

# The Family Relationship in Scandinavian Drama and Its Perception in Japan

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In this paper I am going to try to answer three questions concerning the above-mentioned theme: (1) what significant and unique features has modern Scandinavian drama, particularly Ibsen and Strindberg, in the history of Western theatre in terms of the subject of the family relationship? (2) how were Ibsen and Strindberg introduced and perceived in Japan in the early history of the modern Japanese theatre? and (3) how today should we look at Ibsen and Strindberg from the viewpoint of family and self.

Let's begin with the first question.

## (1)

Ibsen's *Ghosts* is subtitled *en familiedrama*, 'a family-drama'. This term is not used in English translations, where the wording 'domestic tragedy' is preferred, covering a broader subject matter. In German the word *Familiendrama* can be used but it seems that as a genre-term *Rührstück* or *bürgerliches Trauerspiel* is more common. In French the word *drame* was defined by Diderot in the middle of the 18th century as '*drame bourgeois*' or '*genre*

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*sérieux*', that is, a drama in prose where main characters are ordinary people as in Comedy but dealing with serious matters as in Tragedy.

If we define 'a family-drama', however, as a serious drama presenting primarily a problem of the family relationship within a home's four walls, which seems to be Ibsen's intent, its examples are quite limited in the history of drama.

Indeed one may find some Greek tragedies such as plays about the Oedipus family or of the Orestes cycle as examples of the family-drama, but their themes are certainly extended beyond the family to affairs of state. It is characteristic, one may say, that Euripides' *Alcestis*, which is perhaps closest to our concept of the family-drama, is rather tragic-comic and is sometimes regarded as a satyr-drama.

In Shakespeare or Racine, too, we can easily point out a drama involving family conflicts such as *Hamlet* or *Phèdre*, but here again, no one would say they were primarily concerned with family problems. However, Shakespeare's contemporary playwright, Thomas Heywood, wrote one of the earliest domestic tragedies, *A Woman Killed With Kindness* (1604), and some other minor works of this type appeared during this period. But this genre did not develop further. Even *A Woman Killed With Kindness*, which is an interesting play about a wife's adultery and a husband's revenge for it, cannot be placed among dramas of family problems in the strict sense.

It is commonly claimed in the history of Western drama that the first modern domestic tragedy is George Lillo's *London Merchant* (1731), and that Diderot's practice of his own theory of *drame bourgeois* was followed and exceeded by a famous German Enlightenment writer, Gotthold Ephraim Lessing, whose influences can be distinctly traced throughout the history of modern German drama. But to the history of family drama, the contributions of these dramatists were not significant.

The first tragedy where the main problem of the play is

definitely focused upon the relationship between the family members may be Friedrich Hebbel's *Maria Magdalena* written in 1844. But even here the story ends with the daughter's suicide directly caused by her fiancé's betrayal. In this perspective, it can be said that the first serious drama, though ending happily, that is totally concerned with family problems, appeared in Norway in 1865; that is, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson's *The Newly Married*, the first so-to-speak *drame bourgeois* in Scandinavia.

The unique feature of this drama is that the crisis of the family is caused entirely by the family relationship itself, without any disturbing element from outside. A man who is married to an only daughter of a rich factory owner and for whom, therefore, a future position is already promised lives in the household of his parents-in-law and is expected to do nothing other than to console them by making their daughter happy. His wife is quite satisfied with this situation, but he feels it unbearable to live such an unproductive life and revolts against her and his parents-in-law, saying that he is nothing but a doll given to the daughter to play with. He runs away, forcing his wife to do the same if she wishes to be together with him. The second half of the play shows the results of this decision, being set in his own household with his wife. There are some conflicts between them, but with the help of their close female friend everything works out and the play ends happily.

It might be of some interest to mention just in passing that after the first production of *A Doll's House* in Japan one Japanese playwright wrote a play called *A Male Nora*,<sup>1)</sup> which is a parody of Ibsen's play and is of a very similar situation to that of *The Newly Married*. The hero of this play utters the same cry that he is only a doll to his wife. No one has hitherto pointed it out, but I presume that this writer somehow knew of Bjørnson's play.

As generally accepted in the scholarship of Scandinavian drama, Bjørnstjerne Bjørnson was the forerunner of a new

literary movement in Scandinavia, and Ibsen, though four years senior to him, followed in his footsteps every time as far as the innovation of the dramatic form is concerned. *The Newly Married* was intended to be a Scandinavian *pièce à thèse* after French writers such as Émile Augier or Dumas fils and its 'doll statement' was echoed in a minor character in Ibsen's first modern prose play, *The League of Youth* written in 1869, though the complainer was reversed from the husband to the wife. This change in Ibsen's play was of course quite critical in the future development of his playwrighting, but at this time Bjørnson's play reflected a new conflict in the modern family style more distinctly than Ibsen's: namely the transition from the large family to the small one, enforced by the capitalistic development of society. It is also worth noting that the revolt in *The Newly Married* is made by the son against the father-in-law. We may recall that the conflict in Hebbel's *Maria Magdalena* was also in the child-father relationship. As a matter of fact, almost all family conflicts in the 18th century *drame bourgeois* were between children and fathers, as seen in Lessing's *Miss Sara Sampson* (1755) and Schiller's *Kabale und Liebe* (1784).

Therefore, a very important, one may say, revolutionary social aspect of *A Doll's House* is that the conflict occurs between a husband and a wife without any third person involved. Here Ibsen draws for the first time in his playwrighting a so-called small nuclear family living in an apartment house, a newly appearing urban family life-style at the time. Ibsen was clearly aware of the social significance of this aspect when he did away with the extended family type in *Pillars of Society* of 1877 and adopted in the next play, *A Doll's House*, a nuclear family type, which he used throughout the rest of his playwrighting with the only exception of *The Wild Duck*.

However, there was one Western drama before *A Doll's House* that dealt with the same problem of the husband and

wife relationship. That is a French drama, *La Révolte*, written by Villiers de l'Isle-Adam in 1870. De l'Isle-Adam, who would become known as a prominent writer of Symbolism later on, wrote this realistic problem play whose plot was very similar to the last part of *A Doll's House* and which was thought too radical to be produced at the time even in France. This play could not possibly have been known to Ibsen. But it has at least two critical differences from *A Doll's House*; the one is that in *La Révolte* the wife returns home after having left the house and felt entirely alone in the dark and lonely streets outside; and the other is that there appear only two persons, the husband and the wife, in the French play, while in Ibsen's play we see children even if their dramatic significances are not very clear. In other words de l'Isle-Adam had no intention of depicting the problems of a new type of family in modern society.

As is well known, *A Doll's House* caused much heated debate in Scandinavia and one of the strongest criticisms came from a 21-year-younger Swedish writer, August Strindberg. He wrote a short story, titled *A Doll's House*,<sup>2)</sup> an amusing parody of Ibsen's drama. This is a story about a captain and his young wife. During the captain's absence at sea the wife suddenly becomes emancipated through reading Ibsen's *A Doll's House*, which was recommended by her blue stocking girl friend. She writes to him that she has been a mere doll in their married life and that they must separate. The captain, surprised and disgusted at the influence of hypocritic Ibsen on his wife, does not take her words seriously and after coming home succeeds in curing her of that stupid disease by flirting with her blue stocking girl friend and making her jealous.

It must be noted, however, that in Strindberg's *A Doll's House* the captain visits his mother, who lives by herself, and consults her about this matter, and here, too, the couple has no child. Of course this short story is nothing but a parodic comedy, but even so, it suggests that Strindberg did not seriously

find in Ibsen's play the problems of a modern nuclear family.

I am not familiar with the percentage of nuclear families in Sweden in the 19th century, but as far as Strindberg's family dramas are concerned, there is no pronounced tendency toward dealing with this type of family. On the contrary, one may note that in many of his dramas extended families or modified extended families are presented. This may mean that Strindberg was more concerned with the traditional vertical relationship between a child and parents, while Ibsen was more interested in the horizontal one between a husband and a wife. But it seems to me that Strindberg drew rather complicated pictures to show how the horizontal relationship is disturbed by the vertical one and vice versa.

A typical example of such a family drama by Strindberg is *The Father* written in 1887. The family in this play consists of a husband (an army captain), his wife, their daughter and the wife's mother. But in the same household live an old nurse, who was also a nurse of the husband when he was a child, an army doctor, who comes to the place at the beginning of the play, and army footmen and domestic girls. So, this is quite a large family in the original sense of the word used in the ancient Roman period. And indeed Strindberg shows here how patriarchal power is destroyed by the league of women. A woman caresses *and* destroys a man because she is a mother and a wife at the same time. A woman is never equal to a man, or, one should say, a man never to a woman.

Ibsen's and Strindberg's family dramas are rather isolated phenomena in the history of modern European drama. It is true that in Russia at the turn of the century Chekhov was writing his major dramas, the action of which took place in the houses of declining aristocratic families, but so many people from outside come and go, and the problems presented by them are too extended and complicated to be categorized as being centered on family matters. The same thing could be said about

some other dramatists, but none in the 20th century European theatre have been interested in expressing the family relationship as intensely as Ibsen or Strindberg.

It is quite strange, therefore, that the tradition of the family drama was carried on by major dramatists in the United States, such as Eugene O'Neill, Arthur Miller and Tennessee Williams. Are there any similar conditions of family lives between Scandinavia in the second half of the 19th century and the United States in the first half of the 20th century? Being a layman of the sociology of family I cannot answer this question, but as a student of drama I can say that O'Neill and Williams were much influenced by Strindberg, and Miller by Ibsen. Even today Sam Shepard, undoubtedly one of the best living American actor-playwrights, and Lars Norén, the most proclaimed Swedish poet-playwright, are reviving this unique tradition on both sides of the Atlantic.

(2)

Now we turn to the question of how Ibsen and Strindberg were introduced and perceived in Japan.

Around 1920 a Japanese theatre magazine inquired of contemporary Japanese playwrights which European dramatists had most influenced them. Shakespeare and Ibsen got the most points, and Strindberg and Maeterlinch came next. Indeed, Ibsen is the most important European dramatist in the history of the modern Japanese theatre, far more than Strindberg, but I presume that Strindberg touched the heartstrings of many writers more deeply than Ibsen, for passions expressed in Strindberg's plays and novels sound more intimate to us, while Ibsen's ideas may be more shocking.

According to Professor Fujiki, a specialist of Ibsen in Japan, the history of Ibsen-reception in Japan can be divided into four periods.<sup>3)</sup> (1) the period from 1892 to 1905; 1892 is

the year when Ibsen was introduced in Japan, and during this period he became known to the general literary public, (2) the period from 1906 to around 1920; 1906 is of course the year of Ibsen's death and it inflamed the Ibsen boom in Japan, (3) the period from about 1920 until around 1935; Ibsen's centenary in 1928 was celebrated with many productions and publications of his dramas, and this is the period during which Ibsen was reexamined and reappreciated through studies by Ibsen scholars both Japanese and Western, and (4) the period after the second world war until today; Ibsen remains in general repertoires and is discussed and respected enough but apparently has lost his past glory; he seems to most theatre people to be old-fashioned in comparison with the new post-war European dramatists. Among these four periods the second one is most important to the history of the modern theatre in Japan.

As is well known, Japan tried to catch up with the much developed Western countries by modernizing every field during the Meiji period, which began in 1868 right after opening gates to foreign countries after the three hundred years' self-contained feudalistic Edo period. But the modernization of theatre had not earnestly been pursued until 1886, when *Engeki Kairyō Kai*, 'the Society for Modernization of the Theatre', was founded by elite intellectuals and high ranked officials, who had travelled in Europe and the United States and realized that theatre was considered to be high culture abroad. But in Japan the theatre, that is, Kabuki, was entertaining only ignorant people with its utterly ridiculous stories and often cruel and indecent scenes, they thought.

The Society failed, however, in modernizing Kabuki, not only because its primary concerns with the form of the theatre house and the social status of the actors were severely criticised by young intellectuals such as Shoyo Tubo'uchi and Ogai Mori, but because no support came from the general public. It has been often pointed out that Japanese culture has a distinct

characteristic which is that its evolvement occurs not through transforming itself into new forms but simply by taking in new genres or styles from outside in addition to the old ones. So, many different kinds of forms and styles, new and old, exist together in Japanese culture. As for the history of theatre, the first genuine dramatic form, Noh, was established in the 14th century, but when the new age of Edo began, it did not transform itself to adapt to new demands of the public but kept its rigid form with the support of the Shogunate government. Instead a new theatre form, Kabuki, sprang up from outside.

Therefore, it is no surprise that Kabuki had no ability to adapt itself to the modern age, and the new and modern form of theatre had to come from outside of its tradition. The first attempt as such was made by a group of political agitators, and this new type of theatre, generally called *Soshi Shibai*, 'agitator's theatre', shocked the public with its political harangues and realistic fights between radicals and policemen on stage, which were never seen in Kabuki. Before long the agitator's theatre enjoyed a boom in spite of its amateurish acting, but as its actors gradually acquired professional skills, it came closer and closer to Kabuki and finally came to be called *Shinpa*, 'New School', to be distinguished from the genuine modern theatre called *Shingeki*, 'New Theatre,' which made a definite start with a production of Ibsen's drama, *John Gabriel Borkman*, in 1909.

When news of Ibsen's death reached Japan in 1906, one of the leading literary magazines, *Waseda Bungaku*, devoted a special issue to him (July 1906). Next year a group of young talented writers, led by Kunio Yanagida, a would-be famous folklorist, started meetings once a month to discuss Ibsen's dramas. At this point Ibsen was not looked on as a dramatist of social problems so much as a dramatist of radical individualism. Yanagida even declared that Ibsen was more important as a skillful playwright than as a modern thinker.<sup>4)</sup> The symbolism

in Ibsen as much as his realism was also emphasized by some critics, and in the meetings Ibsen's character depictions were mostly discussed.

They did not pay much attention to new family problems, particularly problems of the husband-wife relationship, in Ibsen's modern dramas. It is no wonder, therefore, that the play chosen for the first Ibsen production in Japan was *John Gabriel Borkman* (1896), the next to the last of his works and one of the least known. It is reported that this play was recommended by a prominent novelist, Toson Shimazaki, for he felt much sympathy with the self-asserting cry of Borkman's son, Erhart, for independence from his parents, which is an utter misreading, because Erhart's self-assertion was clearly considered unsympathetically by the author, but which is understandable because many young people at that time in Japan were desperately trying to liberate themselves from bondage to the patriarchal family system.

The production of *John Gabriel Borkman* was undertaken in 1909 by *Jiyu Gekijo*, the Japanese *Théâtre Libre* founded by Kaoru Osanai, a 28-year-old university graduate and theatre critic, and Sadanji Ichikawa II, a 29-year-old enlightened Kabuki actor. It evoked enormous excitement among young and ambitious intellectuals. Guessing from contemporary documents, however, the production seems to have been rather poor. Since most of the players were Kabuki actors, even the important female roles were played by *onnagatas*, male actors playing female roles. But the audience did not care much about the acting but were content with getting to know the author's ideas. It was the first experience for them to realize that the ideas expressed in a play could be more important and indeed more interesting than acting skills on the stage. The history of modern Japanese theatre definitely started at this point.

Two years later the production of *A Doll's House* followed. It was staged by *Bungei Kyokai* 'the Society for Liberature

and Arts', the head of which was the above-mentioned Shoyo Tsubo'uchi, an eminent professor at Waseda University. Tsubo'uchi was more interested in Shakespeare than Ibsen, and so *A Doll's House* was directed by his favorite disciple, Hogetsu Shimamura, also a lecturer at Waseda, and Nora was played by Sumako Matsui, who had been trained from an amateur at the Society. The playing of Nora raised her at once to a star actress.

It may be worth noting here that *Jiyu Gekijo* and *Bungei Kyokai* had opposing ideas for training actors. The former tried to make already established Kabuki actors suitable for modern and realistic drama, while the latter trained ordinary people for two years to be new actors and actresses at its own acting school. Osanai, one of the founders of *Jiyu Gekijo*, said, 'professionals should become amateurs', but in *Bungei Kyokai* amateurs became professionals. Both ways of developing new actors continued in the theatre world until a great earthquake destroyed the Tokyo area in 1923. After that Kabuki actors somehow stopped performing in modern dramas and the idea of amateur-become-professional has dominated the modern Japanese theatre until today.

The production of *A Doll's House* took place first in September 1911 as a closed performance at a private theatre and then in November the same year for the general public at the Imperial Theatre. It caused much debate and reenforced the women's liberation movement at the time. The play was ridiculed of course by men, and Nora's final decision to leave home was criticised sverely by some moral thinkers.

In the meantime a monthly literary magazine for women, '*Seito*', *Blue Shoes*, was founded in the same month as the closed performance of *A Doll's House* was performed, and it issued a special volume of its members' articles on the play in January of the following year. This magazine which held radical and idealistic views on women's liberation and in-

cluded many advanced-minded women writers as its supporting members, was quite influential. The famous manifesto, written by Raicho Hiratsuka, the leader of the editing members, and printed in its first number, laments, "In the beginning the woman was the sun. But she is the moon today, only reflecting the light of others." Raicho Hiratsuka wished women's liberation to be on a higher level than political rights, higher education, independence from men, freedom from servitude at home, etc. which were what the ordinary women's movement was requiring at the time. What she thought as real liberation of women was that they discover their own geniuses inside themselves and develop their hitherto unsuspected abilities fully. If there were any obstacles to that, women were to fight against them, but in order to develop their own geniuses they should forget their egos. In other words women must seek before anything else their self-realization, and then, only then, they would revive as the sun. Her view was passionately stated and its idealism was no doubt moving, but it sounds rather abstract and mystical today.

It is no wonder, therefore, that Raicho Hiratsuka and some other members of '*Seito*' were not as sympathetic to *A Doll's House* as might have been expected. They did not see the family relationship there so much as Nora's seemingly selfish act, which looked doubtful as a model of self-realization. It is no wonder, again, that in the first issue of '*Seito*' was printed a translation of Melejikovsky's article on *Hedda Gabler*, which emphasized Hedda's undetermined genius and admired it in spite of her failure to realize it.

If we turn our eyes to Strindberg in Japan, we find that he was perceived by Japanese literary people differently than was Ibsen.

It was Bin Ueda, famous as he was for his translation of European Symbolist poems, who wrote the first essay on Strindberg in Japan, though Strindberg's name had been known through

the translation of Volkert's *Aesthetik* in 1898. Ueda's essay was titled "A Dramaturgy of Scandinavian Naturalists" and printed in a literary magazine in 1904.<sup>5)</sup> However, it was nothing but a translation of the preface of *Miss Julie*, and it is not clear just how much attention was paid to this essay by general readers. An often quoted essay on Strindberg was one by Kaoru Osanai, titled "A Swedish Dramatist, August Strindberg" and printed in 1906.<sup>6)</sup> But this too was a mere translation of the chapter on Strindberg in James Huneker's *Iconoclasts*, which had come out in New York the previous year. Then, next year Ueda's translation of *The Father* appeared, and it raised much interest in Strindberg in Japan. Many began to read his works even in the English or German versions, among which Emil Schering's German translations were most popular.

Strindberg's so-called naturalistic dramas, not to mention his later expressionistic ones, made quite different impressions on young intellectuals from Ibsen's. We find one essay written in 1909 and titled "A Ghostly Fire in the Literary World",<sup>7)</sup> where the author tried to analyze the dark and bottomless fear in Strindberg's mystical self.

But what surprised people above all was Strindberg's misogyny, of course, but it was welcomed by men who were irritated with Ibsen's seeming feminism. At the news of Strindberg's death in 1912, Shoyo Matsui, one of the most skilled directors at the time, wrote,<sup>8)</sup> "In today's Japan, which is full of modern girls who blindly admire Ibsen's doll-like 'Nora', it is necessary to import more of Strindberg's plays to show men's power and authority." He continued as follows:

What cheers me up in Strindberg is that he is struggling at the bottom of life without shouting about so-called social problems. If he had written *A Doll's House*, he would not have let Nora go off the stage triumphantly. His Helmer would have grasped Nora by the neck with all his strength

and brought her back onto the stage. And then the couple would have fought each other until one of them got exhausted and fell down.

Obviously Matsui did not know of Strindberg's own *A Doll's House*.

The first production of Strindberg's drama in Japan was undertaken in October of the very year of his death. It was done, this time again, in cooperation with the director. Osanai and the Kabuki actor Sadanji II, who had put on the first Ibsen production in Japan. The play was *Inför döden* (*Facing Death*), and performed as one of the repertoire of Sadanji's Kabuki company so that all female roles were played by male actors. It is unthinkable today that a Kabuki company would perform a modern Western drama in translation, but, as I mentioned before, it was not unusual at the time.

This production received very good reviews, if not so enthusiastic as of the first Ibsen production. One of the reviews, written by Hisao Honma, a university professor, is particularly important in the context of our discussion here. I quote it to some extent:

The performance of Strindberg's *Facing Death* by Sadanji and his company was a most worthwhile one, indeed the best of this year.[...] This drama is not among Strindberg's best. The characters of the three sisters are not very clear; they seem to be mere means whereby to draw out the hero's personality. Even this hero, Monsieur Durand, does not look like a real person who has both intellect and feelings, as a complex human being does, but only a character through which Strindberg hastily expresses his own thoughts. This play should be ranked far below the same author's masterpiece, *The Father*.[...] But the problem the author ex-

presses in this play is not a question simply of the husband and wife relationship. It is the triangular relationship of the husband, the wife and children.[...] Here we can find an ethical meaning in the conflict between the couple on the horizontal dimension of the domestic tragedy and at the same time a predetermined meaning in the vertical relationship between the parents and the children. If you look at the play from this point of view, it becomes more interesting. It is of much significance to stage this play, therefore, and I was quite impressed even by their acting, which made this idea of the play very clear to our eyes. On top of that, Mr. Sadanji created on the stage a real human being. We should be much obliged for his efforts.<sup>9)</sup>

It seems, however, that this kind of interpretation was not extended to other realistic dramas of his, even when *The Father* was produced next year. And *Miss Julie*, which is the best known drama of Strindberg, and which was staged by an amateur group in 1914 for the first time in Japan, did not draw much attention from Japanese literary people, nor was it regarded as indecent, as it had been in Sweden before the turn of the century. Perhaps it was because the character of Julie looked simply unbelievable to the general audience and readers. This assumption could be supported by the frequency of the production. *Miss Julie* had been produced only four times before the war, while since the war half of the whole Strindberg productions have been *Miss Julie*.

The most favored plays of Strindberg were instead *Creditors* and *Paria*. When the latter was performed for the first time in 1914, the actor who played Mr. X (the archaeologist) said that his interest lay in the delicate process of understanding the characters through the stark and life-and-death conversation. *Creditors* was produced by the same company in 1917 as the second piece of the evening's repertoire, following a Japanese

drama, *Sono Imouto (The Sister)*, by Sane'atsu Mushanokoji.

It seems to me that Mushanokoji was one of the few Japanese writers who wrote dramas truly influenced by Strindberg. I said truly because in his dramas such as *Aiyoku (Lust)* Strindberg's terrible, indeed illogical fight between the sexes was fully integrated into the author's own expression. The play deals with a hunch-backed husband's and his beautiful wife's unbearable desires toward each other together with the earlier and continuing love of the husband's elder brother for the wife. The triangularly complicated psychological relationship between the three reminds us of *Creditors*, but we do not sense any unnatural tone in the play, which can hardly be said in the cases of the plays in imitation of Ibsen.

(3)

Now we come to the third and last question: how we should look today on the family relationships in Ibsen's and Strindberg's dramas. I'll just briefly offer my own views on the question.

As I stated before, from *A Doll's House* on Ibsen mostly concentrates on the family relationship in a nuclear family, but in each play the family is a deficient one in which one of the primary members is lacking or disappears during the play. This absence or disappearance causes, or is caused by, a disharmonious family relationship, which is either a vertical or a horizontal one. Perhaps the most complex interaction of both relationships is expressed in *Ghosts*, the play which followed *A Doll's House*. It is commonly interpreted as a play which shows how Nora and other members of the family would have come to a bad end if she had not left the house. But that is a mistaken interpretation. The heroine, Mrs. Alving, did leave the house after one year of her marriage but was forced to return to her husband, who was both physically and mentally

rotten. However, everything had resulted from Mrs. Alving's having married for money and from dissatisfied sexual life of her husband. A critic, who is also a psychiatrist, suggests that their son, Osvald, comes to suffer from dementia at the end of the play, not because of his inherited syphilis from his father, which is the generally accepted interpretation, but because of his parents' distorted married life at a critical age for his development.<sup>10)</sup>

Indeed, money and sexual desire are the two most important elements in Ibsen's modern dramas. *A Doll's House* is full of talk about money from the very beginning. It is significant that Ibsen had the husband work in a new position of a bank director, because the normalization of the banking business was the central issue of Norwegian economics in 1870s.<sup>11)</sup> In *Doll's House* Ibsen undoubtedly regarded money as a symbol of male-domination of society.

But sexual desire comes to play a more and more important role in Ibsen's dramas which follow. It is not only men's but more often women's desires which are unsatisfied. Either sexual dissatisfaction disturbs the husband-wife relationship, as in *Rosmersholm* (1886), or the distorted relationship causes sexual dissatisfaction, as in *The Lady from the Sea* (1888). In Ibsen's late dramas this problem seems to have been what prevented a woman's self-realization, as in *John Gabriel Borkman*. Ibsen desperately tries to find a way of establishing harmony in marriage life, but fails. There is no moral message from him, but we are overwhelmed by his deep insight into problems of sexuality in the modern family. That must be the reason why Freud and other eminent psychologists were so much interested in his dramas.

Nevertheless we must not forget that those families Ibsen presents are mostly well-to-do. Their problems are of those kinds that come not from lack of money but from possession of money. *Little Eyolf* (1894) is a typical example of this. The couple

can afford, one may say, such complex anxieties because they have free time made possible by the wife's wealth. Here we see a sort of prophetic picture of the family in today's welfare society.

The same thing could be said about Strindberg, too, though for different reasons. In his family dramas distortion or disharmony derives from the fact that the bond of husband and wife or that of father and mother is at odds with the true nature of the male-female relationship. In other words one's social being and sexual being are splitting up. And since everything is seen from a man's viewpoint, for Strindberg *is* a man, what he disdains is the split in a woman, as shown in *The Father*. But his disdain is of course a sign of his fear of a woman's barbarian sexuality, which is far more powerful than a man's sophisticated one.

It seems to me that today this split is becoming more and more apparent not on the philosophical level but on the level of everyday life. And is it because we are still living in male-dominated society that we are more disquieted by the split which we perceive in a woman's psyche than in a man's?

One may call Strindberg a visionary in this respect, though he is usually called so because of the fact that a Japanese from Hiroshima appears in his last drama, *The Great Highway* (1909), and commits suicide to take responsibility for unhappiness in society.

#### Notes

- 1) Taguchi, Kikutei, *Otoko Nora*, printed in *Bungei Kurabu*, August issue, 1914, and performed in the same month at The Imperial Theatre.
- 2) *Ett dockhem* in *Giftas I*, 1884.
- 3) Fujiki, Hiroyuki, "Ibsen," *Obei Sakka to Nihon Kindaibun-gaku*, Vol. 3, Tokyo: 1976.
- 4) Yanagida, Kunio, "Ibsen Zakkan," *Waseda Bungaku*, July issue, 1906.

- 5) Ueda, Bin, "Hokuo Shizenha no Gikyokuron", *Chu-o-koron*, May, July and August issues, 1904.
- 6) Osanai, Kaoru, "Sweden no Gekisakusha August Strindberg", *Sin Shosetsu*, February issue, 1906.
- 7) Shiogama, Tenpu, "Bundan no Onibi", *Teikoku Bungaku*, December issue, 1909.
- 8) Matsui, Shoyo, "Strindberg ni tuite", *Kokumin Shinbun* (newspaper), May 19 and 21, 1912.
- 9) Honma, Hisao, "Gisei no Shiso oyobi Engi", *Engei Gaho*, November issue, 1912.
- 10) Derek Russel Davis and David Thomas, "Rosmersholm: Existentialist tragedy or escapist fantasy? A dialogue", *Contemporary Approaches to Ibsen*, Vol. 4, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1979.
- 11) cf. Kåre Amundsen, *Norsk sosial økonomisk historie 1814-1890*, Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1963.