

Ibsen's (p 41) at
home. there is



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Ibsen's symbolic portrayal of the weather functions as an echo for what is going to occur, meaning that it is a foundation upon which actions arise. In the opening stage directions Ibsen sets the scene by establishing a big wall of glass through which a "gloomy fjord landscape" (p 1) is visible. It rains constantly, thus the weather is throughout most of the play particularly dismal, a symbolic expression of the oppressive atmosphere created by the social norms.

The darkness of the weather also represents the dreariness of the family circumstances, by being shrouded by secrets. Oswald is mainly affected by the oppressing weather, as he complains that it prevents him from thinking properly and resorts to drinking to cope with the circumstances. This exemplifies how the dismal weather represses Oswald's and Regina's joy of life, an inherited characteristic from Captain Alving.

The weather clarifies that, Oswald cannot live in a society, where there is "never a ray of sunshine" (p 41), a symbol of the joy of life being repressed, supported by him "never having seen the sun shine once" (p 41) at home. There is evidently, no place for the joy of life to develop due to the conventional views of society, in contrast to Paris where Oswald has "never noticed anything particularly unprincipled about these people's lives" (p 17), who share a more unconventional lifestyle. An antithesis is, therefore, created between the "gloomy landscape", a personification of the restrictive society that motivates keeping up appearances and obscuring the truth, and the sunny weather, symbolic of the joy of life resultant of the truth being revealed. Throughout the majority of the play Mrs. Alving represses the truth about Captain Alving and his lust for the joy of life. However, once she

acknowledges the truth and tells Oswald the true story about his father, the sun breaks into the room cutting through the darkness. Similarly, the truth frees them from the burden of their secrets.

The weather is, thus, double-sided, both symbolising the restrictive society, and concurrently, representing a society free from norms.