CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION
Henrik Ibsen, the Norwegian playwright from the 19th Century, has been called the “Father of Modern Drama.” His dramas are the reflection of real social, economical, religious and political issues quite common in the nineteenth century.

This title, exclusively given to him is arguably not an understatement; the playwright’s personal and public life significantly influenced his dramatic plays containing various political, religious, and historical messages. Like Shakespeare, Ibsen tried to incorporate as much prose writing into his plays as possible without losing the story’s focal point. Shakespeare's work convinced Ibsen that serious drama must strive towards a psychological truth and form its foundation on the characters and conflicts of mankind (sean-c-powers.com).

Ibsen tried to incorporate social and psychological problems in realistic contemporary settings in his plays; each play dealing with these tribulations was called a “problem play.” (sean-c-powers.com)

Henrik Ibsen is known worldwide for his realism in drama. In his second phase of writing, he began with realism. Scandinavia was under the influence of realism. “In Scandinavia, Realism appeared as a social and political need. The Scandinavian realists wanted to debate social issues not only for aesthetic reasons, but in order to bring about social change. (Suleiman 3)

Realism was a new trend in the literature. It was the successor of romanticism. It was a way of writing in which life was shown as it was. It can be defined as:

“Realism” as a dramatic style refers to the appearance of lifelikeness (verisimilitude) in setting, costume, dialogue, gesture, facial expression, and so on. A realistic play was to be a photographic copy
of common, observable experience (in practice, usually middle-class domestic experience, to accord with the reality of the rise of the bourgeoisie). The stage was to appear, not as a stage, but as a room or any actual environment; props were to be seen, not as props, but as authentic parts of a particular everyday environment. All the developing technology of the modern theater - hydraulic machinery, cycloramas, lighting boards, etc. was brought to bear in creating the illusion of authentic environment. (Dietrich)

This style of writing was popularized in Europe mainly in France, “where two of its greatest practitioners were the writers Gustave Flaubert (1821-1880), best known for his novel Madame Bovary (1857), and Honore’ de Balzac (1799-1850).” (Suleiman 3) But in Scandinavia, the credit for popularizing this style goes to the Norwegian dramatist, Henrik Ibsen. His plays are the portrayal of his realistic bent of mind. He felt the need to write about reality. Kings, queens, super heroes’ lavish lifestyles did not attract him. The reality and facts of life attracted him.

Ibsen wrote several plays. He began with writing verses but he turned to writing plays. He introduced what came to be known as ‘Problem Play’. His plots were well constructed and encompassed reality. He left his audience shocked and bewildered. He wrote about issues which were considered trivial before he attempted them and were completely neglected. Family ties, blots of illegitimacy, high ambitions, fake morality, religious interferences, etc. were some of those problems which people faced from long times but no one dared to speak about them especially in smaller countries. Various forms of drama occupied the theatre. Morality plays, classical plays, plays with grandeur and substance, tragedies, comedies, etc. were few of those forms which had been in theatre for long. Slowly and gradually, some people
started realizing the artificiality, falsehood and immorality behind the dramatic presentations. People noticed the degeneration in dramatics and by the end of the nineteenth century, drama gained momentum and it started reviving. It is at this time that the literary world was introduced to Henrik Ibsen. In the early years of his writing he was popular among his Norwegian readers but his introduction to the English world brought him an elevation in fame. The man who introduced him to the English world was Edmond Gosse. “It is very possible that Gosse had seen some of Ibsen's work before he went to Norway, but undoubtedly it is to this journey that Gosse owed his real introduction to Ibsen”. (Franc 11) Twenty-two years after the publication of Ibsen's first play, and five years after the publication of two of his greatest works, "Brand" and "Peer Gynt," there appeared in the Spectator of March 16, 1872, the first mention of Ibsen in an English periodical. The article, a book review on "Digte," was headed "Ibsen's New Poems." (Ibid 12)

This was the beginning of Ibsen’s career as a dramatist of the world. Gosse had brought Ibsen outside his limited Scandinavian world. He had begun with the process of literary recognition. In an article in the Spectator of March 27, 1875, Gosse acknowledged his authorship of the March, 1872, article: "It is three years since we have had the pleasure of introducing through these columns, for the first time in England, the greatest modern Scandinavian poet." (Ibid 13)

After this followed many articles and reviews written by Gosse. One by one Gosse introduced Ibsen’s works through his reviews. He winded up his criticism in his next book, A Collection of Essays. “In 1879 Edmund Gosse published his collection of essays, Studies in the Literature of Northern Europe.” (Ibid 22) Here he left the task of giving Ibsen an English reader but this was not the end of Ibsen’s fame in Scandinavia. It was his transition. Now he had come out of the written literary
criticism. He had begun to be known to the English audience than English readers but it was not until 1879 that Ibsen was much known. Among the eminent literati in Europe, William Archer, who later translated most of his plays in English, had taken up his play to stage them on English lands and the world got introduced to a great dramatist. Gosse had made Ibsen familiar but Archer made him famous. It was due to his efforts that Ibsen became renowned in a foreign land. Edmond Gosse writes in this context:

It is true that thirty-six years ago some of Ibsen's early metrical writings fell into the hands of the writer of this little volume, and that I had the privilege, in consequence, of being the first person to introduce Ibsen's name to the British public. Nor will I pretend for a moment that it is not a gratification to me, after so many years and after such surprising developments, to know that this was the fact. But, save for this accident of time, it was Mr. Archer and no other who was really the introducer of Ibsen to English readers. (xi)

Gosse's efforts had given a new direction to William Archer who took up the task of popularizing Ibsen in England. Initially he presented his plays on stage and later he contributed by translating them in English.

In 1880 William Archer entered the field and first presented an Ibsen play on the English stage. Ibsen's reception in England then became more a matter of stage history than a matter of literary criticism. Gosse's important work was the introduction of Ibsen into England by means of laudatory criticisms published in the various London periodicals. (Franc 22).
Ibsen gained recognition but it was followed by harsh criticism. Some people liked him while most of them disliked him or to be precise, his work. He received acclaims and blames at the same time but the accusations reigned.

Time and again, Ibsen was attacked with writing about unsocial and coarse issues. His publications, however, were always bitterly criticized. His foes, and they were numerous, delighted in deriding the man who held up to derision the foibles of his compatriots and the weaknesses of his fellowmen. (Levy 10)

Till his limitations to literary criticism, things weren’t as harsh because till then he did not bother many people. He was rather liked and accepted but with the staging of his plays, the treatment towards him changed. Theatrical presentations of Ibsen’s plays changed the attitude of people. The man, who was not much known till recently and the one, who did not have any prominent identification, was much discussed now. Some liked him whereas most disliked him. Whatever are the reactions, but he aroused the senses of the audience. He set the society into debates.

Of all the critics who attacked him, Clement Scott was the sharpest. He criticized the works of Ibsen bitterly. He found his works groundless and baseless. Like many other critics, he charged Ibsen of immorality. He blamed him of writing unsacred and irreligious issues. He did not like his representation of characters.

He saw in Ibsen a foe to decency and a reviler of sacred things, and he was sincerely shocked. And with bitter resentment, he violently and coarsely abused Ibsen and all connected with him. To quote Shaw in The Quintessence of Ibsenism: “He accused Ibsen of dramatic impotence, ludicrous amateurishness, nastiness, vulgarity, egotism, coarseness, absurdity, uninteresting verbosity, and ‘sub urbanity’, declaring
that he had taken ideas that would have inspired a great tragic poet and vulgarized and debased them in dull, hateful, loathsome, horrible plays.” (4)

Critics, readers, audience and many other dramatists and people of social recognition attacked him. Everyone in England who saw his plays in theatres were moved. Some liked them, some disliked them and some could not form an opinion but every one contemplated on his themes.

From here began Ibsen’s journey as a responsible literary figure. He faced many blows in his life. “During the first half of his life he struggled against an adverse fate. He failed to receive at the hands of his fellows the meed of respect to which he was justly entitled. He dragged his soul to the heights through the long and weary lanes of poverty and want.” (Levy 12)

His personal life had always been trying and his professional life was becoming testing. Norway didn’t give him what he deserved hence he underwent a self imposed exile for twenty seven years in expectation for something better in future. He saw better days in future but they were accompanied with tough situations. Earlier, he had been the victim of negligence, now he was victimized with over attention. He was never understood in the right way but one man who supported him critically and morally was William Archer. William Archer always defended him as an artist and as a man. He was never carried away by all sorts of harsh criticism of Ibsen by other writers.

Of all the critics who supported Ibsen dramas in these trying times, Archer was the recognized leader. Edmond Gosse writes in his preface of Henrik Ibsen; “For a quarter of a century he was the protagonist in the fight against misconstruction and stupidity; with wonderful courage, with not less wonderful good temper and
persistency, he insisted on making the true Ibsen take the place of the false, and in securing for him the recognition due to his genius.” (xi)

William Archer was the most unprejudiced critic of his time. He was very rational and wise in his criticism. His calm, serene and mature outlook and perception accredited him with being one of the finest critics. His criticism was never influenced by any opinions. “Mr. William Archer has his reward; his own name is permanently attached to the intelligent appreciation of the Norwegian playwright in England and America.” (Ibid xi)

Ibsen did not write down any imaginary fables to which the majority of the readers and audience were accustomed. He could not control his observation of several of the burning issues of his age. His life had shown him many adverse situations. Right from his birth, he was surrounded with many problems. He faced financial worries resulting in poverty and bankruptcy, responsibilities of family, sacrifices in personal pursuits, the blot of illegitimacy, failure in early career, rejections in theatres and elsewhere, all changed his attitude towards life. He had seen life at its closest. He had savoured the bitter life and therefore his viewpoint towards life completely altered but this viewpoint laid his foundation for his future writings which made him the greatest dramatist only after Shakespeare. In one of his letters Ibsen wrote: “Everything that I have written has the closest possible connection with what I have lived through, even though it has not been my own experience.”

Ibsen’s plays have intensity and depth. Those who read or watched his plays superficially, could not understand their gravity and seriousness but those with an inner eye, a realistic outlook and a profane insight understood that his subject matter was something deeper and more permanent. They could analyze his reasons of dealing with issues of human concern. Critics like Scott neither understood Ibsen nor
his plays. On his adverse comment on Ibsen’s *The Wild Duck*, Shaw defended Ibsen by writing in his Quintessence,

> When an author’s work produce violent controversy, and are new, people are apt to read them with that sort of seriousness which is very appropriately called deadly ... I remember a performance of *The Wild Duck*, at which the late Clement Scott pointed out triumphantly that the play was so absurd that even the champions of Ibsen could not help laughing at it. It had not occurred to him that Ibsen could laugh like other man. (185)

One aspect which differentiated Ibsen from most of his predecessors was his faith in individualism. He believed that a man could remain happy when he was clearly himself. In the words of Nora, “There is another task I must undertake first. I must try and educate myself--you are not the man to help me in that…I must do that for myself. I must stand quite alone, if I am to understand myself and everything about me. It is for that reason that I cannot remain with you any longer.” (*A Doll’s House* 87)

External influences drained the happiness from life. He believed that the efforts made by any human being to make himself happy and satisfied were more important than the efforts of the society. He disagreed to the concept that society had a cure for everyone. He believed that just as every ailment cannot be cure by one doctor, similarly every social ailment cannot be cured by one society. Thus, he believed in the power of individualism. He believed that whatever a man can do for himself, is several times better and important than what a society can do for him. Nora is the creation of this concept and Mrs. Alving an example of the consequence of not following it while Ellida Wangel is an example, who, on identifying her individuality,
invites happiness and peace in her life. Dr. Stockman is the mouthpiece of Ibsen when he says, “The strongest man in the world is he who stands alone.” (An Enemy of People 288)

When Ibsen had started pondering on the various social issues, capitalism had entered the European society. Situations changed and society underwent transformation. Industries developed, rapid industrial progress took place, capitalists flourished and social digressions became visible. Political conflicts increased, social patterns underwent changes, hypocrisy grew, social events became more artificial, family values deteriorated and class conflict was borne. Apart from these numerous other changes became evident which occupied Ibsen’s attention. He pondered over these very deeply. All his life, he had lived in a financially and socially strained condition therefore he could clearly see the changes in his society. He could see how the society was falling under the clutches of modernity. He could not endure to see the shallowness in the relationships and the fakeness in the ethics. He disapproved of the vagueness and the futility of the social pomp and show which was lowering the dignity of an individual. The fraudulent bourgeois were crushing all the goodness of the past. All this agitated Ibsen from within and his agitation came evident in his plays. Ibsen reacted to the increasing capitalism and its after effects without being a preacher. He targeted the society and the rich people who comprised of that society. Through Dr. Stockmann, Ibsen ridicules the society which is ruled by the compact majority which in the words of Aslaksen is the “small tradesmen” who form “as it were, a compact majority in the town.” (An Enemy of the People 204)

DR. STOCKMANN. The most dangerous enemy of truth and freedom amongst us is the compact majority--yes, the damned compact
Liberal majority—that is it! Now you know! (*An Enemy of the People* 255)

He mocks at the “compact majority” who are unworthy of ruling and occupying the official positions but still they manage to do so because of their financial influences.

DR. STOCKMANN. Who is it that constitutes the majority of the population in a country? Is it the clever folk, or the stupid? I don’t imagine you will dispute the fact that at present the stupid people are in an absolutely overwhelming majority all the world over. But, good Lord!—you can never pretend that it is right that the stupid folk should govern the clever ones. (*An Enemy of the People* 256)

In one of his essays also, he speaks of capitalism, its effects and the results it produced. “It was a long fight for integrity and dignity, a battle against the despised servility and hypocrisy of the middle class and against the evils which the bourgeoisie beheld in its offspring and enemy, capitalism. Consequently, numerous revolutionary movements appeared at that time.” (*Ibsen Papers*)

The changing society had prepared Ibsen to open the eyes of his readers and audience and to shake the society. He felt awakened and assigned himself the task of writing down his reactions and observations. Although, he did not want to be didactic or instructive yet he surely wanted to awaken the people just as he brought an awakening in Karstern Bernick, Nora, Ellida. Lona awakens Bernick so that he, as a Pillar of Community, might truly establish himself.

LONA. Then why not break with all this lying and deceit?... I did not come back here to betray you, but to stir your conscience so that you should speak of your own free will. I did not succeed in doing
that--so you must remain as you are, with your life founded upon a lie. (*The Pillars of Society* 481- 482)

His experiences had taught him to trust only himself. He distrusted all those ideals which gave way to hypocrisy and immorality. Most of his protagonists are creations of this theory. He wanted to aware the people with all these changing realities. He wanted the people to see, observe, analyze and deduce what was good and what was bad. He wanted his audience to be judicious in reaching any conclusion. His approach of spreading awareness and making the reality apparent to all was quite pragmatic. He presented a problem that agitated the soul of the people. After which he showed the probable results with its effects or adverse effects and the next stage was achieved in which his readers or audience were forced to think about the relevance of the problem. This enabled the people in realizing the outcomes of such problems. But there were a few sections of critics and clergies and other people who always condemned him and his plays and charged him of being instructive.

As early as 1882, in the preface of a translation of *A Doll's House*, by Henrietta Frances Lord, Ibsen was introduced as a didactic dramatist who never took up his pen without the intention of preaching some gospel.

Ibsen believed in honesty to oneself, honesty to the souls. He believed that unless human nature underwent complete transformation, a true life could not be attained. He thought that unless human beings examined their inner selves and cleaned it of all artificiality and hypocrisy, attaining moral and religious life was impossible. His faith lay in the efforts of an individual more than on the church. What a man could do for himself was much more fruitful than what any other institution could do. He asked people to scrutinize their life and the purpose of life. According to him the reason of ignorance was the adherence to the changing principles,
lifestyles, monetary elevations, industrialization and the most important the increasing rift between a human being and his soul. To quote in the words of Azher Suleiman,

The core of Ibsen's moral ideals resides in the principle that honesty in facing reality is the first requisite of a decent life. The dark depth of human nature must be explored and scrutinized to be finally illuminated. Life is full of pitfalls, humbugs, hypocrisies, and vague diseases which must be recognized to be avoided and then to be cured. For Ibsen, this must be the moral obligation of the intellectuals in any society. They should have enough courage and faith in the human soul. Man should depend on himself to release himself from the old social and political restrictions through patient endurance and nobler ideals. Man should not expect any type of salvation from without; we alone can help ourselves, and this is a vital point to comprehend Ibsen's plays. (Suleiman 11)

Ibsen strongly condemned lie as the basis of life. He regarded it as a venomous factor which could ruin the life of others and its absence could make a home a happy and contented home. Its absence could make a man real and genuine and all his relationships could flourish wonderfully. “Ibsen abominates every institution which is based on a lie and he regards it as a symbol of injustice. Such issues form the keynote to the significance of his plays, as well as to the psychology of Henrik Ibsen himself.” (Suleiman 12)

His preliminary task was to identify the evils prevalent in society which slowly but continuously damaged the roots of the society. He knew it was demanding, nevertheless, he continued his efforts. After minute but practical and sincere labour, he realized that four factors severely injured the society. They were: “the Lie inherent
in our social arrangements; Sacrifice and Duty, the twin curses that fetter the spirit of man; the narrow mindedness and pettiness of Provincialism that stifles all growth; and the lack of Joy and Purpose in Work which turns life into a vale of misery and tears.” (Goldman 12)

Having identified some of the root causes of social misery and human suffering, he knew how to stir the sleeping generation. He was blessed with his art of expression through writing. Although he started his writing career to become a renowned writer but his purpose changed later. His intentions were clean and pure. He wrote with an exclusive and positive aim. He wrote to arouse the reasoning of his age. He wrote to spread awareness. He wrote to suppress the lie in order to raise the truth and he wrote to stir the nation. He scanned his mind in his writings. His art of writing was independent of any outward influences. Nothing deterred him from writing on subjects which occupied his consideration.

State and related machineries had always upset Ibsen. It had refused him the pension he had asked for and only after long and strenuous efforts, he managed to get it. He never received the expected help and support from his state. “This notion: that the State is the foe of the individual, and must therefore be done away with, is a favourite idea with Ibsen. Sixteen years later I heard him expatiate on it with as much fervour and zeal as when he first put it forward” (Jaeger 206)

He expected the state to be a platform which could give peace and such liberty to individuals where they could grow freely and inculcate all individual qualities without being swayed away. In a letter to Brandes, he wrote, “The State is the curse of the individual...Undermine the notion of the State, let free will and spiritual affinity be the only recognized basis of union, and you will have the beginnings of a liberty worthy of the name." (Jaeger 206) This conflict between his notions and the real state
are the subject matter of some of his plays. The state, politics, Norwegian viewpoints, Norwegian hypocrisy all were such thoughtful subjects that he could not escape thinking and writing about them. Individual freedom was an important phenomenon in the building of character and basis of a happy life. His personal interaction with various social, political, hypocritical, financial, religious and behavioral problems made him think about them deeply. He felt it his conscience’s call, to deal with the same issues in his plays. His initial plays were focused on the state and allied machinery whereas his twelve most important plays are focused on exposing the artificiality borne of capitalism which gave way to immorality and hypocrisy. In one of his direct address made to some enthusiastic students of Norway, on eighteenth September, 1874 who, as unexpectedly, welcomed him most warmly. He said,

In part I have written of things which have come to me in a flash, in my best hours, as being great and beautiful, and which have stirred me with living power. I have written about that which has seemed to me high above my everyday self, and I have written about it in order to give it substance outside me and within me. But I have also written about the very opposite; about that which, in my introspective moods, has come to light as the scum or the sediment of my own nature. (Ibid 184)

Henrik Ibsen’s dramas are so real and natural in form that they directly appeal to people. It was not his didactics but his sincere and transparent representation of life which was liked by his followers or by those who had a similar bent of mind. He depicted life in its true form. He wrote on the problems often neglected by the ruling class or by people in position. He wrote about the bogus theories on religion and ideal human beings. He wrote about the reality prevalent especially in Norway. He wrote
about the real human and the feigned human and most importantly he wrote about the impact these lay on the real life in the form of immorality and hypocrisy.

His early plays like, Catiline, The Warrior’s Barrow, Burial Mound etc. were purely the outcome of his aesthetics. They were written when he was quite young, full of energy and excitement. While writing these plays, he focused himself on writing about complicated characters and great themes but these did not bring him the success and financial security which he had expected. He felt hopeless and disgusted with his failure. It was only after The Pretenders that he got stable because it brought him the pension he wanted. The course of events of the past few years had profound effect in his life. He left Norway in expectation of a better future and recognition. By now his interests changed from aesthetic to ethical and real. He wrote twelve plays after his transformation of mind and purpose which brought Ibsen, the recognition he had longed all his life and made him immortal.

He began a new trend in writing dramas. He wrote about social problems. In his plays, he scanned human beings and their interwoven relationships. After careful analysis he found that individuals were under the growing threat of immorality. The new economic trend in the market had entwined the reality and morality of the people, which, he felt could bring disastrous results. He observed that society was falling into the clutches of insincerity and falsehood. People were adopting illusionary ways to keep themselves in pace with growing trends. There was nobody who discouraged them from putting a break. There was no one who stirred their conscience because nearly the entire age had fallen prey to such practices. He could not refrain himself from pondering over these issues. First he was observant to these growing malpractices which were ruining the human soul followed by the ruining of human life. Then he used his pen. All his life experiences had amalgamated with his recent
feelings and the product came out in the form of his first social drama, *Pillars of Society*.

In this play, Ibsen makes his audience aware of the capitalistic trends which were spreading far and wide. ‘His dramas thus gave a core understanding of the social processes that made up the basis of late capitalist society.’ (Suleiman 9) He unveiled the bourgeoisification in the society:

At that time the Scandinavian societies (of which Norway is a part) went through an enormous transformation by the breakthrough of modernization, capitalism and bourgeois society. Ibsen focused in many of his plays on problems of mature and capitalist society. He was concerned with the crisis of liberalism, the conflicts of the bourgeois families, woman’s emancipation, and the psychological break-down of the individual and the power of economy over human relations in capitalist society. (Suleiman 9-10)

He acquainted people with the true intentions of the rich people who misused the working class. He exposed the character of those people who exploited the weaker and innocent section of society in order to fulfill their selfish purposes. Through the character of Bernick, who is a lifelike example of the affluent business class, he tried to bring the truth before his audience and readers that the higher position of the man was not a testimony of his duty towards God and society. His social position was as susceptible to influences and temptations. He could be easily lured to any attractive ventures. Bernick belongs to the rich business class. He is blessed with a good social standing, a reputed household and an opportunity to serve the people and pay reverence to God. He does not lack any material comfort. What he lacks is a strong character. In this play, Ibsen very skillfully showed all the stages of development of
an inhuman character. He draws the real life sketch of an ambitious person, who, in order to earn name and fame, uses all simple as well as crafty techniques. He loves one woman, enters into illicit relationship with a second woman and marries a third one. The immorality of this man lies not only in his illicit relations but also in the events followed by it. When he is caught in a room of an actress, he convinces his brother in law to take the blame and he himself marries another woman very respectfully. The brother in law’s reputation is blotted whereas he comes out clean. Later, he secretly buys the lands where the railway lines are to be built but keeps the public in dark and when at all he tells them about it; it is based on a big lie, i.e. community welfare. Not only this, Karstern who calls himself the true pillar of society, lays the foundation of his marriage on one lie and his entire future on heaps of lies and yet he always calls himself “the pillar of society” but at Lona’s insistence, he confesses everything.

LONA. But then, when Betty came home--a pretty young girl, idolized by every one - and it became known that she would inherit all her aunt’s money and that I would have nothing!

BERNICK. That is just the point, Lona; and now you shall have the truth without any beating about the bush. I did not love Betty then; I did not break off my engagement with you because of any new attachment. It was entirely for the sake of the money. I needed it; I had to make sure of it. (Pillars of Society 438)

It is at this stage that he removes all the lie and hypocrisy from his character. He tells her the reason for doing so in the following words:

BERNICK. I found--and you must keep this a profound secret - a house on the brink of ruin. Yes - as good as on the brink of ruin,
this old respected house which had seen three generations of us.

What else could I - the son, the only son - do than look about for some means of saving it?

LONA. And so you saved the house of Bernick at the cost of a woman. (*Pillars of Society* 439)

Lona questions him whether he lied to his wife as well and he answers in the affirmative.

LONA. What does Betty know of all this...that underlies her union with you?

BERNICK. Do you suppose that I would hurt her feelings to no purpose by disclosing the truth? (*Pillars of Society* 439)

Ironically the man who claims to be the pillar of society, but is just the contrary of it, talks very highly of character and community and his model house in his town. He talks about the character development of his wife, the credit of which, she owes to him.

BERNICK. As you can imagine, daily intercourse with me has had no small share in developing her character. Every one, in their degree, has to learn to lower their own pretensions, if they are to live worthily of the community to which they belong. And Betty, in her turn, has gradually learned to understand this; and that is why our home is now a model to our fellow citizens. (*Pillars of Society* 440)

When Lona tries to persuade him to speak the truth, he fears it for the loss of his family peace and for the loss of his reputation in the town.

LONA. But you yourself, Karsten? Do you feel within yourself no impulse urging you to shake yourself free of this lie?
BERNICK. Do you suppose that of my own free will I would sacrifice
my family happiness and my position in the world? (Pillars of
Society 441)

The society represented here is the same society which Ibsen always despised. He always hated the realities lying under the morally constructed society. He analyzed that even in real life; the foundation of the new and progressive society was moral corruption and falseness. The higher the position a man secured the lower were his principles of morality. The social responsibilities had lost their meaning. Social fervor had diminished with the advent of new technology and the feeling of comradeship was losing hold amongst people and the charm to hold profitable positions was increasing day by day. Bernick is a victim of ambitions and aspirations. He wants position, money, a good reputation etc. at the cost of other’s innocence. He wants society to respect him and Lona severely criticizes him for this.

LONA: And you call yourselves pillars of society!
BERNICK. Society has none better.

LONA. And of what consequence is it whether such a society be propped up or not? What does it all consist of? Show and lies -and nothing else. Here are you, the first man in the town, living in grandeur and luxury, powerful and respected--you, who have branded an innocent man as a criminal. (Pillars of Society 453)

The evils present in Ibsen’s time are put forward in the speech by Lona. The exploitation of the weaker class was a prevalent custom. The rich and socially strong people used the common man as a shield to safeguard his image. Either they forced them to obey their commands or they bribed them to fulfill their desires. Both ways the weaker and labour class was used for personal interests. An example of this
custom can be seen in this play *Pillars of Society* play where Ibsen highlights this trend. Another example of such venal crime is in *An Enemy of the People*, in which the Mayor tries to influence his own brother, Dr. Stockmann to disable him to expose the truth of the baths but when he fails, he approaches Hovstad and Aslaksen. He bribes them with a social position and solves his purpose. Similarly, Krogstad is another character in *A Doll’s House* who tries to use Nora to accomplish his task. They are all followers of the prevailing corrupt practices.

Through his plays Ibsen tried to bring the reality to the surface. The truths which lay hidden were unmasked before the public. Scandinavian towns were a congregation of simple kind of people who were not aware of the malpractices the new trends had brought along. The affluent classes ruled them as in any other European place hence very few people were aware of the truths while the rest were not and those who were not aware were made aware now. The idea behind all this was to expose the rich and capitalist class.

Because of this advent of large scale capitalism, overwhelming the self supporting petty bourgeoisie, one of Ibsen’s moral and political ideals was to criticize that capitalistic spirit which had invaded his small native country. It was a long fight for integrity and dignity, a battle against the despised servility and hypocrisy of the middle class and against the evils which the bourgeoisie be held in its offspring and enemy - capitalism. (Suleiman 9-10)

Another issue which drew Ibsen’s attention was the institution of marriage and family. The evils of the changing economic trends had swept in the families of people. The truthful foundations of a marriage were shaken and lie had pervaded there. Trust, which had always been the core of a happy and strong family, was wiping out from
the lives of the people. Marriage turned into an immoral game. Marriages had become a license to freedom of the morally ill class. True marriages had lost their worth. They were limited to as means of social recognition and shelter. The essence of a happy marriage diminished. It no longer remained pure and pious. The purity of a marriage was adversely affected.

Mrs. Alving, the protagonist of *Ghosts*, leads a very ruinous married life. Her husband cheats her and the pastor forces her to follow her religion and duties as a wife and as a mother. When she thinks of abandoning her marriage, she is forced to remain with her dissolute husband. She is not allowed by the pastor to seek freedom and happiness whereas her husband is not restricted in any way. Her religion forbids her to live a free life because she is bound with duties. She is doomed to live in the treacherous house for ever and alone. Her marriage is based on immorality and falsehood.

Similarly, in *The Wild Duck*, Hialmar and Gina’s relationship is based on a lie. Initially their relation seems to be honest and religious but with the interference of Gregers the truth is unveiled. Gina is used by Old Werle and when his intentions are satisfied, he quietly gets her married to Hialmar and his evil deeds remain a secret but this on revelation, this secret ruins the married life of Hialmar and Gina and they lose their dearest daughter Hedvig.

Ibsen’s play throw light some light on the factors responsible for a happy married life and the causes of its failure. The success of marriage lies in truth, trust and respect. When the husband and wife have faith and trust in each other and when they are completely honest to each other, no external elements like ‘Gregers’ can bring any harm to them. But if any of the spouse, does not follow these rules, the marriage gets short-lived. Like faith and truth, respect for each other is also very
important in this relation. Unless and until there is a balance in the position of both the partners, the completeness of the marriage does not take place. Karstern Bernick (Pillars of Society) married his wife only for money, he never loved her as he should have and he never trusted her either and yet, being the Husband, he demanded complete honesty and duty from her. In the play, he repeatedly, blames her of being negligent and responsible for all the bad that take place.

BERNICK. Yes. I know; but you--you, who see nothing that is going on - you, who have no mother's eyes for your son (485)....Why did you not look after him? Now I have lost him. Give him back to me, if you can. (485)....! There, you see, Lona--no support to me, either in gladness or in sorrow (485).... Bernick: I know, at all events, that she has been nothing to me of what I needed. (480)

The case with Helmer and Nora in A Doll's House is quite similar. Helmer is a staunch believer of male supremacy and patriarchal society. He hardly trusts his wife and her dutiful nature. He takes her to be a doll in his hands that he can play with. Equality and balance have no room in his married life. There is only male dominance in his family. He thinks it his moral duty to guard his family but like many men in real life, when his guardianship is put to test, he proves an utter failure. He is not able to perform his duties as a husband when he ought to have it performed the most. When he falls ill, his wife, Nora goes out of way to take get him cured but when Nora needs him and his support the most, he isolates her. All his morality vanishes at the fear of her being guilty. His hypocrisy is revealed when Nora wants him but he leaves her alone just because she lied for his sake and because she was a liar. Due to her immorality, he refuses to accept her as his wife and denies her all her rights as a mother.
HELMER. (walking about the room). What a horrible awakening! All these eight years - she who was my joy and pride - a hypocrite, a liar - worse, worse - a criminal! The unutterable ugliness of it all! - for shame! For shame! ...All your father's want of principle - be silent!--all your father's want of principle has come out in you. No religion, no morality, no sense of duty - How I am punished for having winked at what he did! I did it for your sake, and this is how you repay me.... The matter must be hushed up at any cost. And as for you and me, it must appear as if everything between us were as before - but naturally only in the eyes of the world. You will still remain in my house that is a matter of course. But I shall not allow you to bring up the children; I dare not trust them to you (A Doll’s House 81)

Short lived marriages, unhappy marriages, unbalanced marital relationships, extra marital relationships, denial of religious and sacred duties in a marriage, treachery, over expectation from wives by their husbands, etc were some of those problems evident in the society during Ibsen’s time. These problems were real life problems but no one had the courage to bring them on a social platform. In fact many people thought it unsacred to speak about them because they were prohibited by church and religion. Ibsen, however, keenly observed these. He found that the root cause of these problems was again the change in the economic pattern. The wealthy business class struggled to make money. They did not care for the ways adopted for the same. Their prime concern was to be richer and richer. This unlimited desire to earn money snatched away all their human qualities. Moreover, the riches they possessed made them morally blind. First they toiled hard to make profits and once
they became financially sound, they took over to all kinds of activities as now they hadn’t to worry about earning a living or catering to the basic needs of their family. Once financial security was obtained, they looked for all sorts of recreational activities. Their recreational activities included hunting, drinking, extra marital affairs and involving in dissolute activities. Mr. Alving in *Ghosts* occupied a noble position in society as a Chamberlain. He was financially secure and did not have much to worry about as the rest was looked after by his wife, Mrs. Alving. Since he was mentally as well as financially free, he used his time by getting involved in all sorts of immoral and depraved activities. He seduced his own maid Johanna and physically abused her. The result was the illegitimate birth of Regina. Marriage failures were also the consequences of uncontrolled desires. The nineteenth century was an age of transition. Another reason which laid the foundation of a married household was financial security. Love, affection, values, morals, transparency, etc had very little to do in most of the nineteenth century marriages. The first thing people thought of was a financially secure living. Whether we take the example of Mrs. Alving (*Ghosts*) or Mrs. Linde (*A Doll’s House*) or Mrs. Stockmann (*An Enemy of the People*) or Helmer (*A Doll’s House*) or Karsten Bernick (*Pillars of Society*) or even Hialmar (*The Wild Duck*), they all want a financial security more than anything else. Mrs. Alving married for financial security and so did Mrs. Linde. Both of them confess this truth. Mrs. Alving owns it up before Pastor Manders.

MRS. ALVING. Yes, that is true. Those three cast up the account for me. Oh, it's marvellous how clearly they made out that it would be downright madness to refuse such an offer. If mother could only see me now, and know what all that grandeur has come to!

(*Ghosts*130)
Mrs. Linde, narrates her grievances in front of Krogstad who blames her for her infidelity towards him. She explains him giving reasons for not being able to marry him.

MRS. LINDE. You must not forget that I had a helpless mother and two little brothers. We couldn't wait for you, Nils; your prospects seemed hopeless then. *(A Doll’s House 67)*

Similarly, Karstern Bernick ignores his love for money and marries someone whom he does not love because he gets a monetarily secure future by marrying her.

BERNICK. That is just the point, Lona; and now you shall have the truth without any beating about the bush. I did not love Betty then; I did not break off my engagement with you because of any new attachment. It was entirely for the sake of the money. I needed it; I had to make sure of it. *(Pillars of Society 438)*

Helmer *(A Doll’s House)*, on the other hand, always thinks of finances, irrespective of his wife’s desires. Mrs. Stockman *(An Enemy of the People)* is rather different but she persuades her husband to take care of financial position of the family prior to everything. On the other hand, Werle *(The Wild Duck)* makes Hialmar financially stable so that he can get him married to Gina, the girl whom he seduced. In all these cases we see that all morals fade in front of a financially secure future.

Engstrand *(Ghosts)* accepts, Johanna as his wife because he gets a handsome amount for it. Money and position surpassed all barriers of morality. The so called ‘Pillars of Society’ gave importance to money more than anything and yet had the audacity to preach morals.

Where on one side Ibsen depicted unhappy marriages, on the other side, he also introduced us to a relation which ends up in happiness. The play, *The Lady from*
the Sea, was an effort by Ibsen, to reveal the positive consequences of a faithful relation. Quite contrary to the examples mentioned above, we see that complete trust and faith in a marriage results in a happy married life. Wangel and Ellida have complete faith in each other. Their relation is completely honest. They have not let ‘lie’ and ‘hypocrisy’ take hold of their relation. Their relationship only demands some freedom and this attainment of freedom enables them to restart their married life, happily all over again. Ellida has been sad and gloomy for many years because she is not free to make a choice in her life. But when Wangel gives her the freedom to chose, she chooses him back and they start their happy married life afresh. It is this freedom in any relationship that makes it strong and happy.

ELLIDA. Yes, dear, faithful Wangel - now I am coming back to you again. Now I can. For now I come to you freely, and on my own responsibility. (The Lady from the Sea 82)

If only Helmer had given a similar kind of freedom to Nora in A Doll’s House, and if only Hialmar, in The Wild Duck, had understood his wife as Wangel did, the plays would have concluded differently. Any kinds of secrets, hypocrisy, immorality, selfishness, domination, etc. ruin a relationship and bring misery and sorrow. Since Ibsen was keenly observing all the changing trends of his society, he could not help writing about them and bringing it before his readers and viewers.

‘Lie’ and ‘falsehood’ have been prominent issues in most of Ibsen’s plays. He exhibits the outcome of relations founded on lie. Simultaneously, he makes us familiar with the human values, vices and virtues, evident then and even now. Lie is the root cause of an unsuccessful and unhappy relationship. It is this lie which robs people of their human tendencies and forces them to behave irrationally and selfishly. Relationships based on lies are short-lived. Time and again, it is proven that lie
destroys the essence of life and is most instrumental in breeding immorality and hypocrisy.

Ibsen’s plays are not only in accordance to the age they were written in but they also bear resemblance and validity in today’s time:

Ibsen rendered an undying service in his effort to unmask hypocrisy, to remove the rouge and paint from the cheeks of a hypocritical set in society, and to deride the pretensions of the self-satisfied, the complacent, and the formal, among mankind. He dived into the depths. He sought to place upon the canvas of human imagination a picture of the evils wrought by the unbalancing of the pillars of society, - truth and freedom. (Heller 12)

Ibsen has tried to show two things in his plays. The first is the falseness of a relation based on lie and the second is that over trumpeting the chants of morality do not lead to happiness always. At times a ‘life saving’ lie is better than a life taking truth. He has dealt with the issue of lie in a very realistic manner. He did not exaggerate the concept of lie unjustly. He showed reality in them. He showed how the households of people were ruined because of lie. Nora and Helmer’s relationship in *A Doll’s House* ends because of not revealing the truth. Nora does not tell the truth about the loan she had taken from Krogstad, and from the moment when Krogstad tries to take advantage of the situation, Nora does not spend a day in peace. Unexpected as things happen, when the truth is revealed to her husband, he alienates her who she had never expected and therefore finally she leaves him and goes away. Thus the happiness of her life ends. Although it brings a new awakening in Nora and she realizes the futility of the morality which had always been enchanted in her house but which was least put into practice.
Similarly, Mrs. Alving’s (Ghosts) marriage is a lie itself which she conceals from all others. She never lets people and even her own son know the truth about her marriage thinking that it is immoral to say anything against her husband. She tolerates everything in the hope that all her miseries would end one day when her son would stand for her but fate denies all kind of happiness to her and her son suffers from the disease borne of the lie. This lie takes away all her happiness in youth and in old age as well.

In The Wild Duck, Hialmar’s life ruins because the lie of Werle’s illicit union with Gina is discovered. Everything is going on well but the revelation of the truth snatches away all happiness from the lives of Hialmar and Gina. Although their life, till then, rests on a lie yet it does them good. But the truth shatters their peace and happiness by taking away their only daughter from them. Thus we see that excessive morality is not always good. If slight falsehood saves someone’s life, it is better not to unveil it.

Quite contrary to it, Karstern Bernick’s life, in the play, Pillars of Society, which is also founded on a lie, flourishes the moment the lie is erased out of it. Where as if we talk about An Enemy of the People, Dr. Stockmann, we see, that the problems of his life multiply because he does not surrender to the hypocrite and false society. He cannot stand the immoral and bogus society which runs behind profits more than people’s lives. He tries to convince his townsfolk that the water in the baths is polluted and is the cause of many diseases but no one listens to him because they are under the hypnotic clutches of the people in position. They do not try to find out who is their real well-wisher.

They do not use their power of reason in order to find out the truth because their reasoning and sense of decision have been amputated by the rich capitalists who
have become their saviors without even their knowing it. The capitalists had taken hold of the entire society and the people without realizing the people had surrendered to them. These problems were some of those which people of nineteenth century feared to discuss because they thought it immoral to do so but Ibsen knew how effective these were and how much attention they needed.

Society underwent social, economical, political, emotional and moral changes. With the improvement in the paying power of the people, they cared little for the ethics. All kinds of deeds were performed. Dissolute relations came into trend. First people performed all sorts of crimes and then they concealed it by paying compensation to the sufferer. This tendency of people bred corruption and immorality. They did whatever they liked and neutralized its adverse effects by bribing the people. Whether it was an illegitimate relation or exonerating oneself from any blame or securing some social position, money was used to accomplish the mission. Since money had surpassed all morals and values, society became a play house for the nefarious lot. Whether we take the case of Mr. Alving or Werle, both enter into illicit relations with their maids Johanna and Gina respectively, and their relations are kept concealed because they are paid for doing so either in money or in kinds, Johanna is given a sum of seventy pounds to resettle in marriage.

MANDERS. And then the immorality of such a connection! For money - ! How much did the girl receive?

MRS. ALVING. Seventy pounds. (*Ghosts 130*)

Gina is also settled in her life by Werle. First he sends Hialmar to her house as her tenant. Then he establishes a studio for him and then craftily he gets Gina married to him. Gregers brings this fact in light before us.
GREGERS. (Rises and moves about a little.) Tell me: was it after your engagement - was it then that my father - I mean was it then that you began to take up photography?

HIALMAR. Yes, precisely. I wanted to make a start and to set up house as soon as possible; and your father and I agreed that this photography business was the readiest way. Gina thought so too. Oh, and there was another thing in its favour, by-the-bye: it happened, luckily, that Gina had learnt to retouch. (*The Wild Duck* 704-705)

When Johan comes to town after many years, Karsten Bernick tries to bribe him so that he conceals the truth forever.

BERNICK. Stay over there, Johan; hold your tongue, and I am willing to share with you-

JOHAN. Keep your money, but give me back my name and reputation (458).

Henrik Ibsen belonged to the nineteenth century when people were under the strong influences of churches, religious principles, moral and ethical values. At that time people blindly adhered to these without confirming their cogency and usefulness. Churches were the supreme sacred authorities and were under the direct control of the capitalists hence they catered to the needs of the rich more than the poor. Class difference was evident. But a new kind of difference came in the scene and it was the difference in opinions of people regarding morals. By now two sects of people were formed. One, which believed in the old morals and principles, and the other, who had a modernistic outlook for morals and codes. The old people believed in church and priests and religious ceremonies whereas the new generation showed some kind of
decline in the old beliefs. The old generation blindly followed the morals and codes whereas the new generation tried to reason and check the relevance of any belief. Only after being satisfied with the results, they followed some beliefs.

Pastor Manders, (Ghosts) is a representative of the older beliefs and morals and Oswald represents the modern sect of believers. Oswald has lived in Paris and therefore his view regarding marriage is not the same as that of Manders. Manders believes in the sacredness of marriage. He believes in the honest commitment whereas Oswald talks about the live in relationship which is quite common today. Manders follows religion whereas Oswald follows reason. Manders believes in the universality of religious morality and Oswald believes in acting in accordance to the situation whether the principles of morality are followed or not. For Manders submission to the supreme is most important whereas for Oswald peace, happiness and satisfaction is much more important. A similar situation is seen in Pillars of Society where this difference of opinion is seen again. The people around Bernick are the counterparts of Manders with Rorlund leading the group and Lona and Johan forming the opposite group. The Rorlund group believes free living as a sin. They do not approve of Lona’s cutting her hair, or wearing men’s boots or her singing in drinking saloons etc.

MRS. RUMMEL. She was an extraordinary person too! Would you believe it, she cut her hair short, and used to go about in men's boots in bad weather!

MRS. RUMMEL. She no longer has any connection with the family, as you may suppose; but this much the whole town knows, that she has sung for money in drinking saloons over there-

MRS. HOLT. And has given lectures in public-

MRS. RUMMEL. And has published some mad kind of book. (400)
They also don’t approve of Johan as a decent man because of the rumour that he was caught with an actress in her room. Dina, the actress’s daughter is also made their target.

MRS. HOLT. But she has always been a difficult child to deal with. It is only natural - with all the bad examples she had had before her.

A girl of that sort is not like one of our own; one must be lenient with her. (401)

With this group on one side, we have the targeted group on the other side. The targeted group which comprise of Lona, Johan and Dina represent the modern outlook even as regards morality. Unlike their opponents, they do not believe in fake morals and artificial values. They believe in a happy and independent existence more than a sorrowful but moralistic one. However it is the latter group who lives in reality and practice what they preach.

Another example of this rift of values is visible in *The Wild Duck*. Here the conflict is between Gregers, the fake moralist and Relling the realist. Gregers believes in exposing the truth without thinking of the consequences it may lead to and Relling believes in thinking about the consequences and maintaining happiness and peace first and then following the moral tenets. Gregers insists on true living and poisons the mind of Hialmar whereas Relling believes in happy living and tries to shield Hialmar but of no use.

In *A Doll’s House*, we see this conflict of morality in the view points of Helmer and Mrs Linde on one side that target Nora comprising the other side. Helmer compulsively injects the morality drug in Nora and Mrs. Linde’s faith in the disclosing the truth for a happy marriage, worsens Nora’s life. Although they ignorantly harm Nora but they deliberately do not try to understand her feelings. Nora
believes in a simple and happy living which the two thoughtless moralists destroy completely.

MRS. LINDE. In my first moment of fright, it was. But twenty-four hours have elapsed since then, and in that time I have witnessed incredible things in this house. Helmer must know all about it. This unhappy secret must be enclosed; they must have a complete understanding between them, which is impossible with all this concealment and falsehood going on. (70)

Just prior to the moment when Krogstad takes his allegation back, Helmer speaks like this,

HELMER (walking about the room). What a horrible awakening! All these eight years - she who was my joy and pride - a hypocrite, a liar - worse, worse - a criminal! The unutterable ugliness of it all! - ...all your father's want of principle has come out in you. No religion, no morality, no sense of duty - How I am punished for having winked at what he did! I did it for your sake, and this is how you repay me. (A Doll's House 80-81)

And a minute after Krogstad withdraws his case, the hypocrite; the most immoral moralist says this:

HELMER. Yes, do. Try and calm yourself, and make your mind easy again, my frightened little singing-bird. Be at rest, and feel secure; I have broad wings to shelter you under. (Walks up and down by the door.) How warm and cozy our home is, Nora. Here is shelter for you; here I will protect you like a hunted dove that I have saved from a hawk's claws; I will bring peace to your poor beating heart.
It will come, little by little, Nora, believe me. To-morrow morning you will look upon it all quite differently; soon everything will be just as it was before. Very soon you won't need me to assure you that I have forgiven you; you will yourself feel the certainty that I have done so. Can you suppose I should ever think of such a thing as repudiating you, or even reproaching you? You have no idea what a true man's heart is like, Nora. There is something so indescribably sweet and satisfying, to a man, in the knowledge that he has forgiven his wife - forgiven her freely, and with all his heart. It seems as if that had made her, as it were, doubly his own; he has given her a new life, so to speak; and she is in a way become both wife and child to him. So you shall be for me after this, my little scared, helpless darling. Have no anxiety about anything, Nora; only be frank and open with me, and I will serve as will and conscience both to you-. (A Doll's House 83-84)

Realism is the soul of Ibsen’s plays. He is one of the greatest literary sculptors who sculptured his works so naturally and realistically that they almost look the incidents of day to lives. The best part of his plays is his treatment of morality in them. Morality is very important to him but it is not the only important subject for him. He never tells readers not to be moralistic but he definitely arouses their senses so that people may draw the line somewhere. He urges his readers and audience not to accept the terms of fake morality which leads to hypocrisy “Hypocrisy is pretending to be one thing when you are, in fact, something else. Hypocrisy is not merely being inconsistent in the manner in which one lives. … Similarly, religious hypocrisy is the blatant inconsistency of claiming to be righteous, or leading people to believe such
because of one’s public behavior, while in private willfully engaging in sinful practices or holding sinful attitudes with no remorse or intention to change. The hypocrite knows his or her hypocrisy. (Glen Blog)

He was strictly against submission of oneself without even thinking what one is doing. He wanted people to distinguish between the correct and incorrect, between morality and immorality, between hypocrisy and reality. He wanted that the people use their cognition and intellect for understanding things as they are not as they appear to be. He strived hard to expose the sham morality and illogical behaviour of people who infected the happy lives of others. He wanted to enable people in finding out the truth and reality so that they may act rationally and sensibly, not influenced by any external influences. One of his mottos behind these plays has been bringing the right kind of awakening among the people.

Most of his plays show some kind of awakening. Nora, in A Doll’s House, is awakened when she comes face to face with reality. When she sees the real Helmer, she realizes what a hypocrite he is. She realizes that she had spent her life with a man who was completely dishonest not only to others but to himself as well. The sudden change in the attitude of Helmer brings an awakening in Nora. She understands that no one but she alone can help herself in that situation.

NORA . No, I don't. But now I am going to try. I am going to see if I can make out who is right, the world or I (89)…. Torvald - it was then it dawned upon me that for eight years I had been living here with a strange man, and had borne him three children-. Oh! I can't bear to think of it! I could tear myself into little bits! (90) … I know quite well, Torvald, that most people would think you right, and that views of that kind are to be found in books; but I can no
longer content myself with what most people say, or with what is found in books. I must think over things for myself and get to understand them. (88)

In *Ghosts*, Mrs. Alving is also awakened against the moral rules of society which were told to her by Pastor Manders. She comes to the conclusion that all the morals and religious teachings are worthless if they cannot do any good and therefore she feels it completely correct of Oswald who also disregards piousness and sanctity in a marriage if it is not happy, so she agrees with him.

MRS. ALVING. Here, in my loneliness, I have come to the same way of thinking, Pastor Manders. But I have never dared to say anything. Well! now my boy shall speak for me. (118-119)...But I don’t attach any importance to those obligations and considerations any longer. I cannot! I must struggle for my freedom. (131)...Yes, by forcing me to submit to what you called my duty and my obligations; by praising as right and just what my whole soul revolted against, as it would against something abominable. That was what led me to examine your teachings critically. I only wanted to unravel one point in them; but as soon as I had got that unraveled, the whole fabric came to pieces. And then I realized that it was only machine-made. (134)

There is an awakening in *The Lady from the Sea*. In this play Ellida is awakened from her illusions. The minute Wangel gives her the freedom which the nineteenth century women hardly got; she realizes the importance of her marriage with Wangel and her duties as a mother as well. She confesses about her awakening in the following words:
ELLIDA. Ah! Don’t you understand that the change came - was bound to come when I could choose in freedom? (82)

The drama, *An Enemy of the People*, is an awakening of Dr. Stockmann, when he is tried in his hard times. It is then that he is awakened to many aspects of life. It is then that he comes to know that the compact majority is most immoral and hypocrite and so he decides to devote himself completely to the task of bringing an awakening and he realizes that individuality of a man make him most powerful.

DR. STOCKMANN. I only want to drum into the heads of these curs the fact that the liberals are the most insidious enemies of freedom - that party programmes strangle every young and vigorous truth - that consideration of expediency turn morality and justice upside down - and that they will end by making life here unbearable. (286)...Never, I say. I will educate you myself; that is to say, you shan't learn a blessed thing - but I will make liberal-minded and high-minded men of you. You must help me with that, Petra (287. but I have made a great discovery... It is this; let me tell you-that the strongest man in the world is he who stands most alone. (288).

The awakening in the *Pillars of Society* can be called the central idea of Ibsen’s theory. In this play, Lona speaks what Ibsen wants to speak. Her efforts bring an awakening of the conscience of Karstern Bernick. In the beginning he fears to admit and confess the truth but at the end he realizes that his identity as the Pillar of Society is nothing more than fakeness. He realizes that he does not deserve to be called the Pillar of Society and so he confesses his truth. This confession frees him of all guilt and he feels greatly relieved.
BERNICK. This is what I have to say: hats off to that man, for he has nobly taken another's guilt upon his shoulders. My friends, I want to have done with falsehood; it has very nearly poisoned every fibre of my being. You shall know all. Fifteen years ago, I was the guilty man. …Yes, friends, I was the guilty one, and he went away. The vile and lying rumours that were spread abroad afterwards, it is beyond human power to refute now; but I have no right to complain of that. For fifteen years I have climbed up the ladder of success by the help of those rumours; whether now they are to cast me down again, or not, each of you must decide in his own mind.

(Pillars of Society 493-494)

Bernick is awakened to the truth that most people in society suffer from immorality disorders and that all such people need to cure themselves. He says,

BERNICK. By all means - but thoroughly and conscientiously. There are many among us who need thorough and conscientious repairs… I feel now as if I had come back to my right senses, after being poisoned. But I feel this that I can be young and healthy again.” (Pillars of Society 496)

From the detailed study of some of the plays of Ibsen, we may conclude that Ibsen’s intention behind writing these plays was not just of entertainment.

Thus we see that Ibsen has treated the subject of morality in the best possible way. He has neither been like a priest teaching what morality is and he has neither treated it like an atheist. “You may find that his is not the attitude of the constructive teacher who offers a solution of the difficulties he reveals. He himself says, "I do not answer, I only question," He is a sphinx asking its eternal questions. He does not
undertake to solve problems. He leaves that for society, for the individual, if you like, but he feels that he has done his duty by indicating the difficulty, the problem, the question. He lays bare the existing facts, and he "places his finger, in unmistakable fashion, on the weaknesses of men, on the evils of social life, as if to say, 'these are the facts; what are you going to do with them?'" (Levy 98)

He has treated the subject in the most natural and clear way. Through his works he has tried to show mirror to the society. He has tried to put facts as they are without drifting away from his aim of bringing an awakening in the people. His work as a dramatist has been to put up questions before the people and to let them seek for the answers themselves. In the words of Otto Heller,

True, Ibsen confined himself to criticism. He did not undertake to solve the great problems; he was content to state them. He realized that in our social canon the rules have been more or less upset. The old principles have gone into decay. New principles are wanted. But before these can be clearly and cleanly crystallized out of the confusion of conflicting interests, an accurate analysis of our situation is requisite. Ibsen wisely refrains from submitting an elaborate plan for the reform of society. For him it suffices to show up, by a set of striking illustrations from life, the extant mal-adjustments, and the generally unconfessed impotence of our long existent and somewhat worn religious, political, and social ideals (Heller 106)

His plays provide a very wide and pragmatic view of the immorality and hypocrisy rooted in the society. They teach us to demarcate our perception of such things which do not always do well. We understand from his works that following morals only for the sake of society may yield very harmful and destructive results. A
man should groom his individuality outside the spheres of superstitions, orthodox beliefs and vain ethical values. Unless a man recognizes his individual self, he cannot remain happy because then he may work under all sorts of evil influences. In such a stage, a man cannot be himself. Of what use would these morals and religious beliefs be, if they took away the lives of those who followed them. Too much adherence to any such principles breeds evils like class differences, hypocrisy, falsehood, inequality, superstitions, degeneration of human values, and disrespect for women and we know that all these give birth to immorality.

In *Foundations of a National Drama*, printed in 1913, Mr. Jones accepted the genius of Ibsen in the following words, "A test of Ibsen's quality is supplied by the characters of the men who have most hated and vilified him. Some tribute may perhaps be offered, belated, but I hope not too late, by those whom his tense and shattering genius has at length conquered and brought to own with great regret that they have in part misjudged, in part underestimated him." And, in the same volume:

> No glance at any corner of the modern drama can leave out of sight the ominous figure of Ibsen. A great destroyer; a great creator; a great poet; a great liberator; in his later prose plays he has freed the European drama, not only from the minor conventions of the stage, such as the perfunctory aside and the perfunctory soliloquy, but from the deadlier bondage of sentimentality, of one-eyed optimism and sham morality. (Franc 140)

Ibsen’s contribution in literature and in the field of realism is unparallel. He was a man who preferred to accept poverty than write fanciful dramas which could earn him handsome money. His motive behind his significant works was to expose reality with probable outcomes. People often criticized him for being immoral but I
believe he was much more moral than most of those people who preach morality but seldom practice it. His life is clear like water. He was one of the most genuine men, literature can ever have. His sincerity, honesty towards himself as well as towards others, his simplicity and his treatment of life, make him one of the greatest writers of his time. He was one man who wrote what he felt. He wrote for himself as much as for others. Truthfulness has been his armour in the battle of life.

We can conclude in the words of Ibsen himself who has summed up all his feelings, his thoughts, his perception and his ideas of morality in the following statement by Lona:

LONA… No, my friend; the spirit of truth and the spirit of freedom--they are the pillars of society. (Pillars of Society 497)
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