Miss Julie Study Guide

Miss Julie by August Strindberg

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Contents

Introduction

First published in 1888, August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* shocked early reviewers with its frank portrayal of sexuality. Although it was privately produced in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1889, the play was banned throughout much of Europe and was not produced in Sweden, Strindberg's native country, until 1906 Britain's ban on public performances of the play was not lifted until 1939. Notoriety is often the best publicity, however, and the play soon gained an underground popularity in both Europe and America; mainstream acceptance and success came a bit slower, but by the early twentieth century the play was considered an important facet of modern drama.

The root of contention over the play stemmed from its frank portrayal of sex. Not only does *Miss Julie* contain a sexual encounter between a lower-class servant and an upper-class aristocrat (in itself outrageous for the times), the play clearly describes the sex act as something apart from the concept of love. The idea of intercourse based completely on lust was scandalous to late-nineteenth century thinking and enough to provoke censure. And it was nothing more than the idea of sex without love that caused the trouble: the act is only referred to in the play, not actually depicted on stage.

Strindberg's drama focuses on the downfall of the aristocratic Miss Julie, a misfit in her society (the author refers to her in his preface as a "man-hating half-woman"). Julie rebels against the restrictions placed on her as a woman and as a member of the upper-class. From the beginning of the play, her behavior is shown to alienate her peer class and shock the servants. She displays a blatant disregard for class and gender conventions, at one moment claiming that class differences should not exist and the next demanding proper treatment as a woman of aristocracy. Her antics result in her social downfall, a loss of respect from her servants, and, ultimately, her suicide

Miss Julie is widely regarded as the most important drama to come out of the literary movement known as naturalism. The movement was based largely on the theory of social Darwinism, which proposed that individuals fight for position in society much as animals fight for their survival in the wild, and that, in humans (as in animals) only the fittest can survive (this theory is known as "Natural Selection" and was first proposed by Charles Darwin). As a naturalistic drama, *Miss Julie* focuses on Julie and Jean's struggle for survival in their society. Stnndberg claimed that the basis for the plot of *Miss Julie* was a true story he had heard of a young noblewoman who had had sexual relations with a servant, although that young woman did not commit suicide. Strindberg lived in a time in "which gender and class roles were becoming more fluid, and the play reflects the conflicts that are inevitable in a society struggling with change.

Today *Miss Julie* is regarded as remarkable for the same reason early critics and censors found it so shocking: it is the first play in which sex is separated from love. Stnndberg's portrayal of the strength of sexual desire (and the often calamitous situations that result when one surrenders to such desires) strongly influenced later playwrights, most notably Tennessee Williams *{Cat on a Hot Tin Roof).* Although the

play's importance was not widely recognized during Strindberg's lifetime, its place in modern drama, particularly as an example of naturalism, is now virtually undisputed.

Author Biography

Strindberg was born Johan August Strindberg on January 22,1849, in Riddarholm, Stockholm, Sweden. His father was a middle-class merchant, his mother a former servant. He suffered through an emotionally difficult childhood; when he was four his father went bankrupt, and when he was thirteen his mother died. A year after her death, his father married the family housekeeper.

As Strindberg grew older, he struggled to choose a profession. He worked as an elementary school teacher, studied medicine and philosophy, worked as a journalist, and had an appointment in the Swedish Royal Library, cataloguing holdings in the Chinese section. He also made two unsuccessful attempts at becoming an actor. It was during the first of these attempts that Strindberg began writing plays and, in 1870, his first two plays, *The Freethinker* and *In Rome,* were produced. His early plays were poorly received, however, and it was not until 1881 that a reworked version of an earlier play, *Major Olof,* brought him some success.

In 1894, Stnndberg's first collection of short stories was published. Frankly sexual in nature and critical of the upper classes, the book was considered immoral by many, and Strindberg was eventually put on trial for blasphemy. Although he was finally acquitted, the episode made him realize that the government could take away his freedom of expression. He nonetheless continued to explore sexuality as well as class issues in subsequent writings. In addition to working in other genres, Strindberg continued to write plays, gaining more success with his naturalistic dramas, the most well known of which are *The Father* (1887) and *Miss Julie* (1888).

In 1897, Strindberg briefly quit writing in order to pursue scientific experiments, particularly in alchemy, the attempt to turn less valuable metals into gold. He also became interested in mysticism and the occult. In 1896, he began developing psychotic symptoms, experiencing obsessions and hallucinations Putting himself under a doctor's care, he eventually recovered and began writing again. After this experience, however, he developed anew interest in the reality of the psyche, particularly dreams. He began to write his "dream plays," surrealistic pieces such *as A Dream Play* (1902) and *The Ghost Sonata.*

Strindberg's personal life mirrored his professional career, with many ups and downs. In 1877, he married Siri von Essen, a divorced actress. This union ended in divorce in 1891. Strindberg would marry and divorce two more times. He fathered a total of six children: Karin, Greta, and Hans from his first marnage (a daughter also died in infancy); Kerstin from his second marnage; and Anne-Mane from his third.

In addition to his writing, Strindberg was active in other artistic areas. He founded the Scandinavian Experimental Theatre in Copenhagen, Denmark, in 1888, and founded the Intimate Theatre in 1907. Strindberg remained active throughout his adult life, continuing to write until his death from stomach cancer on May 14, 1912. Today he is regarded as one of the most important of modem dramatists.

Plot Summary

Miss Julie opens with Jean, a valet, and Kristine, a cook, in the kitchen of the Count, their master. The two begin to talk about Miss Julie, the Count's daughter. Jean says she is crazy, dancing with the servants at a Midsummer's Eve celebration when she should be visiting relatives with her father. Kristine remarks that Julie has always been crazy but has gotten worse since breaking off her engagement with her fiance. Jean reveals that he once saw Julie "training" her fiance as one would train a dog, making him jump over her riding crop and hitting him with it after each jump until he finally took the riding crop from her, struck her with it, and broke it into pieces. According to Jean, Julie, like her late mother, acts in some ways like an aristocrat and in others like a commoner.

Julie enters and asks Jean to dance with her. At first he declines, noting that he has already promised this dance to Kristine, but Julie finally persuades him. The two go offstage together, leaving Kristine working in the kitchen. When Julie and Jean return, they engage in conversation while Kristine sleeps at the table. Jean reveals to Julie his aristocratic tastes—he drinks wine, speaks French, and uses the language of the upper classes. In contrast Julie chooses to drink beer instead of wine, saying she prefers it.

Julie wants to dance with Jean again, but Jean warns her that she is talked about because of her familiarity with the male servants. Kristine goes to bed, leaving Julie and Jean aJone and, in the ensuing conversation, Julie alternates between urging Jean to treat her as an equal and ordering him around. Jean reveals that he was in love with Julie when they were both children and that to him her father's garden was the Garden of Eden, while Julie herself symbolized the hopelessness of his ascension to a higher class. As they are speaking, a crowd of servants comes to the door, singing a vulgar song about Julie and Jean. The servants are about to enter the kitchen, and Jean tells Julie that, in order to safeguard her reputation, the two of them must hide and that the only possible place for them to go is his room. Julie and Jean leave the kitchen and the servants enter, continuing their singing. When the servants are gone, Julie and Jean return; it is clear that they have had sexual intercourse in Jean's room.

With both of their reputation endangered by their tryst, Jean says that the two of them must leave together, perhaps go to Switzerland to open a hotel. Julie, trying to create a romantic relationship from their purely carnal encounter, asks him to say he loves her and tells him to call her Julie rather than Miss Julie. Jean refuses, saying that such familiarity is only possible in the future, when his ambition leads him to great heights—perhaps to becoming a count in Rumania, where titles can be purchased. He begins to speak harshly to Julie, saying he needs money to leave. When Julie says that she has no money, Jean says that they will have to stay. Julie expresses alarm at the prospect of the servants laughing at her for taking Jean as a lover. Jean calls her a whore, saying her actions are below those of a female servant, who would never throw herself at a man as Julie has.

Later, Jean softens in his attitude toward Julie. They return to the idea of running away together. Julie tells Jean about her family history. She relates her mother's belief in women's equality to men, beliefs which resulted in Julie being raised as a boy in order to show that women could be as good as men. Julie's mother also insisted that, on the estate, male servants take on the tasks of women and female servants do the work of men, a policy that resulted in financial ruin. Finally Julie's father took control, but a suspicious fire, later revealed to be started by Julie's mother, burned the house and other buildings. The family then faced poverty, but Julie's mother was able to secure a loan from a brick manufacturer, later discovered to be her lover. The "loan" was actually money that belonged to Julie's family in the first place. From her mother, Julie learned to hate all men. Despite such hatred, she is still sexually attracted to men and a victim to her passions.

Although Julie says she hates Jean, she wants the two of them to leave together. Jean says that the only solution is for Julie to go away alone. She says she will go if he will come with her. When he refuses, Julie, unable to make a decision, asks him for an order. He now tells her to go and dress for their trip, that the two of them will leave together. Julie leaves the room and, shortly afterwards, Kristine enters. Guessing what has happened, Kristine is disgusted with Julie and no longer respects her. Kristine leaves and Julie enters the room, carrying a bird cage. Jean agrees to leave with her but says they cannot take the bird; Julie agrees to let him kill it. When he decapitates the bird, Julie screams that she hates him and that she will tell her father everything.

Jean leaves, Kristine returns, and Julie begs her for assistance, suggesting that all three of them go to Switzerland, attempting to paint a beautiful picture of their future. Kristine is not interested, and she leaves for church, cutting off Juhe and Jean's chance for escape when she remarks that she will tell the groomsman not to let any of the horses go. Julie asks Jean what to do. He tells her that she should commit suicide. The bell rings, and the two realize that the Count has returned. Jean becomes subservient at the sound of the bell, but he hands Julie the razor and tells her to go the barn. She walks out, carrying the razor.

Author's Preface

Author's Preface Summary

August Strindberg (1849-1912), author of *Miss Julie*, is now regarded as one of the most influential playwrights of the 19th century. He struggled with the limited thinking of the time, and the non-accepting nature of many of his day. Most of the citizens of the era were unwilling to look at change in a positive light, thereby stagnating many of the creative minds that were desperate to put their thoughts down on paper. Strindberg was not one of those stifled by society. He took a risk to publish his writings, and is now respected for his daring writing nature, and credited with breaking the ice to stereotypical art of the time.

In his preface, Strindberg puts emphasis on those characteristics of the play that he deems to be most important, and conveys his feelings with emotional fervor, yet maintains professionalism in stating facts surrounding each situation that arises. We are compelled to listen to his rationale, given the passionate nature it is presented in, while still in awe that he had the courage to state his opinion in such an open way in the 1800s.

Author's Preface Analysis

August Strindberg took great pains in his preface to *Miss Julie*, in order to explain his rationale for writing this play in the fashion he chose. Often touted as too ahead of his time, Strindberg realized that there was an accountability to take on, when writing in this forward-thinking nature. He openly criticized the theater of the time for its closed-mindedness in respect to allowing exploration of topics and themes of performances. He was a proponent of coming up with new topics, constantly challenging the current "acceptable" envelope. In this play, however, he states that he did not try to do anything new, but tried to modernize what has already been done in the past.

In his eagerness to explain why he wrote the play in the advanced method that he chose, Strindberg encapsulated the characters' emotions for the audience to ponder before reading the play. Let me state at this juncture, that I believe it would be beneficial for the reader to go back and re-read the preface after reading the play. It gives clarity to the characters, as well as insight to what Strindberg was putting forth for each person.

The heroine of the play, Miss Julie (referred to simply as Julie in majority of the play), brings forth feelings of pity on our part for her. The author felt that these feelings were to be shouldered entirely by the reader, not the author himself. He felt it was a reflection on society at the time ... a need to feel bad for any less-than-fortunate situation. He also felt that people should just experience these situations, and realize that this was part of life. Disappointment accompanies success, and is an emotion that must be experienced to truly appreciate any good fortune. He stated that everyone of the era was only looking

to see joyful plays, without acknowledging that tragedies are a real and indelible part of everyday life.

The author states that there are many aspects that can be attributed to Miss Julie's suicide: the way she was brought up by her parents, her personality, the recent break-up with her fiancé, the Midsummer Eve celebration bringing on a mood of grandeur, the valet and Miss Julie being together alone in a room after consuming alcohol, or the valet (Jean) himself acting as he did in her presence. The author goes to great pains to make his cast of the play as human as possible, with all of the flaws that come with real people. It adds a great deal of reality to the play. Miss Julie was not the typical daughter of a count. She was struggling with wanting to fit in to every aspect of every class of society. She could not deal with the fact that it was not possible during this era. In this respect, she was also forward-thinking in her own right. She struggled to maintain her identity as a higher-up, while trying to relate to her servants. Unfortunately, this gave her no deep, real relationships with anyone of either class. In contrast to today's society, this way of thinking is greatly respected. Too often in our world, people are not willing to cross class borders. If someone is able to achieve this symbiotic relationship with many different classes, it is looked at as respectable ... a quality to be highly commended. It seems as though both Miss Julie and Strindberg may have been more comfortable living in our 21st century, than during their 19the century.

Jean, the count's valet (Julie's father's valet), was a man who was extremely caught up in him. He had a way of manipulating Miss Julie, and less so, Christine (his other love interest, and also Miss Julie's cook), to the extent that he was ultimately responsible for Julie's suicide. He was convinced that he was in the wrong class, and was born to succeed and move up into the upper class. His dream was to become the owner of a hotel, and have Julie and Christine come to work with him. In trying to achieve this goal, Jean would say what he believed each woman wanted to hear, in order to get them to see things his way, constantly oscillating between different points of view. Depending on the current situation, he would lean on each woman to create an illusion of dedication to each, while solely looking out for his best interests. In today's society, he would be regarded as the classic "player." He had a distinct perspective, in that he was able to look at both upper and lower class points of view, conveying both with eloquent accuracy. He was, in a sense, able to achieve the relationship with both classes that Julie struggled to accomplish each day. Miss Julie was more invested in feelings of "love" than Jean. She wanted true feelings, whereas he acted, once again, on a purely superficial level, to get what would benefit him most out of any relationship ... i.e. capital to start his hotel business, a devoted woman by his side, and any myriad of other potential beneficial situations that may arise.

Christine, Miss Julie's cook, was thought by the other servants to be involved with Jean. Miss Julie believed this to be true as well. Even though Julie is aware of the situation, she does not attempt to honor Christine and Jean's relationship. The true relationship was that they are to be married one day, but there are no feelings of romance. It seemed as though it were just understood that this would occur. She was very wise to the world, and had knowledge of man/woman relationships, whereas Miss Julie was very immature/naive in this arena. Christine could be equated emotionally to that of a

mature woman, whereas Miss Julie would be equated to that of a confused, love-struck high school student, regardless of age.

The author did not use acts, as he felt that once the audience was getting absorbed into the play, they would be interrupted by intermission, thereby destroying the mood they were in, and the identifying stage with the persons of the play that they were experiencing. Again this was forward thinking for the time. He chose, instead, to divide the scenes with a monologue, pantomime, and dance... all of which related to the mood of the play. They all centered on what was occurring in the play, as well, not simply a breaking in order to give the actors a rest. It added to the audience's interpretation of each situation, while adding dimension to previous/future actions of each character.

Strindberg allowed the actors to improvise during the pantomime, which was once again very forward thinking for the era. He believed, and rightfully so, that it allowed freedom of expression from actor to audience. The play centered around the three main characters (Julie, Jean and Christine) on purpose, giving depth, gravity, and importance to the relationships between them. All other occurrences in the play are important, but the audience can infer much of it in the surrounding areas, thereby focusing once more intently on the main actors.

August Strindberg went to great pains to describe scenery, surrounding activity and make-up. This all added to the mood of the play, and was very important in conveying the true mood for which the author was striving. In most plays of the time, scenery, makeup, lighting and activity were not focused on as much as the dialog itself. Strindberg was instrumental in bringing to focus the need for aesthetics in plays, and dramatically improved the standard by which many playwrights were soon held accountable.

The final line in the Author's Preface: "I have made an attempt. If it proves a failure, there is plenty of time to try over again." These are profound words to live by, stated by a very insightful man.

Not all of the other characters, Miss Julie's father, and the servants, etc. are in the play. You are left to form those images for yourself. The play solely focuses on Miss Julie, Jean and Christine.

Dramatis Personae Scene 1

Dramatis Personae Scene 1 Summary

The scene is set with Count having left to visit family, leaving his daughter, Miss Julie (25), alone with the servants at the family estate. The two other main characters of the play are Jean (30), the Count's Valet, and Christine (35), the family's cook. The scene takes place on Midsummer Eve, in the kitchen of the Count's country house.

Christine is cooking dinner for Jean in the kitchen. Jean and Christine talk about Miss Julie, how she likes to dance with all of the men, including Jean, seemingly oblivious to the fact that all of the servants talk about her promiscuity. They think it odd that Miss Julie would rather keep the company of the servants, rather than her own family.

Jean and Christine discuss Miss Julie's recent break-up with her fiancé. It is well know that she wanted to control him, but he would not allow it, and left her. They are trying to rationalize how Miss Julie is upper class in some ways in her preferences, yet lower class in regards to her hygiene.

Julie enters and immediately begins to flirt with Jean. She wants to dance more with him, but he has already promised the next dance to Christine, his fiancée. Jean ends up dancing with Julie instead, as Miss Julie "commands" it, but the says not to take it as a command, thereby asserting the fact that she wants to get along with her help, but making it clear that she still wishes it to be known that she is ultimately in charge of all of them. They leave to dance together at the Midsummer Eve celebration with the other servants.

Dramatis Personae Scene 1 Analysis

This scene is instrumental in establishing the relationships that exist between Julie, Jean and Christine. A constant push/pull is going on between the three. While Julie is keenly aware of the relationship between Jean and Christine, she disregards it as not meaningful and pursues Jean with blatantly desperate fervor. Christine feels she is forced to go along with this at this point, as she cannot risk standing up to her superior and losing her job. She suffers in silence, feeling that Jean will ultimately honor her and be true. She also feels that Jean is merely opting to please Julie with dances and flirting, in attempt to save his own job, as well.

At this point in the play, Jean does feel that it would not be beneficial to hurt Julie, and opts to play out the charade. He is careful, however, to point out to Julie how the servants are talking about her behind her back. She staunchly refutes this statement, as she prefers to believe that everyone likes her. This is a classic case of living in denial. She is in her own world, and due to her immaturity has chosen to live in what she believes to be true ... the situations that make her most comfortable.

Jean sees these vulnerabilities in both women, and begins to form the basis for his deception of them. He is now formulating the ways in which he can achieve what he wants from each of them, while still maintaining their complete devotion to him. As mentioned earlier, he would be considered by today's standards as a "player." He uses manipulation, or whatever means possible, to obtain desired results for himself.

Pantomime

Pantomime Summary

Christine hums while cleaning up the kitchen after Jean and Julie leave to go dancing at the Midsummer Eve celebration. She begins curling her hair, and waits for Jean and Julie to return.

Pantomime Analysis

The audience is left to interpret what Christine is thinking during this pantomime. We know that Jean and Julie are dancing together at the celebration, so we are left to infer that Christine is evaluating Jean's loyalty to her. We can also assume that she is frustrated that she cannot stand up to Julie, and claim the man that is rightfully hers. The fact that she hums calmly while doing her hair says a lot for her personality, though. She could throw a tantrum demanding that Julie stay away from Jean (which is probably the way that Julie would act), or act maturely and wait for Jean to come to her out of his own will. This shows that she is mature, and recognizes that you cannot win a man by guilt of force. Julie is still in the immature stages of her life, and feels the opposite ... that they way to get a man is to demand it. It did not bode well for her with her former fiancé, and it will probably not bode well here.

Dramatis Personae Scene 2

Dramatis Personae Scene 2 Summary

Jean comes back to the kitchen without Julie, allowing Christine and Jean to have a moment alone. Julie enters and is excited about her dance with Jean. She promptly tells him to take off his work clothes and change into attire that is more appropriate. While he is out changing, Julie asks Christine if the two are engaged. Christine says that "in a way" they are, confirming what Julie already knew.

Jean returns changed, speaking French. Julie is very impressed, and asks him where he learned to speak so eloquently. He explains that it was from where his father worked as a cotter on the county attorney's property nearby. While they continue to talk, Julie says that Christine will make a good wife (Christine has fallen asleep in her chair).

When Christine goes to bed, Julie and Jean feel free to toy with commands, i.e. toast to health, Jean kissing her feet to prove servitude. They conclude that if the two of them were to become involved, rather the Christine and Jean, Julie would be stepping down in society, and Jean would be stepping up.

Julie states that she has a recurring dream that she has climbed to the top of a column, and cannot get back down. She wants to, but she simply cannot. In the dream, she feels that there will be no rest for her until she gets down to the ground. Jean's also confides that he has a recurring dream that he is under a tree is a dark forest. He wants to get up to the top where the sun is shining, so he climbs as hard as he can, but cannot make it because the tree is thick and smooth. At this point, Julie flirts with him, about his physique. Julie asks Jean to kiss her hand, and then orders him to. Jean warns her that they should not do this, but she orders him to do so again. Julie insists that they are not doing anything wrong.

Jean confides that he has been in love with Julie since he was a child, that he planned to kill himself on the day he realized that he could not have her due to their differences in class. Julie is impressed with the way he is able to relate to the story. He later says moments later when the tone of the conversation changes, however, that this was not a true story, just a way to gain sympathy from Julie.

Jean repeatedly asks Julie to leave, and go to bed. He states that it is not safe for them to be seen alone together, as the servants will continue to talk wildly about them, and their affair may get back to the Count. Julie will not leave, and then they hear the servants coming by singing the Chorus.

Dramatis Personae Scene 2 Analysis

This scene puts forth the fact that both Jean and Julie struggle with the classes that the have been born into. They both seem to be more comfortable with the feelings that they should be in the opposite classes. Their dreams put this into perfect clarity.

Julie states that she has a recurring dream that she has climbed to the top of a column, and cannot get back down. She wants to, but she simply cannot. In the dream, she feels that there will be no rest for her until she gets down to the ground. This can be translated into her class status. She is in the upper class of the society, and cannot relate to the lower class, no matter how hard she tries. Her ultimate goal is to be able to live and relate with the servants, and she feels that she will not have a peaceful life until she can accomplish this goal. Julie seems to be oscillating between upper and lower class, giving commands, then recanting them to form a softer tone. She does not know which class to fall into, wanting to live both lives simultaneously. This relates back to her dream in every aspect of clarity.

Jean, in sharp contrast, confides that he has a recurring dream in which he is under a tree in a dark forest. He wants to get up to the top where the sun is shining, so he climbs as hard as he can, but cannot make it because the tree is thick and smooth. This can be directly related to his class status as well. He is in the lower class of the society, and even though he can relate to the upper class way of life, he keeps coming back to the lower class, the class he was born into and where he shall remain.

Chorus

Chorus Summary

The servants walk by singing a song relating to adultery.

Chorus Analysis

Although not stated here by Strindberg here, we can infer that Julie is realizing for the first time that Jean has been correct in his accusations that the servants are gossiping about their relationship. We are now left to look forward to seeing how Julie will handle this newfound reality.

Dramatis Personae Scene 3

Dramatis Personae Scene 3 Summary

Julie hears the song that the servants are singing, and in one last attempt to deny reality, says that they still lover her, and are not singing about her relationship with Jean. He, however, insists that they do not in fact love her, and that they take advantage of her and her position, and talk behind her back terribly. At this point, Jean again asks Julie to go away, to hide from the situation. They end up going to Jean's room, per his suggestion.

Dramatis Personae Scene 3 Analysis

Julie finally realizes that Jean is correct in stating that the servants are aware of their affair. Jean pleads with Julie to leave the kitchen, and hide from the servants and their accusations. When she finally agrees and goes with Jean to his room, we are left to imagine what happens at this point. We can infer that they cross the line with their playful relationship, sleeping together while they are in his room. Now we are left waiting to see how the drama between the three main characters will play out.

Ballet

Ballet Summary

The peasants dance, referring to the chorus song adultery.

Ballet Analysis

This break leaves the audience time to ponder the consummation of the relationship between Jean and Julie, as well as how Christine will react once she finds out the truth regarding Jean's loyalty.

Dramatis Personae Scene 4

Dramatis Personae Scene 4 Summary

Julie and Jean return to the kitchen. Jean asks Julie to realize that what the peasants were singing about is how they feel ... that they can never hide from that fact that everyone is aware of the situation, and its unacceptability in society. He says that the only way to escape the rumors is to run away to Switzerland to open their hotel ... with her money. It is planned that Jean could run the hotel, and Julie could be in the office, padding the customers' bills upon checkout. They talk about leaving immediately, planning out train schedules and escape routes. Julie is excited and ready to go, but Jean is worried that the Count will return soon, and states that they have to leave immediately. Julie says that she can take the cash from her father, but will be unable to look at him in the future, knowing the disgrace of what the two have done. Jean now feels that Julie should go alone if this is how she feels.

During this scene, Jean goes back and forth from feelings of love to feelings of hatred to Julie, depending on where her emotions are going. Now Julie is regretting falling in love with him in the first place. She is horrified by the way he has suddenly changed his feelings for her, so shortly after sleeping together, and is astonished that he will not recant and restate his love for her. Jean softens and lowers his tone, to again regain Julie's trust once she has calmed down. They go back to believing that they will have to escape together in order to get away from everyone's accusations.

Julie wants to talk about the situation before leaving. She speaks about how her mother cheated on her father. When her father realized it, the betrayal devastated him. He came near to committing suicide himself, and this is how and why Julie learned to dislike men. As they discuss the reality that is punishable for a man to seduce a woman, but not punishable for a woman to seduce a man, Julie holds back feelings of disbelief that she fell in love with Jean. Jean encourages her to calm down, but refuses to escape with her. He says that she must leave immediately, without him, pushing her away

At this point, Julie does not know what to do ... stay or leave. As she is so confused, she asks Jean to tell her what to do. Predictably, he reiterates that she must go immediately.

Dramatis Personae Scene 4 Analysis

This scene reinforces the fact that Jean will play on any emotion that Julie is feeling at the time, in order to achieve his goal. He has succeeded in seducing her with promises of a future together, and now is ready to send her off by herself. His only goal now is to be rid of her, since he has obtained what he wants from her ... a night in bed. He must make sure that the Count does not find out what has transpired between the two, as this would ruin any chances he has of moving up in society via the workplace.

Julie, at this point, does not want to be called Miss Julie, but Julie. This shows us that she is still holding on to the fantasy that she can exist in both worlds ... upper class and lower class societies. She has not yet come to the realization that Jean only wanted to sleep with her, that he wants to future with her, but wishes to remain with Christine. This will be a socially acceptable relationship and, again, increase his chances of moving up in society.

Dramatis Personae Scene 4

Dramatis Personae Scene 4 Summary

The morning after Midsummer Eve has come. Julie returns ready to go, carrying a small birdcage with her finch inside. Jean says she cannot take it with her to leave, but states that she says she has to ... it is the only living thing that has loved her. When Jean reiterates that she cannot take the finch with her, Julie says that the bird cannot go to a stranger. Jean says he will kill it then, and so he does. This is the turning point to the end of the play.

At this critical juncture, Julie says that she now wants Jean to kill her, too, rather than run away from the situation. She cannot bear the thought of living with the shame of the situation that has developed. Jean asks her to calm down.

Just as Julie is regaining her composure, Christine returns dressed for church, ready to take Jean along, as he had promised to go. She cannot believe that Jean and Julie stayed up all night together, an act that is very improper in her eyes. All she is aware of, however, is that they talked all night. She is not aware of the extent that Jean and Julie's relationship has progressed. Christine blames Jean for the improper nature of the situation, as he is more mature than Julie is ... more aware of what he is doing. Christine believes that Julie is extremely immature, and that Jean should not play on that. She also states at this point that she believes both she and Jean should quit working for the family, as she has lost all respect for Julie, and cannot work for a person who she feels that way about.

Julie goes to her and asks for protection from Jean. She is growing hysterical and the situation escalates between Christine and Jean. Christine is unfazed as Julie tells her of their plan to run away together. Christine asks her to say if she believes this is possible. At this point, Julie is exhausted and says that she does not know if she believes it or not. Christine leaves Julie to ponder this grave reality, and goes to church by herself, leaving Jean and Julie alone again. As Christine leaves, she says she will ask God for forgiveness for all of them.

Once they are alone again, Julie asks Jean again how to get out of the situation. In a defiantly bold act, Jean suggests that she kill herself. She cannot believe that it has come to this. Suddenly the Count rings that he has returned. Julie and Jean realize that a decision must be made immediately to rectify and/or end the situation.

Julie cannot believe this is happening. When she asks Jean what to do, he again to tells her to kill her self, but says that he cannot order her to. When he is finally able to instruct her, Julie accepts her destiny and is actually ecstatic that the command has finally been given.

In a final twist of emotion, Julie thanks Jean for giving her the means to complete this final act. She now believes that she will be able to be at peace. She goes out the door with conviction. We are left at the end of this play to infer that she commits suicide at the instruction of her former lover.

Dramatis Personae Scene 4 Analysis

This final scene brings to a peak the extreme vulnerability that Julie feels to anyone who may posses any emotion toward her. She repeatedly searches for Jean's approval, even in the ultimate self-sacrificing act of taking her own life. We are left to realize that this immature young lady was in so much pain that she was willing to take these drastic measures to escape her internal pain, while still trying to please the one who she loved the most.

We are also left to assume that Jean accomplished his goal of getting rid of Julie, dissolving the situation and freeing his self to marry Christine as planned.

It leaves a lot for the audience to ponder, as to how this may have played out in a different era. If Julie were more mature, would she simply have gone on to other relationships? If classes were not so distinct, could the relationship have worked? If Jean was not so self-absorbed, could the two have had a future? Many, many possible scenarios are possible, but we are left with the tragedy of a young woman who believed that the only way to escape her pain was to end her life entirely.

August Strindberg did a beautiful job of conveying the broad range of emotions that one can feel in such a short period. It is a shame, however, that his brilliance was not realized during his lifetime.

Curtain

Characters

Jean

Jean is the ambitious valet who engages in sexual relations with Julie. Although he is a servant, he longs for a higher social position. He tells Julie of his desire to open a hotel and become a count like her father. In his discussion with her, he reveals a taste for fine food and good wine as well as a dream of climbing a tree, a symbol of his desire to move up in the world. It is clear, however, that his actions will keep him a servant for life. He has become engaged to Kristine, the cook, further cementing his place in the lower classes and, when he and Miss Julie sleep together, he is primarily concerned with the fact that, because of his actions, he may lose his position as. a servant—the very station he says he wants so desperately to leave.

Although Jean freely insults Julie after their sexual encounter, apparently no longer seeing himself as her inferior, when Kristine insults Julie, Jean tells her she must be respectful towards her mistress Although Jean is brave enough to steal wine from his master, when the Count returns, ringing for his boots and coffee, Jean immediately returns to subservience, leading the audience to doubt that his ambitions will ever turn into reality.

Miss Julie

Miss Julie is the play's main character. She does not understand her place in society as an aristocrat or as a woman; her confusion and lack of understanding is the primary focus of the play. When the audience first sees her, she has been dancing with the servants at their Midsummer's Eve festivities when it would be more appropriate for her to be visiting relatives with her father, the Count. During the course of the play, she spends most of her time with Jean, her father's valet. In her conversations with Jean, Julie alternates between giving him commands and trying to convince him to treat her as an equal In order that the other servants will not see her with Jean, however, she hides with him in his room. While they are locked in together, the two engage in sexual intercourse

Julie not only rebels against her place as an aristocrat, but—having given in to animal passion, to sex without love—she has revealed a confused gender identity as well. Respectable women at this time did not engage in such behavior. Julie also reveals that her mother raised her as a boy, which contributes to her gender confusion. At the end of the play, although Julie is ashamed of her actions, she has really learned nothing. As in the beginning, she still alternates between seeing herself as an aristocrat and as an equal of the servants. At the end of the play, she commands Jean to order her to commit suicide.

Kristine

Engaged to Jean, Kristine is the Count's cook. Unlike Jean and Julie, she recognizes her place in society and stays within what she considers proper bounds. Traditional in every way, she is also extremely religious. Julie's actions appall Kristine from the beginning, but when she discovers that Julie has slept with Jean, Kristine says she can no longer work for people who have no sense of decency. She does not show such anger at Jean, however, and tells him that, in fact, his indiscretion with Julie is not as bad as if he had committed a similar act with a fellow servant. In Kristine's view, it is only Julie who has completely debased herself and is so deserving of disdain. Kristine cuts off Julie and Jean's only possibility of escape when she announces that she will tell the groom not to let any of the horses out, thus revealing that her loyalty is to her master, the Count

Themes

Gender Roles

Miss Julie's confusion over her sexual identity ultimately leads to her ruin. For Strindberg, men and women have specific roles in society; in the play's preface he describes Julie as a "man-hating half-woman." Julie's problems stem from her heritage as well as the way she was reared. Her mother did not bring Julie up according to accepted standards regarding women's roles; she also believed—incorrectly, Strindberg implies—that men and women are equal. She refused to conform to traditional female roles. At first, she would not marry Julie's father, although she had sexual relations with him, was the mother of his child, and was essentially mistress of his household. In this position, she forced the servants into "unnatural" occupations, with men assigned to traditionally female tasks while women did the work of men. The result was financial ruin. In keeping with this philosophy, Julie was raised as a boy, expected to match or exceed the role of a male child. She was forced to wear boys' clothes, engage in physical chores such as caring for horses, and even go hunting.

In addition to forcing male traits on her daughter, Julie's mother also taught her to despise all men. Julie says she only became engaged so she could make her fiance her slave, and it is clear that this is what she did, even to the point of making her betrothed jump over her riding crop while whipping him like an animal. When Jean kills Julie's greenfinch, Julie's rage at men is nakedly revealed. "F d like to see your whole sex swimming in a sea of blood," she tells him. The situation is complicated, however, by the fact that Julie despises women as well and blames her father for bringing her up to revile her own sex. Complicating matters is Julie's sexual desire, which forces her to adopt female behavior she abhors and seduce the men she hates. The result, Julie says, is that she is neither fully male nor fully female but has become "half-woman, half-man," an unnatural role in which, according to Strindberg, she can never find happiness."

Class Conflict

Much of the action of *Miss Julie* focuses on the conflict between the upper and lower classes. Both Julie and Jean are dissatisfied with their class positions. Julie, the aristocrat, relates a recurring dream in which she is high atop a pillar yet longs to come down to the ground. Jean, the servant, also has a recurring dream: he conversely sees himself struggling to climb a tree in order to obtain the golden eggs at the top. Julie, although she is mistress of the house, attends the servants' party, participating in their revelry rather than visiting relatives with her father. Jean, on the other hand, has aristocratic pretensions. He is fussy about his food and drink, speaks in cultured tones, and plans to escape his role as a servant, open his own hotel, and become a count like his employer.

In spite of their desires, however, Strindberg's characters are destined to remain in the class to which they were born. Julie is, at heart, an aristocrat and Jean, despite his refined playacting, has the soul of a servant. While she longs to belong to their common class, Julie also snobbishly states that she honors her servants with her presence at their dance; she alternates between entreating Jean to treat her as an equal and ordering him about Jean speaks of his ambitions, but, after his sexual encounter with Julie, he desperately searches for a way to keep his lowly position and tells Knstine she must respect her mistress. When the Count returns and rings for his boots and coffee, Jean reverts to a state of complete subservience. As far as these characters are concerned, Strindberg believes that there is no escaping class destiny.

Sexuality

In *Miss Julie,* sex is divorced from love—a fact that caused Strindberg and his play a good deal of trouble when it first appeared. Although there is mild flirtation between Julie and Jean at the beginning of the play, there is no sense that their subsequent sexual encounter arises from unrequited passion or love, especially as it occurs while the other servants sing what Jean describes as "a dirty song" about himself and Julie. In addition, when the two emerge from Jean's room, Jean confesses that his previous story of romantic longing for her as a child was merely a lie invented to seduce her. When he saw her as a child, he later reveals, he had "the same dirty thoughts all boys have." Julie is horrified by this revelation. She asks Jean to say he loves her, but her desperate attempt to introduce romance into their relationship is forced, an attempt to convince herself that she has not been disgraced in her surrender to carnal desire.

Strindberg makes it clear, though, that Julie's sexual act with Jean is not romantic but unbridled lust. Jean says he has never seen a woman throw herself at a man as Julie has, that such sexual baseness exists only in anrmals and in whores. Julie says that, although she despises men, she cannot control herself "when the weakness comes, when passion burns." Julie's sexuality ultimately contributes to her downfall. Not only do her passions drive her to sex with a lower-class man—an act that will forever sully her reputation—they force her to intimately interact with the male sex she so despises, behavior that will further damage her conflicted personality. Julie's sexual encounter with Jean causes a breakdown of both her external and internal status: she is disgraced in the eyes of others and has dealt an irreparable injury to her already precarious self-esteem.

Style

Allusion

An allusion is a reference to another literary work. In *Miss Julie,* the name of Julie's dog, Diana, is an allusion to the Roman goddess of hunting. According to her legend, when a man caught sight of her bathing, Diana unleashed her hounds to tear him to pieces. The goddess Diana's rejection of men mirrors Julie's. Another allusion is found in the subject of the church sermon Knstine will attend, the beheading of John the Baptist. According to the Biblical story, John the Baptist was beheaded by the Palestinian ruler King Herod Antipas, who was tricked into killing the disciple of Jesus Christ by his wife, Herodias, and daughter, Salome. John the Baptist's death is reflected in the death of Julie's bird as well as in the death of Julie herself.

Foreshadowing

In foreshadowing, words, symbols, or an event suggest a future incident. Julie's dog Diana's sexual encounter with the gatekeeper's dog, an encounter that horrifies Julie, foreshadows her own sexual act with Jean—as well as her subsequent shame and horror following the act. The beheading of Julie's bird by Jean foreshadows Julie's own death.

The Unities

The three classical unities, unity of time, unity of place, and unity of action, are a Renaissance-era interpretation of the rules of ancient Greek drama (as they are described in Aristotle's *Poetics).* Unity of time dictates that the action of a drama occur within a twenty-four hour period. In order to conform to unity of place, the action of a play must take place in either a single location or locations that are close to one another; one cannot, for instance, set one scene in Paris while another is set in Rome.

Unity of action means that all of the incidents of a drama must follow each other logically. In writing *Miss Julie,* Strindberg strictly adhered to the classical unities.

Structure

The structure of Mm *Julie* differs from contemporary late-nineteenth century drama in that Strindberg, believing that the intermissions between acts interrupted an audience's concentration, chose to write a shorter play He conceived *Miss Julie* as a one-act rather than the traditional three-act play so that the audience could experience his drama in a single sitting. Nevertheless, the play's structure reflects the traditional structure in that it has three distinct parts. Instead of being divided by an intermission, the first and second acts occur on either side of the mime, in which Kristine appears alone onstage. The

second and third parts are separated by the servants' ballet, which occurs onstage while Jean and Julie are alone (having sex) in Jean's room.

Symbol

A symbol represents something outside of itself. In *Miss Julie,* the Count's boots and bell symbolize his offstage presence as well as his continuing power over Julie and Jean. When Jean hears the Count's bell, his dreams of social mobility evaporate, and he once again becomes a lackey. Likewise, Jean and Julie's respective dreams are symbols of their desire to escape their reality.

Naturalism

Naturalism is a literary movement that began in France in the mid~1800s. The French writer Eraile Zola (the *Rougon-Macquart* series of novels) is considered the most influential in defining the principles of the movement. Naturalists were influenced by the theory of social Darwinism, in which the human struggle for social survival mirrored the struggle of animals for physical survival (survival of the fittest). In Naturalism, humans are controlled by social and biological factors, heredity, and environment, rather than by their own strength of will and character. *Miss Julie* is widely considered to be the most important naturalistic drama.

Historical Context

In 1859, less than thirty years before Strindberg wrote *Miss Julie,* Charles Darwin published *The Origin of Species,* a book that revolutionized scientific thought on the subjects of evolution and environmental adaptation Darwin identified a process he called natural selection. According to this theory, the earth cannot support all organisms that develop and so these life forms must compete with one another for environmental resources such as food and living space. The tendency for the hardier species to prevail and propagate while the weaker species die off is what Darwin termed the survival of the fittest.

Darwin's ideas were extremely controversial at this time. Previously, people believed that God had created each species individually Further, Darwin's theories indicated that humans evolved from lower life forms—-more specifically lower primates such as apes. To many, this idea was sacrilegious (as they believed God had created humans in his image, as fully-evolved creatures), a repudiation of God, and a threat to religion. Although some pious individuals accepted Darwin's theories, believing evolution occurred under God's guidance, others found their beliefs challenged. After all, if humans descended from other species, then there was little to separate man from beast.

In spite of such objections, acceptance of Darwin's theories grew. And while Darwin's ideas applied to biology, the concept of survival of the fittest began to influence other disciplines as well. Most notable was the development of social Darwinism, a concept that came to prominence in the late-1800s. Social Darwinists saw natural selection occurring within the social as well as biological realm; the concept was used to explain disparities— why some rose to aristocracy while others languished in the lower-classes —in social status. Those who were wealthy or had accomphshed much had done so because they were better adapted to compete for scarce social resources. Those who were poor and had achieved little were in then-positions because of their own nature. The concept of social Darwinism became important to the Naturalist literary movement from which *Miss Julie* arose. In Strindberg's play, the concept of social Darwinism can be seen in the fall of Julie, who is clearly unfit for a superior position and cannot survive. Jean's ability to rise, while questionable, is presented more optimistically; he is stronger and consequently more likely to improve his position in society.

The social position of the lower-class was improving at the time Strindberg's work appeared. Workers in Sweden began to strike for higher wages and shorter workdays. In 1881, a law was passed to limit child labor in factories, but it was not until 1909 that all adult males in Sweden were given the right to vote. The possibility of social mobility was becoming greater at this time as well. In his preface to *Miss Julie,* Strindberg, himself the child of a servant, wrote of "the old... nobility giving way to a new nobility of nerve and intellect."

The position of women in society was also an important issue at this time. It was only in 1845 that women in Sweden were given the right to own property. In 1846 women were

also given the right to hold certain specific jobs, such as teaching, and finally, in 1862, the right to vote. In the 1870s, women were let into the universities for the first time, although they were not allowed to study theology or law. In general, women were gradually becoming, at least in the eyes of the law, more independent and closer in equality with men.

Strindberg himself showed mixed feelings about the changing roles of women. In many ways he sympathized with women, but while Norwegian playwright Henrik Ibsen created Nora, the heroine of A *Doll's House* who walked out on her husband and children to meet her own needs, Strindberg placed more importance on the sanctity of marriage and spoke in his preface to *Miss Julie* about the rise of the "man-hating half-woman." A general opposition to feminism is also apparent in *Miss Julie.*

Critical Overview

With its frank portrayal of sexuality, *Miss Julie* has been a controversial play since its inception—even before it was produced onstage. Initially, Strindberg was only able to get the play published, and reviews of this published version were largely negative.

Michael Meyer, in his biography *Strindberg,* quoted a number of early critics. The play was called "a filthy bundle of rags which one hardly wishes to touch even with tongs" as well as "a heap of ordure ... [with] language that is scarcely used except in nests of vice and debauchery." One critic cited in Meyer's book prophesied that the play "will surely nowhere find a public that could endure to see it " Another said that, in order to write *Miss Julie,* Strindberg "must.. have been troubled by some affectation of the brain which rendered him ... not wholly normal."

Production of the play was initially banned by censors, but Strindberg, who opened his own experimental theater company in order to produce the play was able to have *Miss Julie* shown privately in Copenhagen in 1889. In the next few years, the play was banned in various European countries, and it was not until 1906 that *Miss Julie* was performed publicly in Sweden. While the play gradually began to receive more frequent productions, it continued to be perceived as shocking. As Margery Morgan noted in her book *August Strindberg,* as late as 1912 one critic called the play "the most repellent and brutal play we have ever had to sit through." In spite of repeated censure and harsh criticism, however, the importance of *Miss Julie* was gradually recognized. According to Meyer, after seeing a production of the play, playwright George Bernard Shaw *(Major Barbara)* wrote of Strindberg as "that very remarkable genius who was -left by Ibsen's death at the head of the Scandinavian drama."

Miss Julie is no longer considered shocking because of its sexuality, and critics have turned instead to viewing the play largely through the lens of psychology, a fledgling science in Strindberg's time. In *Gradiva,* Harry Jarv wrote that the pre-Freudian psychological theories of the 1880s focused on the elements of a personality but "did not produce a synthesis," a whole integrated personality. Jarv noted that other literary critics have found fault with Julie's lack of cohesiveness as a character. Jarv, however, pointed out the multitude of motivations Strindberg gives for Julie's actions in the preface and remarked that, in his understanding of personality, Stnndberg was actually ahead of his tune. According to the critic,"the master psychologist Strindberg has managed, in Julie and Jean, to give form to the exceedingly complicated functional units of human personalities." Jarv also suggested that Strindberg drew upon elements of his own psychology in developing Julie. "Like Julie," Jarv wrote, "Strindberg had personally felt drawn to a life of the instincts, but at the same time he has perceived it as something shameful." Jarv's article focused on Strindberg's own battles with madness as well. As is often the case in Strindberg criticism, Jarv analyzed the play by offering an analysis of its author.

Writing at the same time as Jarv, Martin Lamm, in his book *August Strindberg,* also saw Julie as a psychological study. Lamm called her a "psychological enigma." According to

Lamm, Strindberg's lengthy list of the "causes" of Julie's fall were an answer to Georg Brandes, who considered Julie's suicide "psychologically unbelievable." Lamm noted that there is no simple single-theory psychological explanation for the suicide. "Strindberg's intention," he wrote, "was to go beyond simple explanations for answers and to present the multiplicity of conscious and unconscious motivations upon which actions are based."

Like Lamm, Harry G. Carlson, in his 1982 book *Strindberg and the Poetry of Myth,* also focused on the complexity of Julie's personality, calling her downfall "the [result] of the awesome power of nature's twin forces, heredity and environment." In addition, however, Carlson pointed out that Julie and Jean's dreams are also a window into the psychology of their characters. However, Carlson went beyond psychology, suggesting that "a mythic destiny had long ago designed and determined the characters' fate." For Carlson, Strindberg's psychological play also has mythical overtones.

Lesley Ferris, inher 1989 study *Acting Women: Images of Women in Theatre,* also showed an interest in the psychology of Julie, but saw that psychology from a feminist perspective. Ferns focused on Strindberg's characterization of Julie as a "half-woman," androgynous because of her upbringing. Julie, according to Ferris, has absorbed the patriarchal concept of what women should be but cannot assume the role patriarchy assigns her. Consequently she does not have "access to an autonomous self." Like earlier critics Ferris believed that Julie has no integrated personality, in essence no self, and this is what leads to her downfall.

Current psychological examinations of Julie and Jean reflect late-twentieth century thought and its emphasis on psychology as surely as the earliest critiques reflected common views on propriety in Strindberg's time. As times continue to change, further viewpoints will lead to a greater understanding of *Miss Julie.*

Criticism

- Critical Essay #1
- Critical Essay #2
- Critical Essay #3

Critical Essay #1

Cross is a Ph.D. candidate specializing in modern and contemporary drama. In this essay she discusses Miss Julie's inability to live within the gender and class roles imposed on her by society.

In his preface to *Miss Julie,* Strindberg refers to Julie as a "man-hating half woman," and indeed, the playwright draws her as such—though it should be pointed out that Julie despises not only men but women as well Nonetheless, psychologically—considered within the context of her time—Julie is neither wholly male nor wholly female, and she cannot find a place for herself within the social confines of either gender role. In addition, Julie, though an aristocrat by birth, does not fit in with either the upper classes or with the lower. Although she lives in a time during which rigid divisions in class and gender were softening, nineteenth-century Sweden was still a highly structured society with clearly defined class and gender roles. Because Julie cannot distinctly identify with male or female, master or servant, there is no place for her in this world. It is this fact that finally leads to her suicide.

From the beginning of the play, well before she even sets foot on stage, Julie's class and gender confusion become clear as the servants Jean and Kristine discuss their mistress's idiosyncrasies. Julie's inability to act within the bounds of acceptable female behavior is illustrated by an act Strindberg makes so extreme that it becomes ludicrous: Julie "training" her fiance by having him jump over her riding crop and striking him each jump. Clearly, Julie desires power over men to a point that is pathological.

Strindberg provides further evidence of Julie's lack of class identity. On one hand, Kristine reveals Julie's extreme anger over her dog's sexual encounter with the gatekeeper's dog, an act that foreshadows Julie's own indiscretion with Jean. On the other hand, Julie has chosen to stay at home and dance with her servants when it would be more appropriate for her to be visiting relatives with her father.

"Miss Julie," Jean says, "has too much pride about some things and not enough about others." Jean reveals that Julie's mother was the same way. As he recalls, "the cuff's of her blouse were dirty, but she had to have her coat of arms on her cufflinks." Like her mother, Julie is unrefined, even less refined than her own servants. Jean remarks that Julie "pulled the gamekeeper away from Anna and made him dance with her." Such an act is unheard of in the world of the servants. *"We* wouldn't behave like that," Jean says.

Julie's inconsistency in matters of class is revealed again when she appears onstage for the first time. When Jean points out that, by dancing with him, she risks losing the respect of her servants, she replies, "As mistress of the house, I honor your dance with my presence!" Yet when Jean says he will act "as [she] orders," Julie replies, "don't take it as an order! On a night like this, we're all just ordinary people having fun, so we'll forget about rank" As much as Julie tries to force a sense of social equality, Strindberg makes it clear that she also demands she respect her position dictates.

In her book *Acting Women: Images of Women in Theatre,* Lesley Ferris pointed out that Kristine, the cook, acts as a counterpoint to Julie. As Ferris wrote, Kristine "clearly knows her place as a woman and a member of the lower class—waiting on Jean, the footman, and enjoying this subservient position." When Jean asks Kristine if she is angry at him for dancing with Julie when he had promised to dance with her, Kristine tells him, "1 know my place." Jean responds, "You're a sensible girl, .. and you'd make a good wife," a statement that plays up the contrast between Kristine and Julie, who is not sensible and would never make a good wife. Shortly after Julie and Jean return from their dancing, Kristine does the sensible thing; she goes to bed. In contrast, Julie stays up with Jean, telling him the story of a recurring dream, in which she is up in a tower and wants only to come down, clearly a reference to her discomfort with her position in society.

As Jean tries to point out to Julie, she is a woman and the mistress of the house, and she tremendously endangers her reputation by drinking alone with him in the kitchen: Julie, however, will not accept (at least initially) the fact that she cannot simply act as she pleases. Even when the other servants arrive and begin to sing the song of the swineherd and the princess, Julie believes they sing out of love for her; she cannot see the gulf between herself and the workers. Finally persuaded that she has invited the disrespect of her servants, Julie hides with Jean in his room, another clear violation of her proper role. Her downfall becomes complete when she willingly has sex with Jean; at this point, her reputation is damaged beyond repair.

After their sexual encounter, Jean and Julie initially seem to believe that they can rectify the situation by fleeing to Switzerland, a place where no one knows them and their class differences will not matter. At this point, Julie, having acted with the sexual freedom reserved for men, now reverts to a traditionally female viewpoint; she wants to turn their purely carnal encounter into an expression of love. Jean, however, will not go along with her romantic fantasy. In addition, the sexual encounter has made them, in a sense, more equal; at least Jean is now able to openly express disdain for Julie. He tells her that her actions make her lower than her servants, calls her a whore, and, fearing no reproach, reveals that he has stolen wine from her father's cellar as well. At this point, Julie no longer wishes to play at social equality, and she attempts to regain her superior position. Insulted by Jean, she commands him, "You lackey, you menial, stand up when I speak to you!" He responds in kind: "Menial's strumpet, lackey's whore, shut up and get out of here"' This exchange brings Julie to realize the consequences of taking liberties with her socially-prescribed role; the respect that she feels is her due—and which she desperately needs for her self-esteem—has been erased.

At this point in the play, Strindberg chooses to provide the audience with some explanation for Julie's inability to accept her gender and class roles. Strindberg shows Julie as the product of heredity and environment, and his explanation for Julie's gender and class confusion even predates her birth, extending back to the character of her mother. Earlier Jean revealed that Julie's mother tried to act as both master and servant, that she insisted that her dirty cuffs be adorned with cufflinks bearing her coat of arms. After her sexual encounter "with Jean and the ensuing arguments, Julie reveals to Jean more of her background. She describes her mother as "a commoner—very

humble background." Because her father is a gentlemen, genetically, Julie truly is a hybrid of the upper and lower classes. Environment, however, has also played a strong part in bringing Julie to her present position. Her mother was "brought up believing in social equality, women's rights, and all that." Julie herself was reared according to her mother's bizarre ideas about gender equality.

As when he described Julie's "training" ofher fiance, Strmdberg once again presents a situation so extreme that it becomes ridiculous. Not only did Julie's mother believe women to be equal to men; she actually forced complete changes in gender roles. Male servants were assigned tasks normally reserved for women and women did the work of men. As a child, Julie was not simply freed from the conventional roles of women; she was forced to take on the activities and even the clothing of men. Julie was not brought up to see men as equals but to hate men and to want to make them her slaves. In addition, Julie complains that her father "brought me up to despise my own sex, making me half woman, half man." Because Julie hates women as well as men, she cannot help but hate herself and is doomed to confusion and misery. Because she is an aristocrat who cannot fully take on the role required by her class, there is no place where she belongs.

Up until the end, Julie's sense of gender and class identity remains ambiguous. For a time she is able to convince herself that she can escape her society by going to Switzerland with Jean, again trying to see their relationship as that of equals, but when Jean kills her greenfinch (her pet bird), her hatred of his sex and class resurfaces. Her words are remarkable for their violence: "I'd like to see your whole sex swimming in a sea of blood ... I think I could drink from your skull! I'd like to bathe my feet in your open chest and eat your heart roasted whole!" In addition to this expression of hatred for men, Julie again reveals her sense of social superiority in her diatribe against Jean: "By the way, what is your family name?... I was to be Mrs. Bootblack—or Madame Pigsty. — You dog, who wears my collar, you lackey." Again, however, Julie changes her attitude. Retaining a sense of ambiguity in matters of class superiority, she essentially orders Jean to tell her to commit suicide, seemingly taking the roles of both master and slave.

John Ward offered a somewhat different interpretation in his book *The Social and Religious Plays of Strindberg:* "In a sense, Julie decides to kill herself; Jean merely says the words. If anyone is controlled or conditioned, it is Jean by the bell, not Julie who.,. makes her own decision." In her book *The Greatest Fire: A Study of August Strindberg,* Birgitta Steene expressed a similar opinion. During the course of the play, Steene pointed out, Jean and Julie exchange roles. At times Julie acts as the master but at other times assumes the position of servant. According to Steene, however, Julie shows her superiority to Jean in her act of suicide. As she wrote. "While Julie walks to her death holding her head high, Jean cringes in fear before the count's bell. The servant is victorious as a male, but he remains a servant. The aristocrat is defeated sexually and socially, but she dies nobly."

It is common hi the study of literature to romanticize suicide. In reality, however, the nobility of Julie's suicide is questionable and problematic. Ferns denied that Julie even makes a choice at all. "Miss Julie makes no decision here," she wrote, "except the joint

decision with Jean that they have 'no choice.'... there *is* no option, no choice in this world where the hierarchy of gender and class reigns supreme. Ferris went on to say that "Miss Julie is Strindberg's 'battle of the sexes' personified; her selfhood, whose existence she denies, manifest itself in a psychotic struggle between her male and female halves." One could add that Julie also engages in such a struggle between her aristocratic and common halves. For Ferris, Julie's suicide is not a noble act, but the only way out for one, neither male nor female, neither master nor servant, whose divided identity "gives her no willful action to an autonomous self." Having at best a divided identity, Julie sees self-destruction as her only option.

Source; Clare Cross, *fat Drama for Students,* Gale, 1998.

Critical Essay #2

Citing the playwright's background as a photographer and filmmaker, Rokem explains the stagecraft techniques employed by Strindberg in writing Miss Julie.

Stnndberg succeeded in arriving at theatrical effects that resemble the way a photograph "cuts out" a piece of reality: not a symmetrical joining of one wall to the other walls in the house—the basic fourth-wall technique of the realistic theater—but rather an asymmetrical cutting-out. Furthermore, Strindberg used cinematographic techniques resembling zoom, montage, and cut, which are highly significant from the strictly technical point of view and for the meaning of the plays. Historically, photography and movies were making great strides at the time and were art forms to which he himself— as photographer and as movie writer—gave considerable attention and interest. During Stnndberg's lifetime, both *The Father* and *Miss Julie* were filmed as silent movies by the director Anna Hofman-Uddgren and her husband, Gustaf Uddgren, writer and friend of Stnndberg, but only *The Father* has been preserved.

Strindberg thus developed dramatic theatrical techniques that, like the movie camera, can bring the viewer very close to the depicted action and, at the same time, can quite easily change the point of view or direction of observing an event or succession of events. The disappearance or near disappearance of the static focal point is largely the result of the introduction of these different photographic and cinematographic techniques. When the characters, the action, and the fictional world are continuously presented, either from partial angles or from constantly changing ones, it is often impossible for the spectator to determine where the focal point is or what the central experiences are in the characters' world. This in turn is a reflection of the constant and usually fruitless search of the characters for such focal points in their own lives.

Whereas Hedda Gabler's lack of will to continue living was based on her refusal to bear offspring within the confines of married life, Miss Julie's despair primarily reflects her unwillingness merely to exist. Of course, there are external reasons for her suicide, and Strindberg has taken great care both in the play and in the preface almost to overdetermine her final act of despair. Nevertheless, as several critics have pointed out, there are no clear and obvious causal connections between her suicide and the motives presented. Instead, this final act of despair is triggered by an irrational leap into the complete unknown, as she herself says "ecstatically" (according to Strindberg's stage direction) in the final scene when she commands Jean, the servant, to command her, the mistress, to commit suicide: "I am already asleep—the whole room stands as if in smoke for me... and you look like an iron stove.., that resembles a man dressed in black with a top hat—and your eyes glow like coal when the fire is extinguished—and your face is a white patch like the ashes." These complex images within images resemble links in a chain, and they illustrate the constant movement or flux of the despairing speaker's mind. For Miss Julie there is no fixed point in reality, no focal point, except her will to die, to reach out for a nothingness.

In Strindberg's description of the set in the beginning of *Miss Julie,* he carefully specifies how the diagonal back wall cuts across the stage from left to right, opening up in the vaulted entry toward the garden. This vault however, is only partially visible. The oven and the table are also only partially visible because they are situated exactly on the borderline between the stage and the offstage areas. The side walls and the ceiling of the kitchen are marked by drapenes and tormentors. Except for the garden entry, there are no doors or windows. As the play reveals, the kitchen is connected only to the private bedrooms of the servants Jean and Kristin; there is no direct access to the upper floor where the count and his daughter, Julie, live except through the pipe-telephone.

In his preface to the play, Strindberg explained: "I have borrowed from the impressionistic paintings the idea of the asymmetrical, the truncated, and I believe that thereby, the bringing forth of the illusion has been gained; since by not seeing the whole room and all the furnishings, there is room for imagination, i.e., fantasy is put in motion and it completes what is seen." Here Stnndberg describes the imaginative force of this basically metonymic set. But rather than following the custom in realistic theater of showing the *whole* room as part of a house that in turn is part of the fictional world of the play, Strindberg very consciously exposes only *part* of the room. He claims it should be completed in the imagination of the audience As Evert Sprinchorn comments: "The incompleteness of the impressionist composition drew the artist and the viewer into closer personal contact, placing the viewer in the scene and compelling him to identify with the artist at a particular moment."

The audience comes closer not only to the artist through this view of the kitchen from its interior but also, by force of the diagonal arrangements of the set, to the characters inside the kitchen. This is because the fourth wall, on which the realistic theater was originally based, has been moved to an undefined spot somewhere in the auditorium, the spectators are in the same room as the dramatic characters. It is also important to note that, to achieve this effect, Strindberg also removed the side walls from the stage, thus preventing the creation of any kind of symmetrical room that the spectator could comfortably watch from the outside. Furthermore, the audience is not guided regarding the symmetries, directions, or focal points in the set itself, which the traditional theater strongly emphasized. The only area that is separated from the kitchen is the garden, visible through the vaulted entry, with its fountain and, significantly enough, its statue of Eros. Thus, the physical point of view of the audience in relationship to the stage is ambiguous.

What is presented is a "photograph" of the kitchen taken from its interior, drawing the audience's attention to different points inside or outside as the play's action develops. The set of *Miss Julie* can, furthermore, be seen as a photograph because while the spectators get a close view from the inside of the kitchen, they also experience an objective perception of it and the events taking place there through the frame of the proscenium arch. The comparison between Strindberg's scenic technique in *Miss Julie* and the photograph is compelling because of the very strong tension between intimacy and closeness on the one hand and objectivity and distance on the other; this sort of tension has often been observed to be one of the major characteristics not only of the play but also of photography, as the practice of documenting and preserving large

numbers of slices of reality. The photograph also "cuts" into a certain space from its inside, never showing walls as parallel (unless it is a very big space photographed from the outside), at the same time it freezes the attention of the viewer upon the specific moment. In photography the focus is on the present (tense), which is "perfected" into a "has been" through the small fraction of a second when the shutter is opened. Barthes even goes so far as to call this moment in photography an epiphany.

This is also what happens in *Miss Julie* when the attention of the audience is continuously taken from one temporary focal point to the next by force of the gradual development of the action. Our eyes and attention move from the food Jean is smelling to the wine he is tasting, to Miss Julie's handkerchief, to Kristin's fond folding and smelling of the handkerchief when Jean and Miss Julie are at the dance and so on. In *Miss Julie* these material objects force the characters to confront one another and to interact They are not objects primarily belonging to or binding the characters to the distant past toward which they try to reach out in their present sufferings—as are the visual focal points in Ibsen's plays or even the samovars and pieces of old furniture in Chekhov's plays. The objects in *Miss Julie* are first and foremost immersed in the present, forcing the characters to take a stance and their present struggles to be closely observed by the audience.

In *Miss Julie* the past and the future have been transformed into fantasy, so the only reality for the characters is the present. Because Jean and Miss Julie are forced to act solely on the basis of the immediate stimuli causing their interaction, and because the kitchen has been cut off diagonally leaving no visually defined borders on- or offstage, it is impossible to locate any constant focal points, either outside or inside the fictional world of the play and the subjective consciousness of the characters This "narrative" technique achieves both a very close and subjective view of the characters and a seemingly objective and exact picture of them. The temporal retrospection has also been diminished because Jean and Miss Julie are not as disturbed by irrational factors belonging to a guilt-ndden past as, for example, the Ibsen heroes are. Strindberg's characters are motivated primarily by their present desires.

This of course does not mean that there are no expository, references to the past in *Miss Julie,* on the contrary, there are a large number of references to specific events in the lives of the characters preceding the opening of the scenic action. The play, in fact, begins with a series of such references, all told by Jean to Kristin. Thus, we learn that Miss Julie is "mad again tonight" (inferring that it is not the first time this has happened), as represented by the way she is dancing with Jean. And to give her behavior some perspective (just before her entrance), Jean relates to Kristin how Miss Julie's fiance broke their engagement because of the degradations he had to suffer, jumping over her whip as well as being beaten by it. These events are, however, never corroborated by other characters in the play. Miss Julie's subsequent behavior does to some extent affirm Jean's story, but we can never be completely sure.

What is specific to Stnndberg's plays is not the omission of the past—-which absurdist drama emphasizes—but rather a lack of certainty regarding the reliability of what the characters say about that past. And since in many of Strindberg's plays there is no

source of verification other than the private memory of the character speaking, the past takes on a quite subjective quality. Miss Julie gives *her* version of *her* past and Jean relates *his,* and the possible unreliability of these memories is confirmed when Jean changes his story of how he as a child watched her in the garden, (pp. 112-15)

The major outcome of past actions, guilt, is objectified in Ibsen's plays. That is the reason why it can be given a specific geographical location in the outside world, which becomes the "focus" (in all respects) for it. In Strindberg's fictional worlds there is definitely an awareness of past actions, that is of guilt, but it exists as a private limbo in the subjective consciousness of the individual characters and thus cannot be projected onto the objective outside world. That is why in Strindberg's plays there is either no visual focus or a constantly moving one.

In *Miss Julie* the two principal characters continuously try to turn their respective opponents into the focal point onto which their own guilt and related feelings of inadequacy and general frustration can be projected. That is one of the major reasons for their sexual union and.the distrust and even hatred to which it leads. Just how fickle those focal points are, however, can also be seen as in Miss Julie's last desperate attempt to find some kind of support in Jean for her step into the unknown realm of death. Jean's face has become a white spot, resembling to Miss Julie the ashes of a fire because the light of the sun—which is rising at this point in the play—is illuminating him. Again the present situation becomes the point of departure for her wishes. And when Miss Julie wants to die, her wish is thus focused on Jean's illuminated face. In *Ghosts* Ibsen used the same images (the fire and the sun) at the end of the last two acts as objective focal points. Strindberg has compressed these images into one speech in which they are projected onto Jean by the fantasy of Miss Julie's subjective consciousness. Ibsen gives a "scientific" explanation of Oswald's madness for which the sunset is a circumstantial parallel, whereas Strindberg lets the sunset motivate the outburst of Julie's death wish, as expressed from within. Thus the preparations for the introduction of expressionism, wherein everything is projection, had already been made in Stnndberg's pre-Infer-no plays.

Source: Freddy Rokem, "The Camera and the Aesthetics of Repetition' Strindberg's Use of Space and Scenography in *Miss Julie, A Dream Play,* and *The Ghost Sonata"* in *Stnndberg's Dramaturgy,* edited by Goran Stockenstrom, University of Minnesota Press, 1988, pp. 107-28

Critical Essay #3

Calling Strindberg's drama "more a pathological curiosity than a clear and moving play," Gibbs nevertheless offers a positive appraisal of this 1956 production.

Miss Julie is something, and with bells on, as the pretty saying goes. The heroine's mind is the battleground for a hundred waning impulses, inherited from a family of distinguished peculiarity, and her behavior, to put it very mildly, is bizarre. She is an incurable aristocrat who hates the idea of class distinctions, a passionate woman (the performance at the Phoenix suggests nymphomania, but I doubt if that was the author's intention) who has a horror of men, an idealist ceaselessly, corrupted by her senses. It is apparently Strindberg's contention that no tragedy has a single, pat explanation, and Julie's ultimate suicide, coming as the climax of her grotesque affair with her father's valet, surely bears this out. She is a figure of infinite complexity, but whether she is pitiful, ludicrous, or simply incredible is quite another point. It is my opinion that a perpetual shifting back and forth between love and hatred for the same things—an emotional confusion nearly indistinguishable from lunacy—is too difficult a conception for the stage, and that *Miss Julie* is more a pathological curiosity than a clear and moving play. If I'm mistaken—and it should be noted that *Miss Julie* has been performed regularly since 1888— the blame can be laid partly to Viveca Lindfors' rather lurid rendering of the title role at the Phoenix. It has always been my aim to keep vulganty as far as possible out of these essays, but I am almost forced to note that Miss Lindfors gives it the old Ophelia, with darker rumblings from Medea here and there. She is abetted by James Daly and Ruth Ford, the second of whom, incidentally, stars in the curtain-raiser, also by Strindberg, a sort of one-woman filibuster called "The Stronger."

Source: Wolcott Gibbs, "Two Crazy, Mixed-up Kids" in the *New Yorker,* Volume XXXII, no 2, March 3, 1956, pp 63-64

Adaptations

Miss Julie was made into the 1951 Swedish film *Froken Julie,* directed by Alf Sjoberg.

A television version of *Miss Julie* was produced by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in 1965. The program was directed by Alan Bridges and stars Stephanie Bidmean, Ian Hendry, and Gunnel Lmdblom.

In 1972, John Glenister and Robin Phillips directed another version of *Miss Julie.* This adaptation stars Helen Mirren, Donal McCann, and Heather Canning.

Topics for Further Study

Compare Miss Julie to Edna in Kate Chopin's novel *The Awakening.* How do both women respond to the restrictions of their societies? How does Edna's suicide differ from Julie's? Could the authors' genders be an influence in the differences between these two works?

Although the Count affects the action of *Miss Julie,* he never appears onstage. Discuss the Count's importance to the play. What might be the purpose of his remaining an offstage presence? How would the play be different if he appeared onstage"

Compare *Miss Julie* to the Ibsen plays *A Doll's House* and *Hedda Gabler.* How does Strindberg's apparent view of the changing roles of women in his society differ from Ibsen's?

Compare and contrast Jean and Miss Julie's characters. How do they differ in their dissatisfaction with their class positions? Why is Jean able to live while Julie sees no option but suicide?

Research the theory of social Darwinism. How do the fates of the characters in *Miss Julie* reflect Strindberg's belief in this theory?

Compare and Contrast

1888: Although published in 1859, Charles Darwin's *The Origin of Species* is still the focus of controversy as religious people feel threatened by Darwin's findings and the resulting conception of human beings as animals.

Today: Darwin's theories are widely accepted, and most people consider humans to be, biologically, animals. Few religious people consider their beliefs shaken by evolution.

1888: The role of women is rapidly changing as women gain more equality with men under the law. Husbands, however, retain legal rights over their wives and the proper position of married women is widely debated.

Today: European and American women have close to complete legal equality with men, but many believe much progress remains to be made. In some third-world counties there is still great inequality between the sexes.

1888: Social Darwinism gains importance as a theory as people see the concept of the survival of the fittest at work in society.

Today: Circumstances beyond individual control and genetics are now seen as having a great impact in determining who will gain status and wealth. Acceptance of the theory of social Darwinism has greatly declined.

1888: Social reforms in Sweden are in the process of increasing the rights of workers, who are demanding higher wages and shorter workdays. In Sweden, workers are kept from voting by a law that requires a minimum income of those who vote.

Today: The position of workers throughout the world has greatly unproved. Due to a government welfare system, all Swedes have a relatively high standard of living.

What Do I Read Next?

A Doll's House, a play by Henrik Ibsen first produced in 1879, considers the place of the heroine, Nora, as a woman in her culture, Strindberg expressed a strong dislike of this play's portrayal of gender roles. *Miss Julie* is widely believed to be Strindberg's answer to *A Doll's House.*

Hedda Gabler, an 1890 play also written by Ibsen, is the story of a woman who, like Miss Julie, cannot live within the confines of her society's gender roles. The play is regarded by some to be Ibsen's answer to *Miss Julie.*

A Streetcar Named Desire, a 1947 play by Tennessee Williams, is considered to be strongly influenced by *Miss Julie.* This play focuses on Blanche DuBois, a southern belle who has seen better times, and Blanche's relationship with her sister's husband, Stanley Kowalski. Sexual desire as well as class and gender roles are important issues in this drama.

The Awakening, an 1899 novel by Kate Chopin, tells the story of Edna Pontellier, who also rejects society and its conventions. Like Julie, Edna commits suicide. Chopm, however, presents a view of a troubled woman very different from that of Strindberg.

The Father, Strindberg's 1887 play, is another naturalistic drama that is concerned with the difficulties of relationships between men and women.

Further Study

Ferns, Lesley *Acting Wome'n- Images of Women in Theatre,*

New York University Press, 1989.

This book is a good basic introduction to the depiction of female characters in drama from the Greeks to the present Hawkins, Mike *Social Darwinism in European and American Thought- 1860-1945, Nature As Model and Nature As Threat,* Cambridge University Press, 1997.

This book provides a basic introduction to the theory and history of social Darwinism, particularly as it was perceived during Strindberg's time.

Morgan, Margery. *August Strindberg,* Macmillan, 1985 This book provides a brief biography of Strindberg and an introduction to his works Spnnchorn, Evert. *Strindberg As Dramatist,* Yale University Press, 1982.

Dividing his work into periods, this book integrates a study of Strindberg's development as a dramatist, including biographical information and criticism of his plays

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Ward, John *The Social and Religious Plays of Strmdberg,* Athlone, 1980, p 62.

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Project Editor
David Galens

Editorial
Sara Constantakis, Elizabeth A. Cranston, Kristen A. Dorsch, Anne Marie Hacht, Madeline S. Harris, Arlene Johnson, Michelle Kazensky, Ira Mark Milne, Polly Rapp, Pam Revitzer, Mary Ruby, Kathy Sauer, Jennifer Smith, Daniel Toronto, Carol Ullmann

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Randy Bassett, Dean Dauphinais, Robert Duncan, Leitha Etheridge-Sims, Mary Grimes, Lezlie Light, Jeffrey Matlock, Dan Newell, Dave Oblender, Christine O'Bryan, Kelly A. Quin, Luke Rademacher, Robyn V. Young

Product Design
Michelle DiMercurio, Pamela A. E. Galbreath, Michael Logusz

Manufacturing
Stacy Melson

For more information, contact
The Gale Group, Inc
27500 Drake Rd.
Farmington Hills, MI 48334-3535
Or you can visit our Internet site at
http://www.gale.com

Introduction

Purpose of the Book

The purpose of Drama for Students (DfS) is to provide readers with a guide to understanding, enjoying, and studying novels by giving them easy access to information about the work. Part of Gale's□For Students□ Literature line, DfS is specifically designed to meet the curricular needs of high school and undergraduate college students and their teachers, as well as the interests of general readers and researchers considering specific novels. While each volume contains entries on □classic□ novels

frequently studied in classrooms, there are also entries containing hard-to-find information on contemporary novels, including works by multicultural, international, and women novelists.

The information covered in each entry includes an introduction to the novel and the novel's author; a plot summary, to help readers unravel and understand the events in a novel; descriptions of important characters, including explanation of a given character's role in the novel as well as discussion about that character's relationship to other characters in the novel; analysis of important themes in the novel; and an explanation of important literary techniques and movements as they are demonstrated in the novel.

In addition to this material, which helps the readers analyze the novel itself, students are also provided with important information on the literary and historical background informing each work. This includes a historical context essay, a box comparing the time or place the novel was written to modern Western culture, a critical overview essay, and excerpts from critical essays on the novel. A unique feature of DfS is a specially commissioned critical essay on each novel, targeted toward the student reader.

To further aid the student in studying and enjoying each novel, information on media adaptations is provided, as well as reading suggestions for works of fiction and nonfiction on similar themes and topics. Classroom aids include ideas for research papers and lists of critical sources that provide additional material on the novel.

Selection Criteria

The titles for each volume of DfS were selected by surveying numerous sources on teaching literature and analyzing course curricula for various school districts. Some of the sources surveyed included: literature anthologies; Reading Lists for College-Bound Students: The Books Most Recommended by America's Top Colleges; textbooks on teaching the novel; a College Board survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; a National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) survey of novels commonly studied in high schools; the NCTE's Teaching Literature in High School: The Novel;and the Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) list of best books for young adults of the past twenty-five years. Input was also solicited from our advisory board, as well as educators from various areas. From these discussions, it was determined that each volume should have a mix of □classic□ novels (those works commonly taught in literature classes) and contemporary novels for which information is often hard to find. Because of the interest in expanding the canon of literature, an emphasis was also placed on including works by international, multicultural, and women authors. Our advisory board members□educational professionals□ helped pare down the list for each volume. If a work was not selected for the present volume, it was often noted as a possibility for a future volume. As always, the editor welcomes suggestions for titles to be included in future volumes.

How Each Entry Is Organized

Each entry, or chapter, in DfS focuses on one novel. Each entry heading lists the full name of the novel, the author's name, and the date of the novel's publication. The following elements are contained in each entry:

- Introduction: a brief overview of the novel which provides information about its first appearance, its literary standing, any controversies surrounding the work, and major conflicts or themes within the work.
- Author Biography: this section includes basic facts about the author's life, and focuses on events and times in the author's life that inspired the novel in question.
- Plot Summary: a factual description of the major events in the novel. Lengthy summaries are broken down with subheads.
- Characters: an alphabetical listing of major characters in the novel. Each character name is followed by a brief to an extensive description of the character's role in the novel, as well as discussion of the character's actions, relationships, and possible motivation. Characters are listed alphabetically by last name. If a character is unnamed□for instance, the narrator in Invisible Man-the character is listed as □The Narrator□ and alphabetized as □Narrator.□ If a character's first name is the only one given, the name will appear alphabetically by that name. □ Variant names are also included for each character. Thus, the full name □Jean Louise Finch□ would head the listing for the narrator of To Kill a Mockingbird, but listed in a separate cross-reference would be the nickname □Scout Finch.□
- Themes: a thorough overview of how the major topics, themes, and issues are addressed within the novel. Each theme discussed appears in a separate subhead, and is easily accessed through the boldface entries in the Subject/Theme Index.
- Style: this section addresses important style elements of the novel, such as setting, point of view, and narration; important literary devices used, such as imagery, foreshadowing, symbolism; and, if applicable, genres to which the work might have belonged, such as Gothicism or Romanticism. Literary terms are explained within the entry, but can also be found in the Glossary.
- Historical Context: This section outlines the social, political, and cultural climate in which the author lived and the novel was created. This section may include descriptions of related historical events, pertinent aspects of daily life in the culture, and the artistic and literary sensibilities of the time in which the work was written. If the novel is a historical work, information regarding the time in which the novel is set is also included. Each section is broken down with helpful subheads.
- Critical Overview: this section provides background on the critical reputation of the novel, including bannings or any other public controversies surrounding the work. For older works, this section includes a history of how the novel was first received and how perceptions of it may have changed over the years; for more recent novels, direct quotes from early reviews may also be included.
- Criticism: an essay commissioned by DfS which specifically deals with the novel and is written specifically for the student audience, as well as excerpts from previously published criticism on the work (if available).

- Sources: an alphabetical list of critical material quoted in the entry, with full bibliographical information.
- Further Reading: an alphabetical list of other critical sources which may prove useful for the student. Includes full bibliographical information and a brief annotation.

In addition, each entry contains the following highlighted sections, set apart from the main text as sidebars:

- Media Adaptations: a list of important film and television adaptations of the novel, including source information. The list also includes stage adaptations, audio recordings, musical adaptations, etc.
- Topics for Further Study: a list of potential study questions or research topics dealing with the novel. This section includes questions related to other disciplines the student may be studying, such as American history, world history, science, math, government, business, geography, economics, psychology, etc.
- Compare and Contrast Box: an □at-a-glance□ comparison of the cultural and historical differences between the author's time and culture and late twentieth century/early twenty-first century Western culture. This box includes pertinent parallels between the major scientific, political, and cultural movements of the time or place the novel was written, the time or place the novel was set (if a historical work), and modern Western culture. Works written after 1990 may not have this box.
- What Do I Read Next?: a list of works that might complement the featured novel or serve as a contrast to it. This includes works by the same author and others, works of fiction and nonfiction, and works from various genres, cultures, and eras.

Other Features

DfS includes □The Informed Dialogue: Interacting with Literature,□ a foreword by Anne Devereaux Jordan, Senior Editor for Teaching and Learning Literature (TALL), and a founder of the Children's Literature Association. This essay provides an enlightening look at how readers interact with literature and how Drama for Students can help teachers show students how to enrich their own reading experiences.

A Cumulative Author/Title Index lists the authors and titles covered in each volume of the DfS series.

A Cumulative Nationality/Ethnicity Index breaks down the authors and titles covered in each volume of the DfS series by nationality and ethnicity.

A Subject/Theme Index, specific to each volume, provides easy reference for users who may be studying a particular subject or theme rather than a single work. Significant subjects from events to broad themes are included, and the entries pointing to the specific theme discussions in each entry are indicated in boldface.

Each entry has several illustrations, including photos of the author, stills from film adaptations (if available), maps, and/or photos of key historical events.

Citing Drama for Students

When writing papers, students who quote directly from any volume of Drama for Students may use the following general forms. These examples are based on MLA style; teachers may request that students adhere to a different style, so the following examples may be adapted as needed. When citing text from DfS that is not attributed to a particular author (i.e., the Themes, Style, Historical Context sections, etc.), the following format should be used in the bibliography section:

□Night.□ Drama for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 234-35.

When quoting the specially commissioned essay from DfS (usually the first piece under the □Criticism□ subhead), the following format should be used:

Miller, Tyrus. Critical Essay on □Winesburg, Ohio.□ Drama for Students. Ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski. Vol. 4. Detroit: Gale, 1998. 335-39.

When quoting a journal or newspaper essay that is reprinted in a volume of DfS, the following form may be used:

Malak, Amin. □Margaret Atwood's □The Handmaid's Tale and the Dystopian Tradition,□ Canadian Literature No. 112 (Spring, 1987), 9-16; excerpted and reprinted in Drama for Students, Vol. 4, ed. Marie Rose Napierkowski (Detroit: Gale, 1998), pp. 133-36.

When quoting material reprinted from a book that appears in a volume of DfS, the following form may be used:

Adams, Timothy Dow. □Richard Wright: □Wearing the Mask,□ in Telling Lies in Modern American Autobiography (University of North Carolina Press, 1990), 69-83; excerpted and reprinted in Novels for Students, Vol. 1, ed. Diane Telgen (Detroit: Gale, 1997), pp. 59-61.

We Welcome Your Suggestions

The editor of Drama for Students welcomes your comments and ideas. Readers who wish to suggest novels to appear in future volumes, or who have other suggestions, are cordially invited to contact the editor. You may contact the editor via email at: ForStudentsEditors@gale.com. Or write to the editor at:

Editor, Drama for Students
Gale Group
27500 Drake Road
Farmington Hills, MI 48331-3535