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Animal, Magnetism, Theatricality in Ibsen's *The Wild Duck**

Rachel Price

MUCH OF CONTEMPORARY Ibsen criticism has addressed one of two concerns: Ibsen and feminism, or Ibsen as realist and inaugurator of modern theater. Articles on the first subject are often critical of universalizing readings of Ibsen that would have the playwright concerned with “humanity” (loftier than the mere “woman question”);¹ articles on the latter theme tend to celebrate Ibsen’s putative antitheatrical vanquishing of melodrama. Yet it may be that in reading Henrik Ibsen’s *The Wild Duck* (1884) neither of the dominant critical investments goes far enough, for in this work neither a particular attention to the treatment of women (nor, as shall become particularly clear, the false alternative of some transcendent “humanity”) nor a project of formalist canonization sufficiently accounts for a crucial connection between Ibsen’s reflections on mode and theatricality and his broader ethical concerns.²

In *The Wild Duck* it is, I argue, via the figure of the animal that Ibsen is able to address with impressive economy both aesthetic problems and his abiding concerns with power and liberation.³ Reflections on the animal serve as the conceptual node linking the play’s exploration of power and agency to formal and thematic concerns. Below I draw out how Ibsen yokes an ethics of alterity to aesthetic concerns with theatricality, authenticity, and illusionism. He does this, I document, through a sustained exploration of the ways that different forms of mediation—theatrical, technological, intersubjective, and occult—all pivot about the same aesthetic questions that plague discussions of animality.

To set up my argument I begin with a brief excursus on the centrality of “the animal” to questions of theatricality, mimesis, absorption, and illusion in Western aesthetics, and hence to the related themes of both the specular and something like its inverse: identification, the unseen or the spectral, aspects of a consistent but understated gothic strain within Ibsen’s oeuvre. The shadowy recesses of the occult and the bright surfaces of realism abut in *The Wild Duck* in the treacherous terrain of illusion’s

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ethical and aesthetic ambiguity. For paradoxes of illusion, theatricality, and realism reduce to an uncertainty: is illusion threatening because too convincing, or because not truthful enough? Does realism, in its approximation of life, or does theatricality, with its ability to “spellbind,” exert a deeper control over others? Similarly, is an animal utterly authentic in its actions, the model for a realist actor, or is it “soulless,” unable to feign absorption, and hence beyond theatricality and authenticity?

In the late nineteenth century such concerns dogged not only the theater but other forms of spectacle, and even politics. They fueled, for instance, the popular nineteenth-century interest in animal magnetism (also known as mesmerism), an occult performance predicated on a belief in the ability to affect participants’ thought processes by way of sympathetic magic and internal animal forces. In the trances induced—sublime states of total absorption—people were moved “beside themselves,” outside their own egos, much like the state to which the realist actor was exhorted to strive in properly inhabiting his or her character.⁴ Because mesmerism was believed to operate via unseen forces, it was also linked to the science/art of photography. For photography was held to reveal hidden essences and lay new claims to authenticity, while also possessing a unique ability, due to its indexical realism, to deceive. As shall be spelled out in greater detail below, *The Wild Duck* draws from these disparate references to shed light on the degree to which the animal, the child, the woman, the otherworldly, and the actor test the limits of a certain ideology of “the human” in the period.

First, however, a brief review of the plot may help the reader to track what it is Ibsen attempts in his weaving together of these apparently eclectic themes. The *Wild Duck* follows the fate of two linked families, the hapless Ekdals and the wealthy Werles. Long ago Old Ekdal and Haakon Werle were partners in some kind of geological venture, until a scandal concerning illegal logging on state lands sent Ekdal (but not Werle) to prison. Now Old Ekdal’s son, Hjalmar, is a poor, would-be photographer married to Gina; Hjalmar and Gina live with their daughter Hedvig in a cramped apartment that doubles as their photography studio. The apartment is divided between the studio/living quarters and the overtly theatrical backdrop of an attic-like loft space, where Old Ekdal pretends he is still a hunter and where Hedvig keeps her pet, the wild duck. Into this sorry scene enters Werle’s son Gregers, just back from decades overseeing his father’s operations in the Hoidal forest. Appalled by the growing conviction that his father made Old Ekdal the fall guy for Werle’s machinations, Gregers begins spending more time with Hjalmar, his childhood friend, and in due course moves into a spare room in the Ekdal apartment. Eventually Gregers forces Gina to admit she once had an affair with Gregers’s father, Haakon Werle,

and that Hedvig may therefore be Gregers's half sister. When Hjalmar learns of Gina's ancient affair, he walks out on Hedvig who, prompted by Gregers to sacrifice her beloved wild duck in order to prove her love for Hjalmar, instead kills herself.

I turn now to review the role of the animal in a dominant strain of Western aesthetic theory, then to a reading of *The Wild Duck* more properly, and finally to an analysis of the role of photography and other forms of mediation in the play.

Absorption, Illusion, Animal

Jonas Barish's *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* is an epic consideration of a distrust of theatricality evidenced from the Greeks to the present. Barish emphasizes in the book that the eponymous prejudice leads to an equating of the theatrical with the insincere, and of naïve expression with authenticity. The antitheatrical—the authentic—is manifest in a pure, almost sublime absorption characterized by a sheer expressiveness. This absorption is instantiated in romanticism and its legacy as a state that “knows nothing of the presence of others” and that “takes as its models the guileless folk of the earth, who ‘know not seems’: the peasant, the savage, the idiot, the child.”⁵

This premium on art's depiction of sublime absorption was, in fact, already present in the eighteenth century, as art historian Michael Fried demonstrates admirably in his analysis of antitheatrical writings by Denis Diderot, who claimed, among other things, that “all that is naïve is true.”⁶ After Diderot, Fried argues, eighteenth-century painting (Fried's primary concern) would privilege the paradoxical illusion that the beholder did not exist, or at least was not implicated in the viewing of the painting. More relevant here, however, is that the *theater* too would adopt a similarly paradoxical realism in which performances were to make of the audience total voyeurs—chance onlookers onto a real-life drama staged for no one but the actors themselves. Actors were to evince an “*oubli de soi*,” a shedding of self-consciousness. It was a realism that demanded not the insistence on subjectivity but the abandonment of it, so as to seem all the more genuine. As Fried writes, the object-beholder relationship, itself the “very condition of spectatorhood, stands indicted as theatrical, a medium of dislocation and estrangement rather than of absorption, sympathy, self-transcendence.” Diderot demanded in effect that actors and painters “de-theatricalize beholding and so make it once again a mode of access to truth and conviction.”⁷

If, following such a realist poetics, the measure of authenticity in representation is the degree to which an actor embodies an object ignorant

of being beheld, then animals going about their habitats unawares might logically be considered the very embodiment of such selfsame abandon. Yet in aesthetic theory the animal has more often been held up as the negation of absorption, a being bereft of an (anti) theatrical self that could be displayed, despite itself, in an unguarded chance sighting. For, the reasoning goes, if the animal does not possess a properly split subjectivity, a post-Cartesian reflexivity, there can be no “self” to forget. Such an uncertainty about the status of animal subjectivity has implications for Ibsen’s unusual foregrounding of them in several of his plays, particularly *The Wild Duck*. For the duck, ostensibly all but offstage (in the loft), and always an object, never a subject, throws into relief multiple situations of mis- or underrepresentation and blindness accorded the women, children, and the lower classes (the “guileless folk”) in the play.

To parse a bit more carefully the paradox of a suspicion of animal theatricality: that for Diderot silence persistently signaled sublime abandon in an artwork (and for silence we may understand the absence of language, mark of the nonhuman) suggests that authentic inward expression *ought* to be the rapturous extralinguistic silence embodied by animals.⁸ After all, the silent animal obviates the beholder just as Diderot urged his actors do. Again, however, in Western aesthetics animals are often understood to perform absorption without any awareness or illusion. They are authentic because they *cannot* deceive, because they are *not* theatrical.⁹ This is to be a dominant dismissal of the animal, who may serve as the object or model for, but not subject or creator of, representation—just as the guileless are those who “know not seems.”

This philosophical position is not, to be sure, the only one in Western aesthetics, but it remains the dominant one. Still, a noteworthy exception that gets at the import of animal theatricality is the counterargument offered by Russian director Nicolas Evreinoff in his book *The Theatre In Life*. Evreinoff begins by acknowledging a quality of indifference in animals: a mouse plays dead before a cat, while the cat also “‘plays a role.’ She is, if you like, absolutely indifferent to the mouse.”¹⁰ Certainly, there is nothing unique in this observation itself. But, perhaps alone among theorists, Evreinoff will remarkably attribute this “indifference”—otherwise legible as a kind of absorption—to a proper *theatricality*.

Indeed, heading off skepticism about the possibility of agency in animal deception, Evreinoff adduces examples of “real, unquestionable acting” by animals, “accompanied by ‘conscious self deception.’” And what, he points out, “if not conscious self-deception lies at the bottom of theatrical play? . . . ‘the animal, though recognizing that its action is only a pretence, repeats it, raises it to the sphere of conscious self-delusion . . . the very threshold of artistic production’” (*TL* 18). Thus it is wrong, Evreinoff concludes, to suggest that animals do not have theater, to deny

they “possess an equivalent to that which men call theater, that they are provided by nature with the predilection for acting, that they make use of such specifically theatrical features as the stage, the stage-setting, the dancing, the dramatic impersonation, the dramatic subject (prologue, theme, acting)” (*TL* 18).

In his implicit critique of a whole tradition that would differentiate between the “mere” mimesis of the natural world and that second order mimesis proper to aesthetic endeavors, Evreinoff reminds us of the ancient connection between animals, illusion, and representation that seems to have set the stage for the long run enjoyed by the anthropomorphic position he argues against. When Aristotle, for example, proclaimed in the *Poetics* that “everyone delights in representations,” he offered as proof that “we delight in looking at the most detailed images of things which in themselves we see with pain, e.g. the shapes of the most despised wild animals even when dead.”¹¹ The figure of the wild animal is, then, already implicated in this earliest of Western reflections on the power of mimesis: regarding wild animals offers little pleasure, but tamed by representation the spectacle delights. This looking at animals and assuming animals’ indifference to the gaze is proof less of the animal’s accomplished acting than it is of a posited radical otherness. The position underscores the notion that the animal is supposed to be insensitive to illusion, and though fodder for representation, neither creator nor engager of it.

W. J. T. Mitchell has offered a compelling examination of the rhetoric surrounding animals and illusion in a short essay in which he concludes that human interest in illusion—or mastery over image—is intimately related to a desire for control over others; the use of animals as illusion (decoy) is an underscoring of the differential power relation. *Illusionism*, Mitchell writes, defining the term against mere illusion and singling out the *trompe-l’oeil* as a typical instance of the former, is the capacity to “take power over a beholder.” Realism, in contrast, aspires to tell “the truth about things.”¹² Mitchell allows—and here terms such as theatricality and realism become famously tricky—that realism, in order to convey its “reality,” may resort to illusion. *But it may not resort to “illusionism,”* the desire to control the other.

To illustrate how this difference parallels that marking the human/nonhuman divide, Mitchell invokes Pliny’s reflections on illusionism. Pliny connects the differing human and animal responses to painting to correlative states of freedom and bondage. “Animals are ‘taken in’ by the image, enslaved to it,” while humans “‘take in’ the image with self-conscious awareness.” Pliny’s point, Mitchell writes, is that when a masterful artist like Parrhasius¹³ “takes in” his fellow artist with a *trompe-l’oeil*, painting effectively “turn[s] humans into animals, to make them react to

an illusion like slaves (or animals) to a master." Painting's "proper" use "among free citizens" should rather be, for Pliny, "as a 'liberal science' . . . which frees the beholder's faculties, transmits power to the beholder so that he may 'conquer himself,' enslave himself. This is what we would call 'aesthetic illusion'" (*PT* 339).

Illusionism is likened to enslavement, an exercising of limits over the beholder, while illusion, like the sublime, permits an affirmative testing of the beholder's limits. But the line between illusion and illusionism is fine and can be fudged. Mitchell extrapolates from Pliny's example that "relations of power and domination must be continually invoked" in representation in order "to reinforce the sense of freedom associated with aesthetic illusion," but "simultaneously forgotten or repressed so that this freedom can be represented as autonomous, slavery represented as freely chosen" (*PT* 340). In illusion (which may well undergird realism) the aim is not to obviate the beholder but to empower him or her, so that the art does not "take in" (as might surrealism or illusionism) but instead provokes contemplation.

By now the reader may be wondering what this reflection on the role of animality in discourses of theatricality, illusion, and realism has to do with Ibsen and *The Wild Duck*. Has not the wild duck in the play's title been exposed as something of a red herring?¹⁴ To be sure, the wounded duck is not reducible to a crude symbol. But it functions as something of a tropological conceit through which Ibsen is able to address theories of representation and form—from realism to illusionism and theatricality—that themselves feed back into a reflection on the "content" denoted by the duck, insofar as these very theories of mediation have consistently evinced a vexed relation to animality.¹⁵

Much as it serves as a philosophical linchpin for the play's meditations on representation, the duck serves as a prism for the abusive power flows coursing throughout the play—between the Werles and the Ekdals; between Hjalmar and his family. And when Hjalmar concludes upon Hedvig's death "I drove her from me like an animal! And she crept terrified into the loft and died out of love for me,"¹⁶ the analogy "like an animal"—Hjalmar's brutishness, but also Hedvig's penned up status, her wings effectively clipped—does not merely function to produce the duck as a metaphor or symbol, mystical or otherwise, for the plight of other characters. Rather, the uncertain status of the duck's agency, fate, even "realness" (contingent upon whether a given production relies on a live or inanimate duck) parallels the ambiguity of the boundary between illusion (for example, the family's business of photography and the simulated forest in the loft) and illusionism (Gregers's control over Hedvig, his ability to make her perceive the loft as an ocean or something otherworldly—she is, to borrow Mitchell's term, "taken in").¹⁷

Indeed, in a penetrating reading of both the mode of the play—realistic or quasi-gothic?—and its thematics, Michael Goldman has associated the loft where the duck is kept with “a sense of delusion, self-deception, failure, pathetic limitation. We are watching, not bears in a forest, but rabbits in an urban attic, a piece of ingenious yet amateur carpentry, filled with the cackling of chickens as well as the cooing of doves . . . something which, like all ‘live’ animals in the theater, both heightens and threatens the illusion, an effect which reminds us simultaneously of theater-as magic [*sic*] and theater-as-contraption.”¹⁸ The loft where the duck is kept is an artificial nature, a poor imitation of the lands from which presumably Werle has profited and that have led to Ekdal’s downfall. The paltry illusion, simultaneously heightened and threatened by the intrusion of the animal, points to the harsher illusionism at work: Ekdal’s having been taken in by Werle; Hedvig’s being taken in by Gregers.

In their derivative, impoverished environs, the Ekdals romanticize a nature replete with wild ducks, a nature that serves as the fantastical escape from their own sordid reality—a reality, particularly for Hedvig and Gina, of suffocating enclosure. That Old Ekdal had earlier been sent “to jail . . . or maybe . . . the penitentiary” (*WD* 395) further underscores the sense that his personal attic is in fact little more than an iteration of such spaces of enclosure, albeit one invested with weak libidinal charges.

In “Why Look at Animals?” John Berger cites Georg Lukács’s claim that in certain ideological constructions of nature, “the life of a wild animal becomes an ideal, an ideal internalised as a feeling surrounding a repressed desire. The image of a wild animal becomes the starting-point of a day-dream: a point from which the day-dreamer departs with his back turned.”¹⁹ It would seem that the Ekdals’s loft is precisely such an ideal of freedom, bounty, nature. It is a fantasy that averts the potentially explosive, suppressed desire to reclaim all that Ekdal has resigned himself to having lost—a resignation enabled by an alcoholism the Werles abet, as if out of the intuition that absent the haze of drink, Ekdal might see through such fantasy and demand justice.

Ekdal’s reenactments of hunting thus constitute a supreme daydream through which the Ekdals renounce a more immanent justice.²⁰ All this is summarized in the sad assessment by the canny Dr. Relling: “Well, what do you think of this bear hunter going into a dark loft to stalk rabbits? There isn’t a happier sportsman in the world than the old man when he’s prowling around in that junkyard. Those four or five dried-out Christmas trees he’s got—to him they’re like all the green forests of Hoidal;²¹ the hens and the rooster—they’re the game birds up in the fir tops; and the rabbits hopping across the floor—they’re the bears that call up his youth again, out in the mountain air” (*WD* 477).

As the Goldman citation hints at, illusion is doubly housed in the Ekdal loft. In a self-conscious allusion to the theater, the loft creates

an illusion-within-an-illusion, a diorama within the larger stage.²² Here Berger's astute reading of zoos elucidates the function of the loft. For the nineteenth-century zoo is a product of a similar theatricality that attempts to render "pure illusion—as in the case of painted prairies or painted rock pools," an illusion bolstered by tokens of an original landscape such as pebbles or branches. These vestiges of nature are, Berger writes, for the spectator like "theatre props: for the animal they constitute the bare minimum of an environment in which they [*sic*] can physically exist" (*AL* 23, my emphasis). Once more the illusion/illusionism divide separates human from animal: for the former the theatrical props create the illusion of a habitat, for the latter such sticks and stones are the illusory residuum of a functioning life.

Hedvig's situation is similar. Early in the play she is fed virtually by a father who comes home with mere accounts of the rich food served him at the Werle's, but without a single candy for his daughter. Hedvig prods her father for the promised treats, and he responds:

HJALMAR. So help me if I didn't forget. But wait a minute! I've got something else for you, Hedvig. . . .

HEDVIG, *jumping and clapping her hands*. Oh, Mother, Mother! . . .

HJALMAR, *returning with a piece of paper*. See, here we have it.

HEDVIG. That? But that's just a piece of paper.

HJALMAR. It's the bill of fare, the complete bill of fare. Here it says "menu"; that means "bill of fare."

HEDVIG. Don't you have anything else?

HJALMAR. I forgot to bring anything else, I tell you. . . . Now, if you'll sit down and at the table and read the menu aloud, I'll describe for you just how each dish tasted. How's that, Hedvig? (*WD* 417–18)

Further, with her weakening eyesight, Hedvig's world has been reduced to a few props, a daily walk outside, and little more. Indeed, Hedvig's constricted environment parallels that of zoo animals, about which Berger writes: "the space which they inhabit is artificial. Hence their tendency to bundle towards the edge of it. (Beyond its edges there may be real space.)" (*AL* 24). From this vantage, Hedvig's (possible) suicide may be read as an attempt to move beyond the confines of her existence—an existence delimited by Hjalmar's dreams and the illusion of a family, within which there is little "real space."

Perhaps even more apt an allegorical figure here than the zoo animal is the pet. For it is the pet, as Berger notes, that is part of the modern withdrawal into the family unit, "decorated or furnished with mementos from the outside world" and lacking "space, earth, other animals, seasons, natural temperatures, and so on. The pet is either sterilized or sexually isolated, extremely limited in its exercise, deprived of almost all

other animal contact, and fed with artificial foods. This is the material process which lies behind the truism that pets come to resemble their masters or mistresses" (*AL* 12). The wild duck's transformation into pet explains in part its function as foil for Hedvig, which culminates in the very real identification through which Gregers's incitation to kill the bird translates into Hedvig's suicide.

In this reading not only the wild duck but so many "becoming-human" or "becoming-animal"²³ characters in Ibsen's plays emerge from sexually isolated, deprived, artificially-fed incarcerations to test the limits of their confinements: a long list would include, among others, doll-like, squirrel-like Nora in *A Doll's House*,²⁴ the wild "beast of prey"²⁵ Rebecca West in *Romersholtm*; the mermaid Ellida in *The Lady from the Sea*; the Rat-Wife in *Little Eyolf*; the Bear Hunter (or his mirror, Maja) and the animal-mask sculptures (or their inspiration, Irene) in *When We Dead Awaken*.

Photography, Identification, and The Unseen

If the pet is part and parcel of a cult of deformed and deforming domesticity, a constant in Ibsen's plays, photography, Rosalind Krauss argues, will be that cult's preeminent technology, the "agent in the collective fantasy of family cohesion" and "part of the theater that the family constructs to convince itself that it is together and whole."²⁶ Photography's performative work of illusory cohesion could hardly be more emphasized in the *Wild Duck*, as the Ekdal apartment is divided into the diorama-loft and a photography studio, where Gina and Hedvig carry out the bulk of the family business. Copious reference is made to sight and vision more generally:²⁷ Werle's wife had poor eyesight, bequeathing her ailment to Gregers, but in a curious parallel, Hjalmar's mother has allegedly cursed Hedvig with poor vision (one suggestion being that in fact it comes in both cases from Werle). Both Hedvig and her possible half-brother Gregers, then, are linked by their lack of vision: per the standard trope, Gregers's poor vision is a metaphor for his obstinate blindness to the world, while Hedvig's poor vision suggests her dark, circumscribed existence and inability or refusal to read what is going on about her.

Photography is also central to the play's ongoing reflections on realism and illusion. Photography, through the same logic valorizing Diderodean absorption and authenticity, is understood to be at once the most truthful of all the arts, owing to its indexical relation to reality, and one of the most cunning, due to its ability to feign reality. Thus it is not incidental that Gina and Hedvig *retouch* photographs for the studio. Photography's ambiguous nature is the dilemma of authenticity plaguing realism: does photography yield mimesis, illusion, or illusionism? Certainly it is, like

illusionism, intimately related to power over a subject and to a desire to delimit and fix subjects, to which the medium's early use in criminology and early psychiatry attests.²⁸

Some forty years old in the 1880s, photography was thought to reveal essences in the same way that earlier absorptive painting aimed to render up the essence of the subject in the moment of his or her abandon of the self. This supposed inner truth was described by Walter Benjamin as "another nature that speaks to the camera rather than to the eye: 'other' above all in the sense that a space informed by human consciousness gives way to a space informed by the unconscious."²⁹ Benjamin, like Berger after him, argues that photography, through devices such as slow motion and enlargement, works to reveal a "secret," something hidden, like the unconscious.³⁰ Hence the apocryphal charge that photography steals the soul (a self beyond the eye.)

Yet photography had, since its inception, also made use of retouching and composite printing, leading to misleadingly "realistic" creations.³¹ This confusion was compounded by the ambivalence over photography's questionable status as art or science, an ambivalence Ibsen spins into a commentary on idealism versus practicality, ideology versus clear-sighted reckoning with material conditions in *The Wild Duck*. For Hjalmar swears that could he but devote his "powers to the craft, [he] would then exalt it to such heights that it would become both an art and a science" (*WD* 441), even as he is incapable of realizing the "craft" as a viable business.

Such debates over photography's powers returns one to those questions, so prevalent in Ibsen's plays, concerning beholder and beholden, subject and object, human and nonhuman. Children—who, according to the ideology Barish identifies, approach animals in their naiveté—historically have been a peculiarly situated subject of photography, often serving as a shorthand for a more general vulnerability experienced by the subject of the camera's gaze.³² Though technically an adolescent, Hedvig is preternaturally young, effectively a child. Furthermore she bears an aura of dim-sightedness, however incipient her blindness; she cannot quite return the gaze of the metaphorical camera or of the beholder. Her childhood and her prognosticated blindness conspire to make her doubly vulnerable and objectified. This unidirectional gaze of the photographer is the same one that positions the animal as looked at but not looking, as the absorbed subject of authenticity, but an authenticity paradoxically lacking autonomy or agency.

Berger elaborates on this theme, arguing that in photography all animals appear as fishes viewed in an aquarium. For Berger the reasons for this are both "technical and ideological." They are technical in so far as high-speed or time-lapse photography is used to produce images otherwise imperceptible by the naked eye, producing what Berger terms "a

technical clairvoyance.” Berger’s ideological aquarium of photographed animals is construed from the fact that they are “the observed,” while “the fact that they can observe us has lost all significance . . . what we know about them is an index of our power, and thus an index of what separates us from them. The more we know, the further away they are” (AL 14). This basic desire of photography to capture the unseen, the unrecorded, even unrecordable (requiring a “technical clairvoyance”) partakes in this ethos of surveillance, whose desire to possess the animal’s secret seems only to further the distance between human and animal.

Philosophers have long debated whether animals possess some inner essence or “soul”; Plato and Aristotle, for example, affirmed animals laid claim to *some* kind of soul, while Descartes came down against the possibility, lumping animals together with machines and automata. An abiding uncertainty over an animal’s “soulfulness” may fuel the culture of technical clairvoyance Berger details, as evermore precise technology is necessary to capture this possible absence. Berger’s photographers represent a voyeuristic twist on the Diderodean aesthetics of absorption, highlighting sinister valences already latent in the *philosophe’s* theory. Berger’s point is that the ever-faster and more subtle means devised to capture a “candid” animal essence produce the very subject-object dynamic that frustrates any apprehension of the animal agency sought in the first place.

Reconsidering Diderot in light of Berger’s ethics of observation, one is struck by the extent to which the absorption praised in Diderot and his contemporaries is consistently that of bourgeois interiors or idealized country scenes—never the absorption of the unremarkable worker; never that of industry or public affairs. Yet Diderodean aesthetics emerge against a backdrop John Barrell describes in *The Dark Side of the Landscape* as one of *decreasing* independence and reflection available to peasants or the working class. Eighteenth-century European painting begins depicting peasants as cheerfully, obliviously at work at just that historical moment in which increasing pressure was being exerted to ensure workers *not* stop working, to remind them that they were being observed.³³

In such a tradition neither the guileless laborer’s, nor the child’s, nor indeed the animal’s absorption is sufficiently profound as to be theatrical in its antitheatricality. Hedvig, then, may be shrewd in intuiting the worthless nature of the sacrifice of the duck urged on her by Gregers. For the duck may not have “soul” or “meaning” enough to effect change. By the same logic, neither should Hedvig, whose potential theatricality appropriately dies with her *off* stage. She is to sacrifice the duck to prove her love for Hjalmar, since in Gregers’s twisted logic the loss of the pet will somehow confirm Hedvig’s total dedication to the man she knows as her father. But if the duck is no more than a Cartesian machine, like

other decoys in the loft, such a sacrifice would be invalidated: it would be no sacrifice (one cannot sacrifice a lifeless thing).

By constructing a parallel between Hedvig and the duck, child and animal, the play poses the question of whether, at least for Hjalmar, Hedvig has "soul" enough to effect change. Has she substituted herself for the duck as a more valuable and hence more powerful sacrifice, or has she, as apprehended, as Doctor Relling's postmortem commentary suggests, her disposability, her parity with the duck in her (presumed) father's eyes? Cynical Relling declares upon Hedvig's death that "the grief of death brings out greatness in almost everyone. But how long do you think this glory will last with [Hjalmar]? . . . In less than a year little Hedvig will be nothing more to him than a pretty theme for recitations" (WD 490). Unable to see and unable to be seen properly, Hedvig removes herself from the gaze of photographer Hjalmar.

The initial confusion at the play's end over who has been shot—Hedvig or the duck—further underscores *The Wild Duck's* persistent emphasis on the theme of identification. The psychoanalytic concept of identification is germane as much to issues concerning photography and spectatorship as it is to "identification" in its more quotidian denotation proper to theatricality (that is, an actor's or audience member's identification with a character.) Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis note in their dictionary of psychoanalytic concepts that identification can be understood both *transitively*, as in "to identify" someone or something (notably, the authors cite as examples the photographer and the criminologist) and *reflexively*, as in "to identify (oneself) with"—that is, Hedvig with the duck and with Gregers, or an actor with his or her role.³⁴

In the reflexive instance, an individual "becomes identical with another or two beings become identical with each other (whether in thought or in fact, completely or *secundum quid*) . . . whereby the relationship of similitude—the 'just-as-if' relationship—is expressed through a substitution of one image for another . . . described by [Freud] as characteristic of the dream-work."³⁵ *The Wild Duck* suggests this latter, reflexive identification is at work between Gregers and Hedvig. The identification between the two, underscored both by their relationship as half siblings and by their mutual problems with vision (as if their reflexive identification were strengthened by a mutual failure to properly enact external, transitive identification), facilitates the power Gregers exercises over Hedvig.

When Gregers calls Hedvig's wild duck an inhabitant of "the depths of the sea," for instance, Hedvig brightens and confesses that the very phrase had occurred to her; that "it always seems to me that the [loft-space] and everything in it is called 'the depths of the sea!'" (WD 438). And, again, Gregers's suggestion that Hedvig shoot the duck as proof of her love for Hjalmar prompts Hedvig to kill herself. For her part, Hedvig's

primary identification with the duck has been strangely highlighted by her appropriation of the bird. She asserts an ownership over the duck that she has over little else in her life, and uses it as a mouthpiece for her own troubles: “it’s *my* wild duck . . . uh-huh, I own it³⁶ . . . she’s a *real* wild bird. And then it’s so sad for her; the poor thing has no one to turn to” (WD 483). Whereas Hedvig identifies (and is identified) with the wild duck, Gregers identifies with the “fantastic” dog that hunts it down—though whether to save it or to salvage it for a hunter’s sadistic ends remains unclear:

GREGERS. If I could choose, above all else I’d like to be a clever dog.

GINA. A dog!

HEDVIG, *involuntarily*. Oh no!

GREGERS. Yes. A really fantastic, clever dog, the kind that goes to the bottom after wild ducks when they dive under and bite fast into the weeds down in the mire. (WD 428)

As noted above, Ibsen’s work frequently features characters that are animal-identified in some sense. In *The Wild Duck*, the fact that both Hedvig and Gregers identify with animals and with each other *via* these animals is oddly resonant with nineteenth-century speculations that animal telepathy had a vestigial corollary in people. In a book on the links between *fin-de-siècle* British literature and magical thinking, Pamela Thurschwell notes that a member of the British Society for Psychical Research wrote: “the habits of ants and bees seem to indicate the possession of a mode of communication unknown to us. If our domestic animals are in any degree open to thought transference, may we not get into somewhat closer communication with them?”³⁷ while Freud himself suggested that “we do not know how the common purpose comes about in the great insect communities; possibly it is done by means of direct psychical transference. . . . One is led to a suspicion that this is the original, archaic method of communication between individuals.”³⁸

Again illusion, power, and the animal/human division seem to be analogous elements in an extended reflection on mediation. Photography adds a further iteration of these questions when one considers the role of the specular in Jacques Lacan’s well-known take on identification in his “Mirror Stage” essay. Although the piece draws distinctions between animals and humans mainly to underscore the symbolic (linguistic) nature of human subjectivity, Lacan highlights the ability to identify with one’s own image as a unique trait separating the human baby from animal young. The human baby identifies with an ideal “I” in the mirror (or the photograph, one might add), while the animal is not able to identify itself in these indexical representations.

Are Hedvig's (and, to a lesser extent, Gregers's) identifications with animals connected to an inability to see, to see oneself, *and to be seen*? Lacan further speculates that the struggle for identity and identification is particularly "symbolized in dreams by a fortified camp, or . . . two opposed fields of battle where the subject bogs down [*s'empêtre*, gets entangled] in his quest of the proud, remote inner castle . . . [that] symbolizes the id."³⁹ Whether or not one buys Lacan's dream interpretation, the oneiric loft does serve in *The Wild Duck* as precisely a space for playing out struggles over identification and recognition, a recognition that Hedvig herself does not receive despite living and working in a photography studio.

Freud's and others' however-erroneous speculations on the persistence of some animal mode of communication echo widely held associations during the period between unseen forms of communication, sympathetic magic, and the possible control of others' minds—the latter, as it happens, a constant throughout the Ibsen oeuvre. Nor is it a coincidence that the "black art" of photography coincides, in the 1840s, with the rise of animal magnetism:⁴⁰ photography and animal magnetism were perceived as "mysterious processes that could bring to the surface—either of the photographic image or the mesmerist's body—inner truths about the subject's character and disposition."⁴¹

The power latent in these processes was quickly channeled, and as numerous scholars have pointed out, women were the preferred and predominant subjects of (male) mesmerists' hypnoses.⁴² As opposed to the popular nineteenth-century movement of spiritualism—invented and mainly practiced by women, and marked by "possessions" that might more accurately be characterized as *self*-abandon—male mesmerists were understood to control their subjects' thoughts. In period images of the practice, the hypnotist is often depicted mesmerizing his subject—usually a woman, a member of the working class, or both—from behind. The power relation then "is set up not within the visible, the empirical, but by mysterious means—by animal magnetism. The particular pose induced in the female subject is like a swooning, the melodramatic pose of a character *overcome by a superior power*."⁴³ This, then, is the background for the more overtly politicized, less cryptic animal magnetism at work in much of Ibsen's plays, and certainly in Gregers's influence on Hedvig. For it will be in part the hold Gregers's magical thinking has over Hedvig that convinces the latter that her thoughts and desires can, as for the mesmerized subject, directly "transfer themselves to, and transform, the material world, other people, the future."⁴⁴

Concerned with possession, illusion, and illusionism (control over others' perception), animal magnetism was, moreover, long understood to be close to the theater. In a classic volume on the subject—chemistry

professor William Gregory's 1851 *Letters to a Candid Inquirer on Animal Magnetism*—Gregory voices a concern that animal magnetism's too-truthful spectacle may be perceived as illusionism, or, again, that hyperrealism will be taken to be a lie. Crucially, Gregory fears that it is the lower classes who will betray mesmerism through their imperfect portrayal of (self) possession. The tired refrain of an antitheatricality modeled on, but not reenacted by, supposedly authentic naïfs, children, or animals, returns: "if the subject be uneducated, there will always remain, even while he becomes improved and refined . . . a certain something, which marks the uncultivated mind. Hence his performance, although true to nature, is not perfect, and looks very like acting, *precisely because the best acting is that which approaches nearest to nature, and yet can never reach it.*"⁴⁵ So, on the one hand, the subalterns with whom Gregory is preoccupied may be good impersonators of self-abandonment (in its manifestation as control by an outside agent) but lack the "beautiful soul" that would allow them to fully *be*, rather than merely appear to be, besides themselves. But on the other hand, rather than being convinced that naïve or uneducated subjects "know not seems," Gregory seems more concerned that the uneducated will not be duped.

Cauda

I have argued that Ibsen draws upon philosophical questions concerning animal subjectivity, theatricality, and representation to handily address his modal concerns with realism and his ethical concerns with justice. In treating the disparate fields of the theatre, photography, and sympathetic magic, *The Wild Duck* reveals how all are troubled by distinctions between illusion and illusionism, subjectivity and its renunciation; distinctions which prove to be deeply ethical in their nature, and central to notions of "the human" and "the animal." In concluding, I wish to underscore the theatrical work accomplished by the inclusion of animals, gesture towards the pervasiveness of this animal-centered ethics in Ibsen, and close with a related issue the play leaves deliberately inconclusive.

In the arena of illusion, animals often serve the purpose of exposing human artifice and machinations. Something about the relay between human and animal—a human that both disavows the animal's parity and yet somehow senses that parity may be the animal's "secret," sought after in ever-faster photographs—suggests a disturbing humanism. In *Minima Moralia*, Theodor Adorno pronounces that "the possibility of pogroms is decided in the moment when the gaze of a fatally wounded animal falls on a human being. The defiance with which he repels the gaze—'after all, it's only an animal'—reappears irresistibly in cruelties done to human

beings, the perpetrators having again and again to reassure themselves that it is 'only an animal,' because they could never fully believe this, even of animals. . . . [W]hat was not seen as human and yet is human, is a thing, so that its stirrings can no longer refute the manic gaze."⁴⁶

It seems worth noting that in Adorno's moral exemplum there remains, even if repelled, a gaze back. This gaze back defies the darker Diderodean strictures of absorption, instead comprising the startling moment in which an Ekdal or a Hedvig or an Eyolf, battered or blind, "fatally wounded," returns that arrogant gaze that would set its sights on something higher: Hjalmar's world-changing inventions, or the near-homonymic Allmers's treatise on "Human Responsibility"⁴⁷ in *Little Eyolf*. Indeed the gaze back punctures the lofty goals of so many of the Ibsen men who refuse to take seriously or even take notice of the women and children with whom they live. The gaze back is the look of a woman under the spell of animal magnetism whose hypnotized eyes blink, break the trance, and *see*, or the child in the photograph who is not so much caught *by* as engages *with* the camera. The black humor behind the subject of Allmers's epic book in *Little Eyolf* points to the fact that it is precisely responsibility that is at stake in looking at animals (and people), and in being looked at by them. Ibsen orchestrates his own magic of illusion—but not illusionism—in calling our attention to this.⁴⁸

Instead, if the uncanny in Ibsen patently invokes illusionism, spell-binding, and self-abandon through (otherworldly) possession, in fact it conjures an immanent "beyond" of a humanity that has become a dirty word. In *Little Eyolf*, for example, it is not the Rat-Wife who is, as is implied by Eyolf's parents, ultimately responsible for the boy's death, but the "all too human" treatment Eyolf receives at the hands of his parents. Yet this immanent beyond, so often in Ibsen marked by the sea, also includes the promise of hope for Ibsen's penned-in protagonists. As if it were an edenic haven from which a perverted race of animals (*homo sapiens*) had evolved, the sea beckons in *Pillars of Society*, *Ghosts*, and, perhaps most insistently, in *The Lady from the Sea*, in which Ellida declares that "if only mankind had adapted itself from the start to a life on the sea—or perhaps in the sea—the new would have become something much different and more advanced than we are now. Both better—and happier."⁴⁹

This imported bit of the beyond is, in *The Wild Duck*, the bird, fished out of murky depths, which does the masterful work of photo-realism and composite image at once. It embodies a "beyond" (the sea, freedom, authenticity) grafted, through the artifice of theater, onto the simulated wilds of a grim family. In so doing, it exposes as props that which passes for genuine intersubjective relations within and between the Ekdal and Werle families—it is Goldman's live animal threatening the illusion of the family drama. The duck also serves as a familiar, a foil for Hedvig,

sightless retoucher of photographs, deprived and penned in, who in the end is perhaps nonetheless able to “see through” or carry out that singularly human act of suicide (which both Old Ekdal and Hjalmar had merely threatened to do)⁵⁰—unless Hedvig’s death be an accident.

This is a possibility the play leaves open and which could mean, by denying Hedvig what Lacan deemed humans’ sole successful act, identifying her once more with the animal. What does remain clear at the play’s end is that Hedvig, dead, is described in terms of total absorption (“there she lies, so stiff and still” [WD 489]), a tragic parody of the *oubli de soi* denied her in her lifetime, even as she is well on her way to being actually forgotten, her stirrings successfully silenced within the family—but dramatically announced to the audience.

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NOTES

1 For an exemplary critique of what might be called the “afeminist” position, see Joan Templeton’s “The *Dollhouse* Backlash: Criticism, Feminism, and Ibsen,” *PMLA* 104, no. 1 (1989): 28–40. Templeton is critical of the disproportionate reliance by such “backlash” scholars upon a comment made by Ibsen at a 1898 banquet given in his honor by the Norwegian Women’s Rights League: though grateful for the toast, Ibsen disclaimed “the honor of having consciously worked for the women’s rights movement . . . true enough, it is desirable to solve the woman problem, along with all the others; but that has not been the whole purpose. My task has been the description of humanity” (quoted in Templeton 28).

2 Elin Diamond’s essay “Realism and Hysteria: Towards a Feminist Mimesis,” *Discourse* 13, no. 1 (1990–91): 59–92, is an exception to this tendency. Diamond claims both that Ibsen’s realism is dependent on a portrayal of woman as hysterical, and, more provocatively, that “realism is itself a form of hysteria” inasmuch as “realism’s putative object, the truthful representation of social experience within a recognizable, usually contemporary, moment, remains a problematic issue for feminism” (60). Her argument, however, suffers from a dependence on a rather modernist understanding of realism as *always* complicit in the reproduction of dominant ideologies.

3 In a recent article on Darwin’s possible influence on Ibsen, Asbjørn Aarseth notes that “animal symbolism” frequently feeds Ibsen’s satire, and that “*somehow* the physical resemblances perceived between human beings and certain animals of the higher order must have attracted [Ibsen’s] creative imagination,” but he does not go on to explore the aesthetic or ethical questions Ibsen is able to address through attention to animals. “Ibsen and Darwin: A Reading of *The Wild Duck*,” *Modern Drama* 48, no. 1 (2005): 2 (my emphasis).

4 For an instance of this philosophy of theater, see Denis Diderot’s “Paradoxe sur le comédien,” in *Œcrits sur le theater*, vol. 2 (Paris: Pocket, 1995).

5 Jonas A. Barish, *The Antitheatrical Prejudice* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1981), 326.

6 Michael Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality: Painting and Beholder in the Age of Diderot* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), 101.

7 Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, 104.

8 Fried, *Absorption and Theatricality*, 124, 125, 120. Mladen Dolar, in *A Voice and Nothing More* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2006), cites a 1771 pamphlet by Diderot's contemporary Abbé Dinouart, *L'art de se taire* (The Art of Keeping Silent), on just this point: "in order to be silent well," the Abbé wrote, "it is not enough to shut one's mouth and not speak: then there would be no difference between man and animals which are mute by their nature" (quoted in Dolar 154).

9 Even Jacques Lacan's supposed antihumanism maintains the same point, for he writes in *Écrits*: "deployed in imaginary capture, the feint is integrated into the play of approach and retreat that constituted the first dance . . . moreover, animals show that they are capable of such behavior when they are being hunted down . . . this can go so far as to suggest on the part of game animals the nobility of honoring the parrying found in the hunt. *But an animal does not feign feigning* . . . no more does it efface its tracks, which would already be tantamount to making itself the subject of the signifier." Lacan, *Écrits*, trans. Bruce Fink (New York: Norton, 2002), 294 (my emphasis).

10 Nicholas Evreinoff, *The Theatre in Life*, ed. and trans. Alexander I. Nazaroff (New York: Bretno's, 1927), 7 (hereafter cited in text as *TL*).

11 Aristotle, *Poetics*, trans. Richard Janko (Indianapolis, IN: Hackett, 1987) 2.1.2.

12 W. J. T. Mitchell, *Picture Theory: Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), 325 (hereafter cited in text as *PT*).

13 The artist who famously won a competition by painting a *trompe l'oeil* curtain that his competitor Zeuxis asked to have drawn back to reveal the real painting below. (Zeuxis had first himself painted grapes so convincing the birds had attempted to eat them.)

14 See Toril Moi's argument concerning melodrama and the symbolism of the wild duck in "It Was As If He Meant Something Different Than What He Said—All The Time': Language, Metaphysics, and the Everyday in *The Wild Duck*," *New Literary History* 33, no. 4 (2002): 655–86. Moi is herself presumably marking distance from earlier critics such as Brian McCredie, who wrote of the duck's "structural function as a 'single and precise' symbol" that, "so far from being incidental to the play, . . . is the hub and heart of it" "Falcon and Ducks: A Possible Source of Ibsen's Wild Duck Symbol," *MLN* 93, no. 3 (1978): 495.

15 The duck's family resemblance to Hedvig further underscores both "characters'" vulnerability. Ibsen's attention to the abused child as extreme subaltern has been explored astutely in Michael Goldman's essay, "Eyolf's Eyes: Ibsen and the Cultural Meanings of Child Abuse," *American Imago: Studies in Psychoanalysis and Culture* 51, no. 3 (1994): 279–305.

16 Henrik Ibsen, *The Wild Duck*, in *Ibsen: The Complete Major Prose Plays*, trans. Rolf Fjelde (New York: Penguin, 1978), 488 (hereafter cited in text and notes as *WD*).

17 For the exchange in which Gregers convinces Hedvig that the loft is akin to "the depths of the sea," see *WD* 438.

18 Goldman, "Eyolf's Eyes," 290.

19 John Berger, *About Looking* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1980), 16 (hereafter cited in text as *AL*).

20 Hunting is itself the final iteration in a pecking order of sporting violence exerted over ever-humbler beings; here, if possible, lower still in that pecking order for being mere *simulation*.

21 "Gold and green forests" is an expression for wealth in Norwegian, so the "green forests of Hoidal" signify both Ekdal's lost venture and, more generally, his consequent impoverishment. Thanks to Toril Moi for bringing this to my attention.

22 It is worth noting that dioramas were a product of a similar sensibility in the early nineteenth century, and that Louis Jacques Mande Daguerre, the inventor of the daguerreotype, was himself originally a stage designer and scene painter who in the 1820s intended to develop a diorama in Paris.

23 As Deleuze and Guattari might term it. See Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987).

24 Gail Finney notes that “in Ibsen’s notes to *A Doll’s House* he conjectures that a mother in modern society is like ‘certain insects who go away and die when she has done her duty in the propagation of the race.’ Hence Ibsen bears witness to a larger nineteenth-century historical strategy which Michel Foucault has termed ‘hysterization,’ or the process of defining women in terms of female [or animal?] sexuality, the result of which was to bind them to their reproductive function.” Finney, “Ibsen and Feminism,” in *The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen*, ed. James McFarlane (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 98.

25 Lou Salome’s reading of Rebecca West was of a “wildness that resembles a beast of prey at rest and which hungers for spoil.” Finney, “Ibsen and Feminism,” 97.

26 Rosalind Krauss, *The Optical Unconscious* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1993), quoted in Lindsay Smith, *The Politics of Focus: Women, Children, and Nineteenth-Century Photography* (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 1998), 16.

27 Eyolf, who already bears affinities to Hedvig and the duck in that he drowns, as the wild duck was on its way to doing, is further linked to these characters and to Ellida’s dead child through Ibsen’s invocation in *Little Eyolf* of the very language of vision used in *The Lady from the Sea*. Michael Goldman notes about *Little Eyolf* that “what haunts both parents, however, what they cannot help seeing, is a vision of Eyolf’s eyes.” “Eyolf’s Eyes,” 288. Allmers invokes dead Eyolf’s “evil eyes” while Ellida recalls her dead son’s eyes: “how can we ever fathom this—this—mystery about the child’s eyes—?” Ibsen, *Little Eyolf* and *The Lady from the Sea*, in *Complete Major Prose Plays*, 907, 633.

28 For instance, the first diagnosed multiple personality was photographed in some ten different personality states. See Ian Hacking, “*Automnisme Ambulatoire*: Fugue, Hysteria, and Gender at the Turn of the Century,” *Modernism/Modernity* 3, no. 2 (1996): 39.

29 Walter Benjamin, “The Little History of Photography,” in *Walter Benjamin: Selected Writings*, vol. 2, 1927–1934, ed. Michael Jennings, trans. Rodney Livingstone and others (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999), 510.

30 Benjamin, “Little History of Photography,” 510.

31 Smith notes that “even some of the most radical and important work in photography theory replicates a version of nineteenth-century photography as occupying an unproblematic historical juncture against which to posit subsequent deviations primarily in order to enable the radicality of a modernist avant-garde to emerge against a foil of normative realism.” *Politics of Focus*, 14.

32 Smith traces the Victorian era’s coeval emergence of modern notions of childhood and the medium of photography, in order to make the rather dubious, but here apposite claim that the interconnectedness of the two has made it all but impossible “to refuse . . . identification with the position of the [photographed] child” when looking at photographs. *Politics of Focus*, 7.

33 Barrell admittedly focuses on British painting. See John Barrell, *The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730–1840* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1980).

34 Jean Laplanche and J. B. Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-analysis*, trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith (London: Hogarth Press, 1973), 205.

35 Laplanche and Pontalis, *The Language of Psycho-analysis*, 205.

36 This declaration of ownership negatively anticipates Hjalmar’s later disavowal of taking others’ property (not incidentally, the crime for which his father was incarcerated years before): “Far be it from me to take liberties with another’s property—least of all, a peniless old man’s. No, nor with—the other person’s” (483).

37 Quoted in Pamela Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology, and Magical Thinking, 1880–1920* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), 26–27.

38 Quoted in Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology*, 27.

39 Lacan, *Écrits*, 7.

40 That animal magnetism was also associated, both in France and in England, with radical reform, even with what today would be called animal rights, is less known and probably less relevant to the issues at play in *The Wild Duck* and the rest of Ibsen's corpus, whose occultist themes work to expose real-world politics. In *Ghosts, Emperor and Galilean, The Lady from the Sea, Little Eyolf*, and *Romersholm*, for example, the other-worldly throws into bare relief this-worldly struggles.

41 Geoffrey Batchen, *Burning with Desire: the Conception of Photography* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1997), 50.

42 See in particular Alison Winter, *Mesmerized: Powers of Mind in Victorian England* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1998).

43 W. D. King, "Shadow of a Mesmeriser": The Female Body on the 'Dark' Stage," *Theatre Journal* 49, no. 2 (1997): 201 (my emphasis).

44 Thurschwell, *Literature, Technology*, 6.

45 William Gregory, *Letters to a Candid Inquirer on Animal Magnetism* (London: Taylor, Walton, and Maberly, 1851), 100.

46 Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia: Reflections from a Damaged Life*, trans. E. F. N. Jephcott (New York: Verso, 1974), 105.

47 Allmers is tortured by his life's work: "I sat there, bent over the table, writing day after day. Many times half the night, too. Writing and writing on that massive tome on *Human Responsibility*. Hm!" Ibsen, *Little Eyolf*, 881.

48 As Deleuze and Guattari argue, writers "are sorcerers because they experience the animal as the only population before which they are responsible in principle." *A Thousand Plateaus*, 240.

49 Ibsen, *The Lady from the Sea*, 639.

50 Hegel had argued in his *Philosophy of Right* that "an animal cannot maim or destroy itself, but a man can." See G. F. W. Hegel, *Hegel's Philosophy of Right*, trans. T. M. Knox (New York: Oxford University Press, 1967), 43.