

Annual Report

Centre for Ibsen Studies

2020



(virtual reality rendition of the Comedy House in Bergen during Ibsen's time)

University of Oslo

Introduction

The Centre for Ibsen Studies (CIS), which was established in 1991, is an interdisciplinary center for research, teaching, dissemination, and documentation about Henrik Ibsen and his works. In 2020, CIS maintained a high level of activity in each of its four core areas.

In terms of research, 2020 was an outstanding year in the history of CIS, with the successful defense of no fewer than six doctoral dissertations. We are enormously proud of our Ph.D. fellows and how well they represented themselves and CIS at their respective public defenses, regardless of whether these took place physically or digitally.

The CIS response to the challenges of teaching during the COVID-19 pandemic was rapid, flexible, and ambitious. Seeing the potential for reaching a much larger international audience that lies in digital teaching, CIS implemented plans for developing a fully digital master's program that would be taught in tandem with the existing traditional master's program in Ibsen Studies. This would be the first of its kind at the Faculty of Humanities and CIS continues to collaborate with HF on this process.

CIS has also begun to see positive results from its student recruitment strategy, with 13 new students registered in the master's program, the largest incoming group for any master's program at ILN in 2020. The most significant innovation in teaching at CIS in 2020 was the implementation of a new practicum option for the master's degree; the first students completed their practicum semesters during fall 2020.

As the recipient of ILN awards for excellence in dissemination in 2018 and 2019, CIS constantly strives to strengthen its public outreach. In 2020 CIS implemented a comprehensive media strategy that will streamline our dissemination activities and involve all members of the CIS staff more directly in this work.

The center's mandated focus on documentation is unique within the university; one of CIS's main strategic goals for 2020 was to reconceptualize documentation for the twenty-first century. When CIS was established in the early 1990s the digital resources available today were only beginning to take shape. During 2020 one of the main activities at CIS was developing an over-arching strategy for the center's existing digital resources that will make them fully interoperable and freely accessible to users around the world. As an extension of this strategy, CIS applied for e-infrastructure funding from a number of sources in order to reach the full potential that lies in these resources.

As a semi-autonomous unit under the Department of Linguistics and Scandinavian Studies (ILN), in 2020 CIS produced an overarching action plan ("Handlingsplan") as specified in the current ILN annual plan. This work was completed during fall 2020 and the plan was approved by the department board. The plan outlines the most important actions necessary to maintain the highest levels of productivity and excellence.

The following report goes into greater detail in the areas of research, teaching, dissemination, and documentation.

1. Facts and Figures

CIS is located on the second floor of the Henrik Wergelands hus building. These facilities were completely renovated in 2019, and the center displays a large number of artworks from the University of Oslo's permanent collection that are Ibsen related. CIS is a semi-autonomous unit under ILN that has its own budget, head, and advisory council ("råd").

Key Figures for 2020	
Master's program	1
Courses offered	11
Scientific staff	5.2
Ph.D. fellows	6
Administrative staff	1.5
Budget	6.837 million
Externally financed part of the budget	30%

2. Overview of Current Staff as of Fall 2020

The permanent administrative staff at CIS consists of one 100% senior executive officer and one 50% senior librarian. The permanent academic staff at CIS consists of three 100% positions with combined teaching and research duties and one 100% researcher position dedicated as the data steward for the center's digital holdings.

The limited-term academic staff at the center includes a four-year 100% position as head of center with combined teaching, research, and administrative duties, one renewable three-year professor II (20%) position, and one 30% research assistant who serves as editorial secretary for the journal *Ibsen Studies* and assistant to the data steward. Depending on funding, the center may also have Ph.D. fellows working on their dissertations or holding completion grants after the dissertation has been submitted.

In 2020, two of the permanent teaching/research staff were on leave from their positions to serve as Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Head of the Centre for Ibsen Studies respectively, which necessitated the hiring of temporary replacements.

Name	Position	
Giuliano D'Amico	Associate Professor	100% (permanent)
Gianina Druta	Ph.D. Fellow (Completion Grant)	100%
Nina Marie Evensen	Data Steward	100% (permanent)
Frode Helland	Professor (on leave 2018-2022 to serve as Dean of Faculty of Humanities)	100% (permanent)
Julie Holledge	Professor II	20%
Thor Holt	Associate Professor	100% (temporary replacement for Helland)
Kristin Kosberg	Senior Librarian	50% (permanent)
Ellen Rees	Professor (on leave 2019-2023 to serve as Head of Center for Ibsen Studies)	100% (permanent)
Ragnhild Schea	Senior Executive Officer	100% (permanent)
Astrid Sæther	Professor Emerita	
Hedvig Bergem Sjøiland	Scientific Assistant	30%
Liyang Xia	Associate Professor	100% (temporary replacement for Rees)

A crucial factor in the interdisciplinary success of the center has been the involvement of professor emerita Julie Holledge, who began her tenure as a professor II at CIS in 2011. Professor Holledge retired from this position during fall 2020, although she continues to maintain vigorous research collaborations with staff at the center. Professor Holledge has been a driving force behind numerous initiatives and innovations, and CIS owes her a great debt of gratitude for her contributions within theater studies and digital humanities.

3. Research

CIS maintains a high level of scholarly activity that includes research publications, publications intended for a popular audience, scholarly presentations, an active program of guest lectures that includes the Annual Ibsen Lecture, as well as hosting a number of visiting scholars. The pandemic reduced our ability to host visiting scholars, but other than that the center was able to complete nearly all of its planned research activities.

The project “Data-Mining the Digital Bookshelf,” which was funded by the Research Council of Norway (RCN) and led by Ellen Rees, was completed in 2020. In addition, CIS staff made significant contributions to two interdisciplinary research groups at UiO, both of which are led by Giuliano D’Amico: “Esotericism and Aesthetics in the Nordic Countries,” which held a webinar in the spring and submitted an RCN FRIPRO application in May, and “Book History and Reception,” a collaboration between CIS and ILN’s Scandinavian Literature group that held an international webinar in the fall that was sponsored by HF.

Ph.D. Dissertations

At the beginning of 2020 CIS had six PhD. fellows, four funded internally and two funded by the RCN-funded project, “Data-Mining the Digital Bookshelf. All six defended their dissertations in 2020:

Anku, Solace Sefakor. “Ibsen on the West African Stage: A Case of a Complicated Relationship.” Defended 22 October 2020.

Brovold, Madelen. “Jødiske motiver i norsk litteratur cirka 1800-1970.” Defended 11 December 2020.

Druta, Gianina. “Ibsen at the Theatrical Crossroads of Europe: A Performance History of Henrik Ibsen’s Plays on the Romanian Stages (1894-1947). Defended 26 June 2020.

Holt, Thor. “Far from Home: Ibsen Through the Camera Lens in the Third Reich.” Defended 17 January 2020.

Karlsen, Heidi. “A Discourse Analysis of Women’s Place in Society 1830-1880 through Data Mining the Digital Bookshelf.” Defended 18 September 2020.

Nyhus, Svein Henrik. “Henrik Ibsen in the American Theater, 1879-1914.” Defended 7 February 2020.

Publications

Peer-reviewed scholarly publications

We include only permanent members of the academic staff (or their temporary replacements), the head of center, and Ph.D. fellows employed at CIS during 2020 for this category; thus, the data steward, research assistant, professor emerita, and professor II are not included. In total, CIS produced six peer-reviewed academic publication in 2020, including one monograph, for a total of 18 publication points according to the Norwegian bibliometric system (levels 1 and 2). This is a good result compared to the most recent years

for which we have records: 2011 (2.5 points), 2012 (5.1 points), 2013 (16.4 points), and 2014 (19.4 points).

- D'Amico, Giuliano. 2020. *Tilbake til fremtiden. Håkan Sandell og den nordiske retrogardismen*. Oslo: Scandinavian Academic Press. (level 1)
- Holt, Thor. 2020. "Stories of 'Infidelity': Nazi Ibsen Adaptations and the Norwegian Press." *Ibsen Studies* 20, no. 2: 186-219. (level 2)
- Nyhus, Svein Henrik. 2020. "Ibsen in the German-American Theatre." *Ibsen Studies* 20, no. 2: 154-185. (level 2)
- Rees, Ellen. 2020. "Bjørnsons Sigurd Slembe og samenes plass i Norges kulturelle arkiv." *Norsk Litteraturvitenskapelig Tidsskrift* 23, no. 1: 40-52. (level 1)
- Rees, Ellen. 2020. "Fogden, kvinnen og taterungen. Omstreifermotivet i Ibsens *Brand*." *Edda* 107, no. 4: 242-253. (level 2)
- Rees, Ellen. 2020. "Hytte-humor – om sanitetsbind og begjær." *European Journal of Scandinavian Studies* 50, no. 2: 302-313. (level 2)

Non-peer-reviewed publications

- D'Amico, Giuliano. 2020. "Retrogardism and Metrics in Håkan Sandell's Poetry." *NORDMETRIK News* 4: 5-10.
- Evensen, Nina Marie. 2020. "Tekstreddegjørelse." In *Sigrid Undset: Kransen. Tekstkritisk utgave*, edited by Anne Birgitte Rønning, Aasta Marie Bjorvand Bjørkøy, Nina Marie Evensen, and Ellen Nessheim Wiger, 70-73. Oslo: Det norske språk- og litteraturselskapet.
- Holt, Thor, Eric Rentschler, and Mikkel Bolt Rasmussen. 2020. "Doctoral Defense: Ibsen through the Camera Lens in the Third Reich." *Ibsen Studies* 20, no. 2: 220-248.
- Nyhus, Svein Henrik, Jonathan Bollen, and Olivia Gunn. 2020. "Doctoral Defense: Henrik Ibsen in the American Theatre, 1879-1914." *Ibsen Studies* 20, no. 2: 249-268.
- Rees, Ellen. 2020. "Om 'at lade afdøde Digters Værker leve opp igjen.'" Review of Erik Bjerck Hagens *Norsk litteratur 1830-1875. Romantikk, realisme, modernism*. *Agora* 1: 453-461.
- Rees, Ellen. 2020. "Oslo/Kristiania/Christiania: Ibsen, Hamsun, and the Modern Urban Breakthrough." In: *The Palgrave Encyclopaedia of Urban Literary Studies*. London: Palgrave Macmillan, online edition.
https://link.springer.com/referenceworkentry/10.1007/978-3-319-62592-8_273-1

Research presentations at scholarly conferences, seminars, and other institutions

- D'Amico, Giuliano. "Copyright and the Norwegian Modern Breakthrough." Seminar presentation. "Changing Regimes of Authorship." University of Oslo.
- D'Amico, Giuliano. "Hermetic Semiosis as a Mode of Reception." Seminar presentation. "Reception Studies and the History of the Book: Interdisciplinary Perspectives." University of Oslo.
- D'Amico, Giuliano. "Falsi e storia letteraria. Il caso Ibsen-Hamsun." Lecture for Ph.D. candidates in literary studies. University of Genova, Italy.
- Druta, Gianina. "Translating Ibsen for the Romanian Audience." Seminar presentation. "Reception Studies and the History of the Book: Interdisciplinary Perspectives." University of Oslo.

- Druta, Gianina. "The appropriation of foreign models in the early performance history of Henrik Ibsen on the Romanian stage." Conference presentation. IFTR World Congress (Digital Humanities Working Group).
- Druta, Gianina. "Henrik Ibsen's *Ghosts* and the star-actor tradition on the Romanian stage (1894-1947)." Conference presentation. ARSBN Conference on Baltic and Nordic Studies "Rethinking Europe in Scandinavia and the Baltic Sea Region."
- Druta, Gianina. "Digital Perspectives in Ibsen Studies." Opening lecture. Conference "Self-Realization and the Theatre of Henrik Ibsen." The Department of Theatre Arts, Tel Aviv University in collaboration with the Norwegian Embassy, Tel Aviv, Israel.
- Evensen, Nina Marie. "Inheriting Digital Projects: How to Keep Ibsen Alive Online." Conference presentation. Digital Humaniora i Norden. Riga, Latvia.
- Holt, Thor. "From Labels to Reception Processes: *Jaws* (1975) as an Adaptation of Ibsen's *An Enemy of the People* (1882)." Seminar presentation. "Reception Studies and the History of the Book: Interdisciplinary Perspectives." University of Oslo.
- Rees, Ellen. "Retrograde Masculinity: The Case of Joshua French and Tjostolv Moland." Conference presentation. Modern Language Association, Seattle, Washington, USA.
- Rees, Ellen. "(Re-)Imagining Norway: Practices of Literary Inclusion and Exclusion." Keynote address. Totality and Inter-Subjectivity: Reexamining Community in Contemporary Nordic Literary Studies, Fudan University, China.
- Xia, Liyang. "Ibsen in China: A Political Myth?" Guest lecture. Royal Central School of Speech and Drama, UK.

In-house seminars and Annual Ibsen Lecture

- "Decolonizing Ibsen." Annual Ibsen Lecture by Dr. Robert Malcolm McLaren (theater director) and Professor Sabiha Huq, Khulna University. 10 December 2020.
- "Doubling in Nazi-Era Ibsen Adaptations: *Peer Gynt* (1934) and *Stützen der Gesellschaft* (1935)." In-house webinar by Associate Professor Thor Holt, CIS. 13 November 2020
- "The Greatest Event in a Doll's Life: Who Are the 'Noras' in Today's China?" In-house webinar: Associate Professor Xia Liyang (CIS) in dialog with Guo Yangyang, Lelia TahaBurt, Lin Cuixi, Selena Lu, and Fabrizio Massini (winners of the 2019 Ibsen Scholarship). 28 May 2020.
- "The Racialization of Gerd in Ibsen's *Brand*." In-house-webinar by Professor Ellen Rees, CIS. 15 May 2020.
- "Ibsen and Forgery." In-house webinar by Associate Professor Giuliano D'Amico, CIS. 24 April 2020.
- "*Et dukkehjem* in Slovenian." In-house webinar by Assistant Professor Marija Zlatnar Moe. 2 April 2020.
- "Ibsen and the 'Nanny Chapter': Women's Labor in the Late Plays." In-house seminar by Assistant Professor Olivia N. Gunn, University of Washington. 11 February 2020.

Visiting Scholars

Name	Position and nationality	Duration of stay at CIS
Linnea Buerskogen	Student, Norway	10.08.2020-1.04.2021
Henrik Holm	Professor at Steinerhøyskolen, Norway	01.10.2020-1.04.2021
Nilu Kamaluddin	Researcher, Norway	01.01.2020-31.12.2021

Nino Mazmishvili	Student, Georgia	01.09.2020-01.06.2021
Marija Zlatnar Moe	Associate Professor at Ljubljana University, Slovenia	01.01.2020-01.05.2020
Rezan Saleh	Researcher, Norway	01.01.2020-31.12.2020

4. Teaching

CIS has had an interdisciplinary master's program in Ibsen Studies since 2004. The program is taught in English and attracts students from both Norway and around the world. The program consists of both required and elective courses and a master's thesis. From 2010 to 2015 there were between 6 and 9 new students each year. When the Quota Program was shut down in 2016, the number dropped to only 3 or 4 per year. In 2018 CIS implemented a new recruitment strategy that has led to an increase in enrollment, with 11 new students in 2019 and 13 new students in 2020.

CIS recently implemented a new practicum option for the master's degree and the first two students completed their practicum semesters during fall 2020; one interned at the National Library of Norway and the other worked in-house on the IbsenStage database. Students at CIS can thus now choose between a full 60-credit thesis or a 30-point practicum combined with a 30-credit thesis.

In June 2020 CIS entered an exchange agreement with the Hang Seng University of Hong Kong's School of Humanities and Social Sciences. This agreement will allow both students and staff to carry out studies and research collaboration at the partner institution, and it is thus an important step in formalizing the center's long-standing commitment to international cooperation, especially with China.

During fall 2020 the teaching staff also developed a plan for improving rates of degree completion through more systematic thesis advising that includes group advising. The plan is grounded in innovations in pedagogy that are promoted through the University of Oslo's "Praktisk-pedagogisk utdanning" (PPU, practical-pedagogical education) program. A number of the CIS teaching staff took PPU courses during 2020 and we integrated what they had learned directly into our plans for improving the master's program for 2021.

Courses Taught

Course	Course title	Semester
IBS4000	Research Ethics, Information Resources and Advanced Academic Writing for Ibsen Studies (10 ECTS credits)	Fall 2020
IBS4001	Theoretical, Methodological, and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Ibsen Studies (10 ECTS credits)	Spring 2020
IBS4101	Henrik Ibsen's Works: History, Text, Performance (also offered at bachelor level as IBS2101) (10 ECTS credits)	Fall 2020
IBS4102	Henrik Ibsen's Oeuvre in the Perspective of its Reception History (also offered at bachelor level as IBS2102) (10 ECTS credits)	Spring 2020
IBS4204	Ibsen in Performance (also offered at bachelor level as IBS2204)	Fall 2020
IBS4205	New Perspectives in Ibsen Studies (also offered at bachelor level as IBS2205) (10 ECTS credits)	Spring 2020
IBS4210	Ibsen i praksis (taught in Norwegian; also offered at bachelor level as IBS2210) (10 ECTS credits)	Fall 2020
IBS4220	Ibsen og det moderne drama (taught in Norwegian; also offered at bachelor level as IBS2220) (10 ECTS credits)	Spring 2020
NOR4900 or NOR4950	Practicum semester (30 ECTS credits)	Fall 2020

During this period with unusually many Ph.D. fellows, CIS has been able to make a significant contribution to teaching in the Scandinavian Literature section at ILN, as illustrated in the following table:

Course	CIS Contribution	Semester
NOR1300	Brovold and Karlsen each led seminar groups	Spring 2020
NOR1300	Brovold and Karlsen each led seminar groups; in addition, Karlsen and Rees each taught one lecture	Fall 2020
NOR1302	Brovold was the instructor of record	Spring 2020
NOR2310/4310	Holt was a grader	Fall 2020
NOR2316	Karlsen was the instructor of record	Fall 2020
NOR2360/4360	Brovold taught seven seminars	Fall 2020
NOR2415	Holt was the instructor of record	Spring 2020

5. Dissemination

The new CIS media strategy includes an active social media campaign and networking with global partners. The primary goals of a consolidated media strategy are to 1) improve our ability to recruit students internationally; 2) increase our online presence and visibility; 3) integrate our use of various online platforms; and 4) implement a reliable system for generating online content. In addition, CIS continues to offer more traditional forms of public engagement, such as public speaking engagements for general audiences.

A new development in 2020 was that CIS joined Skien municipality's planning committee for activities relating to the 2028 jubilee celebrating the two-hundredth anniversary of Ibsen's birth. Planning for the jubilee year in collaboration with relevant national and international institutions will guide the CIS dissemination strategy for the next few years.

CIS was awarded the ILN dissemination prize in 2019 specifically for its public outreach through Facebook; throughout 2020 the CIS Facebook page was updated daily and as of February 2021 it had 1283 followers. CIS expanded its social media presence in 2020 with a series of short videos on its dedicated YouTube channel.

Editing the scholarly journal *Ibsen Studies* is a time-consuming and important task that is often overlooked in university metrics. CIS publishes the journal in collaboration with the prestigious British academic publishing house, Taylor and Francis. Each year the editors at the center process a number of submissions and produces two issues, typically with two or three scholarly articles and a handful of book reviews each.

Public presentations

D'Amico, Giuliano, Iris Muñiz and Liyang Xia. "Forsnakk." Introductory discussion to a performance of *Vildanden – Et rettsdrama* at the Teater Ibsen in Skien. 29 February 2020.

Druta, Gianina. "Ibsens komikk." Panel discussion with Hanne Tømte, Knut Nærum, and Liv Gulbrandsen at Nationaltheatret. 23 September 2020.

Holt, Thor. "Ibsens lege-etikk." Panel discussion with Kaveh Rashidi, Ellen Hartmann, and Linn Stalsberg at Nationaltheatret. 15 September 2020.

Rees, Ellen. "Haisommer – filmpub" at Feiring Film Club. 31 October 2020.

Xia, Liyang. "Introduction." Ibsen in Arabic webinar hosted by the Norwegian Embassy in Cairo. 14 December 2020.

6. Documentation

The primary strategic thrust for 2020 was a reconceptualization of documentation as a central component of CIS activities. CIS has identified an ambitious expansion and improvement of its digital resources as the most important way to achieve this goal. An important element of CIS's plans for improving documentation is a newly established collaboration with ILN's Text Laboratory group.

Of primary importance is making the digital resources interoperable and bring them into full compliance with international best practices for data management. CIS staff submitted three proposals for funding to further develop its e-infrastructure: an internal UiO proposal submitted in September, a large and ambitious proposal for a five-year e-infrastructure development project submitted to the RCN in November, and a small-scale internal grant proposal for developing a pilot project submitted to "Teksthub," one of UiO's competence hubs for IT research. Both of the internal UiO proposals were funded, and the results of the RCN call for proposals will be announced in November 2021. A major feature of the RCN proposal is close collaboration with major national Ibsen institutions, such as the three Ibsen museums and the National Library of Norway.

The library collection and digital resources are the core of documentation work carried out at CIS. The library collection primarily houses works by Henrik Ibsen in the original language and in translation, as well as research about Henrik Ibsen and his works. The digital resources include: 1) Henrik Ibsens skrifter (HISe), a digital scholarly edition of Henrik Ibsen's works developed at CIS; 2) IbsenStage, an events-based relational database that registers metadata about performances of Ibsen's works worldwide from 1850 to the present; 3) the Ibsen Archive, a collection of texts about Ibsen's life and works, including transcriptions of book and theater reviews, as well as visual material ranging from Ibsen's own artwork, to photographs of Ibsen, to caricatures of Ibsen; 4) the International Ibsen Bibliography, which is a discovery tool that contains references to publications by and about Henrik Ibsen; as well as 5) other smaller digital projects in various stages of development, including a Virtual Reality reconstruction of the Bergen Comedy House theater ("Komediehuset"), where Ibsen worked from 1851-1857; this project was spearheaded by Julie Holledge as part of her larger "Lost Theaters" project that seeks to recreate virtually theater spaces that have been destroyed. In 2020 CIS established a dedicated VR lab for carrying out research using this and other VR tools for theater studies research.

The present degree of utilization of the existing documentation infrastructure can be measured by the increasingly frequent use of our digital resources in reporting by international media outlets such as the *New York Times* and the *EU Observer*.¹ Statistics on visitors registered by Google Analytics show that CIS documentation has a large number of national and international users. The numbers are split between the different platforms, but

¹ Schteir, Rachel, "Ibsen Wrote 'An Enemy of the People' in 1882. Trump Has Made It Popular Again." *New York Times* <https://www.nytimes.com/2018/03/09/theater/enemy-of-the-people-ibsen.html>; and de Gruyter, Caroline, "Some Lessons from Ibsen's 'An Enemy of the People.'" *EU Observer* https://euobserver.com/opinion/148190?fbclid=IwAR35bNRFKsFRiG8FIDHPRBgNmXq5_n7JhqqTbiMK52kCwT2g7lG_2QaJ1DU

are lacking for HISE. The numbers for the other digital holdings show that nearly 50% of users are international.

For IbsenStage we have user data for the period 1 January 2017 through 24 October 2020. From a low of 2,988 users in 2017, the numbers have increased to 5,192 in 2020. The Virtual Ibsen Centre portal was launched in May 2018 and has since been visited by 928 international and 979 Norwegian users. In 2020 there were approximately 90 users per month on each of the two language versions. The International Ibsen Bibliography was visited by 801 users in 2020, with 11,500 page views and 1,884 sessions. 80% of the users of this digital resource had Norwegian IP addresses.