Ibsen, *Ghosts* (1881), cont.

*Oresteia* at Berkeley Rep (http://www.berkeleyrep.org/)

I, iv-vi: rebellious Mrs. Alving & bohemian son Osvald (58-59): ghosts & memories of past in present what is inherited in the play: ideas, disease, property social revolution turns inward

self-fulfillment, self-change, self-liberation

how get away from “bad conscience” (68); pervasive guilt

Mrs. A: “I didn’t want Osvald . . . to inherit the least little thing from his father” (69).

But can ghosts be repressed? Always return of repressed?

“Ghosts. Those two from the greenhouse – have come back” (70).

Adam & Eve; use of hyphen – the unspoken
Act II

Mrs. A: “I’m anxious and fearful because of the ghosts that haunt me . . .” (76) *

Manders & Engstrand, the guilty guilters use pity, guilt, & shame on people

Light imagery

“The twilight gradually deepens” (86)
into O’s confession of syphilis
vermoulu; worm-eaten plays on Genesis & yet suggests otherwise

“Bring the lamp in” (90)
Osvald’s profound angst, fear
longs, mistakenly, for salvation through woman
thinks Regina is cure, the “joy of life”

Mrs A.: “A vale of tears, yes. And we ingeniously manage to make it that” (95).
misery a historical inheritance, also like a Freudian self-fulfilling prophecy

“that light in the sky” (97)
Fire & Rain
Act III

“Tragedy” of burned orphanage revealed as singularly untragic
Engstrand, who set the fire, blames Pastor, but also takes on his guilt as willing scapegoat
certainly not a tragic of the inevitable vs. the human
Regina, however, doesn’t martyr herself for Osvald pursues her own “joy of life” overturns sentimental plot expectations
Mrs. A., even in realizing Alving’s joy of life, accuses R.
Mrs. A still trapped
All the light imagery finally coalesces
Mrs. A: “In a little while you’ll see the sun” (109).
O: “It’s unspeakable” (110).
Final rising tableau of glaciers & peaks
Mother waits w/ morphine pills for son to die
Ibsen, “To My Friend, the Revolutionary Orator”

I won’t play at moving chessmen.  
Knock over the board; then I’m with you.  
You furnish the deluge for the world.  
I’ll gladly torpedo the Ark.

- From Michael Goldman, *Ibsen: The Dramaturgy of Fear* (2)

“Everything will burn.” (103)

Apocalyptic tenor of Ibsen

For next time: Lumiere Bros, Melies, & Benjamin

Films at http://www.stanford.edu/class/ihum22/media.html
Concentrate on Benjamin’s arguments
How do you assess Benjamin’s use of the notion of “aura”? Is that useful for understanding contemporary art and technology?
How successful or not do you find Benjamin’s attempted synthesis of Marxian and Freudian terms of analysis?