moroccan Tensift company from Marrakech, 3 student productions (1996, 1997, 2000 2x (1 student performance), 2002, 2004 (student performance), 2009, 2011, 2012 2x (1 student performance))

Next to those mentioned here, the youth theatre performance *Nora & Helmer* in 1997 (Utrecht), the performance *The Women of Ibsen* [about Nora, Hedda, Rita, Rebekka and Helene) by Onafhankelijk Toneel, under the direction of Mirjam Koen (Rotterdam, 1998), the production *Ibsen3* (about Nora, Hedda and Ellida) staged by the Belgian company De Tijd in 2008, and *Crashtest Ibsen* by Moeremans Noord Nederlands Theater, being prepared in the form of five Theatre Salons in the autumn of 2012 (Groningen, due April 2013).

*An Enemy of the People*

**1 production** (2009) [adaption by Arie van der Mol of the translation of Margaretha Meijboom (1913)]

*Appendix II***Ibsen by women directors in Dutch Theatres:**

## Amsterdam:

9 januari 1990, *Hedda Gabler*, Toneelgroep Amsterdam, directed by Marcelle Meuleman [translation by Marcelle Meuleman/Maria Uitdehaag, in cooperation with Petter Aaslestad based on the translation by J. Clant van der Mijll-Piepers].

7 april 1995, *A Doll's House*, Van Dijk & Company, directed by Clare Davidson

June 2012, *A Doll's House*, directed by Maren Bjørseth staged as graduation project for the Theaterschool Amsterdam (The Amsterdam Theatre School).

## Arnhem:

2000, *A Doll's House*, directed by Nienke Römer as a student performance

## Eindhoven:

18 oktober 1986: *A Doll's House*, GLOBE, directed by Teuntje Klinkenberg

1 februari 1989, *Ghosts*, Stichting de Jungle, directed by Joanna Bilcka [translation Amy van Marken]

## Groningen:

13 September – 13 December 2012: five theatre salons as a theatrical preliminary examination of Henrik Ibsen's body of ideas as the preparation for the production *Crashtest Ibsen* due April 2013. Directed by the Belgian dramatist Sarah Moeremans, artistic director of the Noord Nederlands Toneel (North Netherlands Theatre).

## Den Haag:

16 april 1939: *Ghosts*, N.V. Het Residentie Tooneel, directed by: Bets Ranucci-Beckman

18 februari 1994: *Ghosts*, Appel, directed by: Agaath Witteman

2008, *Hedda Gabler*, Nationaal Toneel 2008, directed by Marit Eggen

February, 2009, *A Doll's House*, Toneelgroep Adodvs, directed by Manon van Gelder

## Haarlem:

30 november 1927: *Hedda Gabler*, N.V. Het Nieuwe Rotterdamsch Tooneel, directed by Alida Tartaud-Klein.

## Rotterdam:

1997/1998: *De vrouw van de Zee* (The Lady from the Sea), Onafhankelijk Toneel, directed by Mirjam Koen

14 March 1998: *Vrouwen van Ibsen* (Ibsen's Women; about Nora, Hedda, Rita, Rebekka and Helene) by Onafhankelijk Toneel, under the direction of Mirjam Koen.