

laid bare. He failed to see how closely men hug these lies to their bosoms, how indeed they are entwined about one's very heart-strings, how little short of death it is to pull them out. His mind was so permeated by reverence that it postulated equal reverence in everybody else. In his openness and frankness, he failed to comprehend how abusive the respectable, liberal, public-spirited portion of the public in Europe and America could be. He supposed that his discoveries in the domain of lies would be hailed with gratitude. How a lie could be preferred to truth because it carried with it glory and honor and riches, he could not understand. When he did finally understand it, the iron entered his soul.

Ibsen groups all lies under the head of ideals. "Let us not say *ideals*," he pleads. "Let us rather use the good old Teutonic word *lies*." By ideals he does not mean that progressive series of elevated types, which lives in our imagination, and without which progress would be impossible in this world. To Ibsen, the ideal man is the man without ideals. But he means the mass of false, conventional, inorganic conceptions of goodness to which we are all slaves. The courage to live our lives without ideals is the sum and substance of all earthly wisdom. By what right is our life glorified, and another made a by-word and a scorning? By what right do certain conventional requirements make an unholy thing holy? Surely not by public opinion—not by the decision of any majority. A majority represents force simply. It is never right. Whatever is in full harmony with any human soul in its normal condition is right. The approval or condemnation of the public at large has nothing to do with it. Each man's own soul is the court of last appeal. There was a blessed time back in the dim past when individual freedom was not hampered by "ideals"—lies. Then a man did not hesitate to live as his conscience prompted him. He did wrong not because his acts conflicted with a conventional type of goodness, but because they were not in harmony with the true type

in his soul. Such is the philosophy of Henrik Ibsen—simple and straightforward enough. It means simply, "Be true to yourself." But to be true to one's self falls glibly enough from the tongue. To drag ourselves out of the bog of lies, into which we have all sunk, is a very different thing.

But the practical execution of such a theory—the abolition of all restraint on society—would be suicidal. If so, well and good! If modern society cannot endure truth, modern society is a lie and should be flung into outer darkness. Let us go back to first principles. The assumption that modern society—an aggregation of lies cowardice and faint-heartedness—is the ideal of the ages, is itself a lie. But it is not Ibsen and the realists that are pessimists. On the contrary, it is the idealists. It is the man that has no confidence in the native integrity of humanity that fears to abolish restraint. Ibsen never doubts that integrity. It is the man that doubts the capacity of the stream to purify itself, if only left free to flow, that fears to remove the dam. Ibsen never doubts that capacity. "Where law is supported by the dagger and the sword" he says "daylight is much more certain than here where we murder with words." Above all, let us be sure that what we condemn as impure and unholy really is so. Our thinking so on grounds of expediency or even decency does not make it so. Our forms of speech, our habits of thought, our very consciousness, are so hedged about with lies that true judgments are no longer possible. Our only salvation lies in getting back to chaos, back to first principles behind ideals. But it is vain to attempt acceleration. The shell will never crack until the worm has hollowed it out. The lies of the nineteenth century no more than the lies of the fifth will ever come rattling down until their appointed time. Wickedness and tyranny must first be apotheosized.

In his earlier work, Ibsen certainly does not display the gruffness he does in his later. He was a man of pure ideals in his youth—is yet, for the matter of that. He is a Goth,