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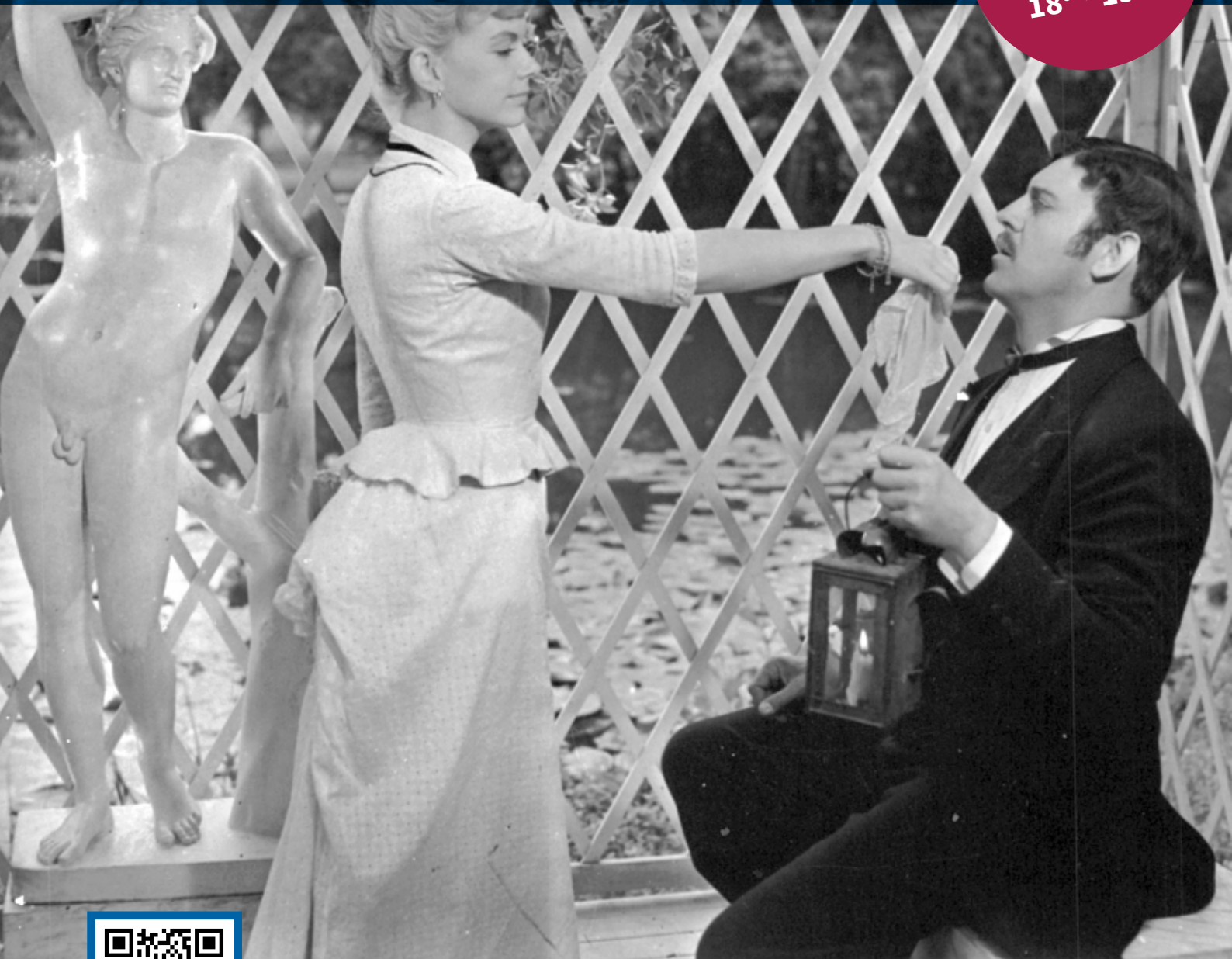
Department of
East Asian Studies
Japanese Studies



Strindberg and the New Woman in Japan: Reception of Western drama in the Taisho period

A hybrid *u:japan* lecture by Martin Nordeborg

Thursday
2024-05-02
18⁰⁰~19³⁰



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The Scandinavian Modern Breakthrough, with authors such as Strindberg and Ibsen departed from the motto of the Danish literary critic Georg Brandes who in the 1870s urged writers to leave behind romanticism and depict the social problems in the world around them. The only literature worthy of writing was that which created debate. Ibsen and Strindberg would be the leading figures in bringing naturalism and realism to the Japanese stage in the beginning of the 20th century.

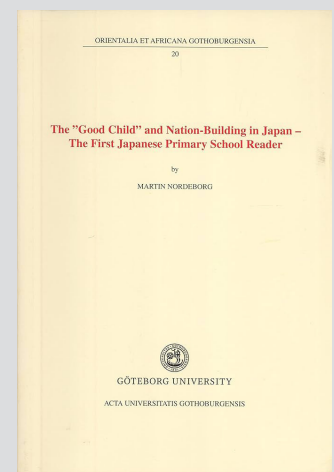
This presentation will focus on the early reception of Strindberg at a time when the so called New Woman, later succeeded by the Modern Girl in the late 1920s, emerged in the major cities of Japan in what might seem to be a rebellion to the norm of being a “Good Wife and

Wise Mother” promoted by the Government.

The naturalistic plays by Strindberg are famous for their depictions of the battle between the sexes. Exposing the crisis of masculinity in the writings of Strindberg is a perspective recently being examined by numerous scholars. What happens to the power struggle between man and woman when the texts are translated and performed in theaters in Japan? As the setting of the naturalistic drama often is the bourgeois home with the ideal model of family in its center, home and family will also be important concepts in examining the reception of Strindberg in Japan.

Martin Nordeborg

is a senior lecturer of Japanese at the Department of Literatures and Languages at the University of Gothenburg, Sweden. His PhD thesis dealt with the first Japanese primary school reader, published in 1873, which was in fact a translation of an American primer. In the framework of the nation-building process it was interesting to see the role of this book and especially how religious concepts were translated at a time when freedom of religion had just been announced that same year. After his dissertation, he continued to examine the Japanese translation of the Bible. Gender and language in Japan is also part of his research and he has combined this with his interest in translation studies, recently the role of translated drama in the modernization of Japanese theater. Finally, originally a junior high school teacher, his research spans literary texts used in Japanese schools as well as fiction consumed by young people in their free time, such as the cell-phone novels.



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