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STRINDBERG'S *MISS JULIE*: AN EXPLOITATION OF
GENDERLECT AND LIBERATORY PEDAGOGY

By

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Submitted to the Faculty of the Graduate College of
Arkansas Tech University
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for the degree of
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Permission

Title: Strindberg's *Miss Julie*: An Exploitation of Genderlect and Liberatory Pedagogy

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Abstract

Navigating the complexities of naturalist dramatic literature proves to be a challenge under the best circumstances. How do we attempt to highlight the major themes and tenants of Naturalism through an educational theatre lens? What happens when the show is then double cast due to indecisiveness? How do we handle actors with personal trauma influencing their ability to work with vulnerability and physical contact? These questions and others were answered throughout this master's thesis production of *Miss Julie* by August Strindberg. Through a process guided by social research and dramaturgical attention to detail, this director was able to explore a variety of different tools to reach actors and help them explore the vulnerabilities of their characters. This paper will also discuss the challenges of employing "liberatory pedagogy," as detailed by Jonathan Cole, to the process of working with designers. This process allowed for an open opportunity to both collaborate with designers on their work, while also stepping back to allow their creative desires flourish. Our experience however, eventually challenged the tenants of teacher / student veracity.

Table of Contents

	Page
ABSTRACT.....	iv
STRINDBERG'S <i>MISS JULIE</i> : AN EXPLOITATION OF GENDERLECT AND LIBERATORY PEDAGOGY	1
WORKS CITED	9
APPENDICES	10
Appendix A. Production Photos	10
Appendix B. Director's Analysis.....	12
Appendix C. Director's Program Notes.....	29
Appendix D. KC/ACTF Respondent Notes.....	32
Appendix E. Student Response Papers	34
Appendix F. "Genderlect as Character Study: Gender Communication Theory and <i>Miss Julie</i> "	47

Strindberg's *Miss Julie*: An Exploitation of Genderlect and Liberatory Pedagogy

Theatre as an art is a constantly evolving, fluid format that offers audiences and professionals the ability to put life and the human experience under a microscope. We can dissect the good, ugly, and apathetic traits that make human beings and human interactions flourish. Naturalist ideology relies on one overarching principle: Scientific reasoning and forces guide the natural world. Supernatural ideologies are not considered since the main governing body of the world is benefitted by an examination of the scientific forces at play. The dramatic vein of the Naturalist movement saw many deep and provocative works during its time. Throughout the naturalist movement many works were composed that sought to build upon the ideas of Realism in the works of Ibsen and Chekov. August Strindberg is arguably one of the foremost studies in naturalist literature. His play *Miss Julie* most specifically sought to explore the contrast of idealization and degradation of people and ideologies. The characters within all offer a wealth of complexity that is often subjective in its interpretation. When approaching *Miss Julie* for performance, there were so many opportunities to be explored in how we work with young actors to identify with the complex violence within the show. The use of sociological and psychological theories has been employed in character exploration for many years. Through *Miss Julie*, there is an opportunity that has not been tapped when approaching character analysis of Jean, Julie, and Christine. Gender Communication Theory offers an intensive addition to a character analysis workbook. Through this lens of analysis and discovery on these characters, actors can intensify their ability to work and identify on a new level of intricacy. Through the exploration and implementation of gendered communication studies, we can supplement the techniques of reputable acting

theorists to create the world of *Miss Julie* as one enriched with specificity and truth for our actors.

Miss Julie is a work that has followed me throughout my career as a theatre professional. I was introduced to the battles of this story as an undergraduate, and Strindberg's masterpiece has stayed with me as a testament to the power that psychological torment can inflict upon another human being. When I began to approach what play I would like to explore and direct for my master's thesis project, I immediately thought of this work. For so long, I have been an artist driven by the need to explore major themes that are relevant to our society in its current state. The use of theatre as a medium to show how we as humans can discover prejudices about ourselves that we were not aware of broadens the possibilities for self-reflection. This reflection can often take us to a place that changes how we see and respond to the world around us. That magic and power in the theatre, and the responsibility I have as the artist delivering that message, truly empowers not only myself, but all of the students I have the opportunity to teach. Through their dedication and work on this script, we have all learned valuable lessons from each other, not only on our process, but also about how we respond to the world around us. As an educator and student throughout this process, an experimental and structured pedagogical approach to artistry was taken to ensure total fulfillment of director, designer, and actor artistic intent.

The play began as an exercise in determining what directing styles I could piece together to form my own version of the perfect process. Like perfection in any other discipline, I quickly learned how impossible it would be to reach a point where I felt I had done everything I could to bring this story to life. My personal goals for this project

were fulfilled through the tireless dedication of my collaborators. My colleagues and students both taught me endless things daily that allowed me to refine my process as not only a director, but as an educator as well.

The beginning of this process was a mixture of play analysis and exploration paired with an intense focus into Gender Communication Theory. That focus on Gender Communication Theory was a topic explored in another graduate class, and the study provided a way to bring this material to the students in a way that allowed them to interact with the language on another level. The challenges of Strindberg's dialogue, and of making undergraduate actors of varying experience levels understand the material, made any little shortcut or different lens indispensable. As an undergraduate student, I was taught two different directing styles that featured a micro managed approach to the material and a macro focused approach that encouraged organic movement and discovery. While both processes make the narrative a complete picture, they both also encourage different levels of actor involvement in the creative development of the characters and play. While researching different directing techniques and practices, I came across an article titled "Liberatory Pedagogy and Activated Directing: Restructuring the College Rehearsal Room" by Jonathan Cole. In this article, Cole details the overwhelming lack of formal study into directing theory and practice, but most especially in an educational setting. Cole states,

"In the director's work with both actors and designers, group interaction and dynamics play a major role. In the initial meeting with both of these groups, the director must identify and communicate the importance of each individual's

contribution to the group. All the artists involved must look to one another as resources” (Cole 199-200).

Upon entering this experience, collaboration was of the utmost importance for personal development. The problems came when this collaborative attempt began to involve allowing the designers to stand by their decisions even if they did not adhere to some fundamental knowledge’s of the show, such as given circumstances.

As an educator, student, director, technical director, and scenic designer in this endeavor, I desired to work as a team with my students, and wanted to allow them to stand by their successes and failures with the full knowledge that they made those design decisions themselves. I made the executive decision to let my students have creative license, and the consequence was pointed out by a colleague and mentor in the theatre department. The line became too blurred to determine where director ineffectiveness met student ineptitude.

This production was entered into the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, and was watched by professionals in both design and performance fields for critical response. An addendum follows this report with a catalogue of the notes from both respondents. While watching the live production of the show, all the little details in all of the design elements became apparent. The aesthetic distance achieved by stepping out of the active director role in rehearsals and back into a sharp design eye highlighted the ineffectiveness of not guiding the designers more effusively through the process. When differences in opinion were offered, it was the educational director’s duty to draw the line between what was stylistically appropriate and what was not. Cole further states,

“It is important to note that the director does not surrender his or her own opinion of the play in favor of the actors or designer’s visions of it; rather, through constant critical dialogue among all parties he or she helps to amplify resonances and draw connections among all the artists” (Cole 202).

During this post mortem examination of this technique, I believe its merits, for me, would have come with experience. With this production, I occupied many different capacities that all have challenges with Naturalism. Combined, they allowed me to see that the visual details most certainly affect the work in rehearsals. The director must be actively engaging with all of these facts and elements. The process with the actors provided some equally challenging scenarios.

When character development and analysis for these characters was completed, I had a very specific idea about what drove each of them and, most importantly, that they were all the hero of the story in their own mind. This guided the audition process. Through two nights of auditions, the number of student actors who embodied each character allowed me to double cast the show. This meant there were now two separate casts to prepare; two separate student interpretations of the characters that allowed me to explore more possibilities that I had not thought of at the beginning of this process. This indecisiveness allowed me to build two different shows that placed the audience’s empathy with two different characters. While Julie is typically, in our modern society, seen as a bratty and naïve woman, she most certainly does not deserve her fate in the show.

With this work, actors could relate to both the obvious traits of their characters, and the traits that were less obvious. For example, Jean is a highly manipulative and

exploitive character that uses the two women in this show to get what he wants. The two young men that played Jean did not possess these traits and struggled to get a deeper than superficial understanding of Jean's super objective. This is where the research on gender communication theory served both casts. To encourage the young men to examine their action verbs for each beat we began to look at the cycle of how Jean began to manipulate Julie. Through his adoption of traditionally feminine speech patterns he not only disarms Julie, but Christine as well. Jean begins to talk of his dreams shortly after Christine goes to bed,

JEAN: No, my dream is that I am lying under a tall tree in a dark wood. I want to get up, up to the top, so that I can look out over the smiling landscape, where the sun is shining, and so that I can rob the nest in which lie the golden eggs (8).

Only a few lines previously Julie uses the exact language structure in repeating her words throughout a phrase,

JULIE: ... I have climbed to the top of a column and sit there without being able to tell how to get down again. I get dizzy when I look down, and I must get down, but I haven't the courage to jump off. I cannot hold on, and I am longing to fall and yet I don't fall...(8)

Jean begins to admit intimate details to Julie, and the actors must then decide if he is translating his message in a feminine speech pattern out of necessity or if he is using this as a manipulative tool to access Julie at her core. Is he trying to get Julie to submit to him through manipulating what she thinks she controls: The conversation? Julie feels a strong kinship to her emotions and was taught to keep them guarded, especially from men. Jean uses this "rapport talk" to encourage Julie (Galvin, et al. 24). Through the use of the

gendered communication study that is detailed in an addendum to this report, the actors were able to relate to their characters on a level that allowed intimate character relationships to form onstage. These intimate relationships exposed a personal trauma for one of the young women playing Julie.

With this discovery, I could then explore how to work with this actress and her personal trauma. She was unable to be touched in any way that triggered a past trauma in her life. The question was then how we work with a cast that has a Julie who cannot be touched? How do we work different builds and moments within the show without further traumatizing the actress? I was fortunate to have an actress who wanted to work past her trauma. Through our work with exploring gendered body language and language, she was able to use the text and language to physically engage with Jean as Julie rather than as her true self. When we approached any moments that proved to be physically challenging for her, she found purpose through Julie's atypically gendered behaviors. She could use the language and Structuralist Standpoint Theory to interact with her fellow actors (Kroløkke and Sørensen 172).

This experience was full of insightful conversations and lessons with colleagues, mentors, professionals, and students. Through the employment of different practices learned in my graduate studies, I was able to test things that may or may not work for my process as a director. The use of gendered communication theory became an invaluable tool in reaching the actors. The process of double casting the show with a mixture of experience levels proved to be a challenge that afforded me the opportunity to appreciate the sheer amount of time necessary to fully explore two different interpretations of the same script at the same time. Finally, the use of Liberatory Pedagogy in this process was

a miss for me. I look forward to fine tuning its implementation more in future endeavors. Its possibilities as a teaching tool are endless, and the ability to encourage a student design collaborative is something I look forward to exploring in my future as an educator. I have been humbled by this experience, and look forward to the next challenge to implement all that I have learned through these characters and Strindberg's Naturalist ideology.

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Appendix A. Production Photos



Production Rehearsal Photo © Jenava Harris



Production Rehearsal Photo © Jenava Harris



Production Photo © Jenava Harris



Production Photo © Jenava Harris

Appendix B. Director's Analysis

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6-24-16

MISS JULIE ANALYSIS

In Miss Julie August Strindberg raises many questions for us to consider. What is the root of communication error between the sexes? How does the “degenerate woman” find peace in her life? How do the lower classes advance their station in life? What sacrifices of the soul have to be made in order to abolish cowardice? These questions and more are at the ground level of an exploration into Strindberg’s narrative and its intent with audiences.

This play is about abuse and identity, relationships, sex, and manipulation. Miss Julie follows the story of three people that are seeking to eradicate an oppression they face in their lives. Whether that oppression is classism, gender violence, or psychological predispositions, Jean, Julie, and Christine seek a change in their lives. The problems arise when this change they seek becomes dependent on the destruction of another. In our society today we face endless amounts of violence that is often geared toward some radical notion.

The rape culture surrounding college campuses is wrought with debate over what kind of justice is appropriate for victims and perpetrators. Radical extremists that seek to massacre people based on their sexual identity or religious ideologies fill new casts on a

much too frequent level. Through our exploration of the themes of this show we must seek to involve study on several different cases to find a way to tell the story of both victim and perpetrator. Through Jean and Julie's encounters they are driven by a need to reconcile the violent tendencies they have toward one another. They are both victim and perpetrator at different points of the narrative. We must work to figure out why they responded this way while also examining what justice means for each party. What is justice for these two against their oppressor? How are they both liable for the damage they inflict and the consequences that follow? What degree of cowardice brings them to the moment of conflict with each other or with themselves? This is not meant to say that victims in sexual or physical assault have a responsibility to their attacker or their role in the attack but rather to examine how Jean and Julie are both assailants that verbally and physically assault each other. Through that duality of assault we had to examine what this says about how we encounter differing ideologies in our own lives. These characters all have very different ways of thinking and the resulting conflict of those ideologies and power dynamics provides a lesson in our tolerance of differing viewpoints.

I chose this play to explore not only its dark themes and their reflections on humanity, but also to find a formula for working with young actors to facilitate an open communication platform. The students of Arkansas Tech University have a use for exploring the themes of cowardice and ineptitude as a weapon against others and the self. Our current society necessitates the ability to decipher communication practices to effectively and informatively deliver a message.

THEME:

The dangers of idealization.

While this play offers many different translations, this production and its director intend to establish the theme of this show as an encouragement for the audience to scrutinize the narrative in their own lives. It will serve as an anecdote of what can happen when idealization dictates action. From this we can begin to examine how we use idealization or ignorance in our own lives. Only upon self-actualization can we begin to grow.

CLIMAX OF THE SHOW:

The climax of the show or the point of no return comes at the sexual encounter between Jean and Julie. This is the point at which their idealization of each other and their physiological responses are at their highest and lead to a situation both cannot recover from no matter how they try throughout the rest of the show. Strindberg challenged DelSarte's well-made play formula and as such offers a long falling action and denouement to rival the length of the first half of the show.

SUPEROBJECTIVE:

To kill any subordination and idealization

METAPHOR:

A cage fighting ring.

The intimacy of an impending battle within the confines of a cage fighting ring reinforce the intimate and impending battle within the kitchen. It offers little chance for escape especially once the gloves are fitted and ready. The battles and conflicts of Naturalism, to Strindberg, relied on this excerpt from his collected essays,

“...this is the kind of misconceived Naturalism which believed that art simply consisted in copying a piece of nature in a natural way, but not the greater Naturalism which seeks out those points where the great battles take place, which loves to see what one does not see every day, which delights in the struggles between natural forces, whether those forces are called love and hate, the spirit of revolt, or social instincts...”

GIVEN CIRCUMSTANCES:

-Time:

Time of Composition: The play was written in 1888. The social climate in the dramatic world was looking at a very significant reaction to the traditional dramas of the age. Melodramatic plays were marked by a caricature of life when presented on stage. This was met with some firm opposition by the work of a new movement called Realism. This movement sought to explore the notion of dramatic literature as a representation of the realistic aspects of life, the good, the bad, and the ugly. The work of the father of Naturalism, Emile Zola, sought to explore the Darwinian teachings of the time and how they fit into the new dramatic landscape in the plays of Ibsen, Chekov, and others along with the new performance practices being taught by Stanislavski. Zola sought to build a bridge between what he saw as an often idealistic view of thematic issues in some plays.

Naturalism sought to examine the scientific reasons behind why some people seem predisposed to bad behaviors. Naturalism is characterized by the following:

- an attempt to determine the scientific forces influencing the actions of people.
- a desire to identify the social and psychological problems in ordinary life and the Darwinian root of this. Darwinian Theory that lead this was based around the notion that heredity and social environment determine one's character.
- a character's fate is often pre-ordained and any surprising plot twist is included to parallel that often surprising quality in everyday life.

When Strindberg read of the teachings and theories of Zola and their applications in dramatic literature he wrote *Miss Julie*, among others, to provide a story that examined these theories with a full inclusion of the dark side of socioeconomic customs of the time. As stated before, the feminist ideology *Miss Julie* learned from her mother pre-ordained her to an ill fate. She adopted those same "hysterical" symptoms from her mother in a Darwinian behavioral evolution. The instinctual aspects of this show drive home a Darwinian survival of the fittest that ends with any indication of breaking subservient roles as a sure death sentence.

Time of Action: The play takes place over the course of Midsummer Eve Festival. This historically is also known as St. John's Eve. The events of the show are directly related to these outside forces creating the perfect atmosphere for this breakdown in propriety. The holiday was celebrated to pay homage to St. John the Baptist who was beheaded to squash any possible uprising he could incite against the reigning king of Galilee. While Midsummer Eve is marked as a time to celebrate the health, fertility, and

virility of life, St. John's Day was a day to celebrate the birth of John the Baptist that was believed to have been six months prior to the birth of Jesus, just around the summer solstice. Below are accounts of European (mostly Swedish) customs surrounding Midsummer Eve Festival:

- fertility festival, celebrating the beginning of summer- summer solstice
- begins with the rising of Midsummer Eve pole (may-pole) that was covered in flowers and danced around to symbolize fertility and new life.
- in Croatia and Denmark many times large bonfires were erected to either jump over (Croatia) or to burn an effigy of a witch to keep evil spirits at bay.
- greenery was often placed over homes and barns to bring good fortune and health to people and livestock.

These customs and beliefs are surrounding the action within the claustrophobic kitchen Julie, Jean and Christine exist within. Strindberg's setting of the action of the play further supports the influence of outside forces on these characters. The festival puts a decidedly informal veil over everyone's behavior that then allows their dark desires to take over in the subconscious interest of fulfilling the fertile mission of the holiday. This allows Miss Julie to succumb to her instinctual need whilst "in heat" along with Jean's lust to take over.

This time in European and American culture also found the place of women as subservient to men. Women were expected to build a happy home and family for her husband. Classes were also not to be toyed with. If you were at a certain level of aristocracy you were born into it. Jean had no hope of elevating his rank to a satisfying level. The trouble comes when Strindberg puts a higher born woman with a lower born

male. The complexities of that power struggle are integral in displaying the Darwinian survival of the fittest motif. Gender roles and societal constructs were essential in understanding how these complexities lead to the play's dark conclusion.

Dramatic Time: The action of the play takes place beginning in the late evening hours of Midsummer Eve and conclude in the early morning hours of the next morning. Approximate times: 10:00 PM - 8:00AM. This is based on research of the customary practice of the servant class at this time. 10 PM would have been when all of the daily chores were done and when revelry would be in full swing for festival goers. The play ends with Christine leaving for church and as such this would have started mid-morning to allow everyone to get there after early morning chores.

-Place:

Geographical Locale: This play was set by the playwright in his native Sweden. Many adaptations have changed this location. This director feels it necessary to reflect important thematic elements by keeping the play in its native country with the class system intact. Moving this to another country would compromise the playwright's intent.

Specific Locale: The play occurs completely within the confines of Miss Julie's father's (The Count) home. More specifically in the kitchen. Jean and Julie to leave the stage for a brief period but return to confront the consequences of their actions within the kitchen. Per Strindberg, the kitchen should feel claustrophobic as if this is the womb in which these two characters create a very massive challenge to the subordination they experience in their lives. Further attention will be paid to the actual hierarchy between characters in a later section.

-Society:

Families: The three characters within have no familial ties to each other.

Love and Friendship: Jean and Christine are close enough to each other to have an agreed upon engagement based on their relationship with each other. After Christine infers what Jean and Julie have done she formulates a plan that ends with his suicide so that she, as his widow, and his children may have a pension to live off on her new plan for their lives. Her line is, “Your plans, yes—but you’ve got obligations also, and those you had better keep in mind.” This line indicates that she and Jean have obligations between themselves that prove detrimental to her and her reputation.

Julie is seeking a real connection to someone on a level of protected equality. She wants to find someone that she can trust to be vulnerable around despite what her mother taught her. The teachings of her mother and the coldness of her father have made that task all but impossible to accomplish as she does not have the emotional skills to be able to handle that search properly. This quiet desperation within her leads to the ultimate mistake of trusting Jean. She has had a broken engagement from a man she sought to control and humiliate into submission to her but that all points to her physical and emotional inability to act the way she “should” in love. She doesn’t know how to handle these things properly and this naiveté contributes to her downfall.

Occupation, Social Status, and Social Standards: Julie is the daughter of a rich count who is absent from the script aside from mentions by all three characters to his wealth and status. As the daughter of a count she would have been expected to marry to ensure her security and survival as she has no discernible skills that would make her

useful in any workforce suitable to her status in life. In search of meaningful connection, she participates in the festivities of midsummer night with the servants of the house and thus lowers herself. She was to go away with friends and her father to celebrate among people of her station but her recent ended engagement provided a source of embarrassment in facing those people. Her break from social custom in dancing with Jean twice and other servant men is seen as even stranger by the servant class because of her severe attitude to those people and her position as their superior.

The dynamics between Jean and Christine are even more interesting upon research of actual manor house hierarchy of the time. Jean is the valet to Julie's father, the Count, and revels in his status as the closest servant to the master of the house. Christine is the cook to the family and maintains a level of dignity in this position. In late Victorian society, manor houses placed head cooks above any personal servant in the line of importance with regards to the social hierarchy of the home. The hierarchy of upper staff is listed below:

Butler —→ Housekeeper —→ Cook or Chef —→ Lady's Maid and
Valet

This further advances the class issues within the script as the man, the seemingly superior person compared to these two women is actually lowest in class. Christine would have been paid more than Jean (by a small margin). This extra layer of complexity in the story allows the reader to see Strindberg's vision and statement even clearer. The man tries to break all subordination to his station in life and propriety on an instinctual level. Jean is preordained to take this road as his low class has backed him into a corner in the triangle of action with these two women.

-Economics- The play exists within a capitalist setting where the rich count has his money and status and Jean and Christine work for wages but the gap is so wide between the two that it makes it increasingly difficult for Jean and Christine to elevate their station in life due to their meager savings. Jean desires to open up a hotel with Christine as the mistress of the house and cook so that they can secure their own financial future that allows them more creature comforts in life and the potential to build wealth and status. The situation makes this goal much harder to entertain as Jean now has an obligation to her and then decides to use her to steal the money from her father to finance his capital intentions.

-Politics and Law: All characters operate within a specific class hierarchy (as detailed earlier) within the home and scope of the play. They all seek to challenge it in some way.

-Spirituality: The play mentions many times the fact that Christine will be going to church to hear the sermon on John the Baptist. The play adopts a decidedly Christian attention to traditions and the consequences of breaking from those traditions.

-The World of the Play: All characters are driven by restlessness to challenge the social norms and gender roles that have trapped them in an inescapable cycle of always wondering what is on the other side of their oppression.

EXPOSITION:

Below are brief character studies on Julie's father and mother to shed light on the situations leading to this play.

The Count

Gender: Male. Julie's father exhibits all the trappings of masculine gender roles. While he does experience a great bit of turmoil at the hands of his wife, Julie's mother, he attempts to cunningly right her transgressions but she is step ahead of him. This leads to his attempt and eventual failure at suicide. Strindberg's commentary on feminist ideology leaves him in a decidedly superior place as he is the man who was wronged by a progressive woman. He gets his life back together and then separates himself from all relationships that could lead to the same end he almost met with Julie's mother. This explains his absence in Julie's life and her propensity to challenge her place as a subordinate to men.

Class /Status: Count who manages a new enterprise most likely within an industrial setting as he has to travel for work and the spread of industrialism would have afforded opportunity to build a new business.

Physical Description: I think that the Count is similar in build and size to Jean. While Jean has the advantage of youth, the count could still be seen as a man who is fit for his age. He is not nearly as virile in appearance as Jean at his age but in his prime he would have been. This would enhance the gravity of his fall from grace.

Morality: By modern definitions, the Count does seem to exhibit loose morals. With his dealings with his wife, he was led down a path that built his propensity for revenge or spitefulness. However, in the world of the Victorian era space they

occupy, he has bestowed on Julie and his servants a sense that he has a high moral compass. Julie, Jean, and Christine are all collectively convinced of his inability to handle what occurred between Jean and Julie. He would not be able to handle the shame. He runs a tight ship and expects his servants to abide by the duty and responsibility to the status he rebuilt for himself.

Julie's Mother

Gender- Female with massive tendencies toward masculine gender role identification. Her inability to stay in her place as a subservient woman to her husband and her desire to challenge her place in life, points toward a decidedly less emotional drive. She operates in her desire to bend everyone to her will and way of thinking, a much more masculine character trait, especially at this time in history.

Age (at death): 33

Class / Status: She was woman who would have been expected to work in and around running the home or supervising the servants who did so. She came from a lower class family than the count and as such would have been treated as even more inferior to him at the onset of the relationship. Her lower social status contributed to her feminist ideology that she imparted on Julie. As a mode of survival, she developed manipulative tendencies to give her an edge on perceived oppression.

Physical Description: Beautiful, this led to her marriage to the Count despite the inferiority of her social status.

Morality: Based on the dealings with her husband it can be said that she had a very loose moral compass guiding her actions. She cheated on him and swindled money away to her lover so he could never reach it.

CHARACTER:

Julie:

Super Objective: Julie's super objective throughout the play is to identify and then abolish any trace of cowardice within herself.

Major Quality: Forcefully

Conflict: Julie's overriding conflict to those around her comes in both internal and external forms. Her major internal struggle stems from her inability to reconcile her desire for intimate, emotional human contact with someone who will encourage the best parts of herself against the hereditary implications of her mother's ideologies and influence. Her external conflict exists in her perceived weakness through being a woman.

Strength of Will: Julie's strength of will seems to undergo a transition throughout the show. She begins very powerful and forceful and ends the epitome of weakness. This is the very thing that indicates her weak will. She allows herself to be manipulated to reach a seeming happiness and then submits herself to his desire when she thinks she can no longer control a favorable outcome.

Values: Julie desires a world in which she maintains all benefits of her social status but also desires to exert control on all people he meets and interacts with to satisfy her feminist ideology. She believes whole heartedly in the caste system in place and believes herself to be superior to all the servants in her home not just by right of birth but also by her arrogant superiority of privilege.

Jean:

Super Objective: Jean's super objective throughout the show is to cunningly manipulate conflicts to serve his best interest, whether that is his desire to elevate rank or his desire to avoid the possibility of the situation with Julie all together. His actions are constantly guided by intent to secure a gain for himself or his sense of security. He is driven by his idealization of an elevation in rank and status.

Major Quality: Calculating

Conflict: Jean's major source of conflict is the inferiority of his station and his position at the bottom of the social hierarchy compared to Julie and Christine. Through the events of the play he is presented with the problem of influencing the other characters through his perceived superiority as a man. He uses the "man card" to his advantage in putting both Julie and Christine in a place he can control. Julie represents a possibility to rise up but only through shame and force. Christine is the safe bet that can help him work toward the dream on the horizon but she also has a strict moral compass that Jean cannot manipulate. His main external conflict exists in the now imminent probability of having a child with Julie and the ensuing responsibility both to Julie and Christine based on his extra marital liaisons.

Strength of Will: Jean's will is strong throughout the play until the absolute end. He demonstrates control in all things throughout but loses that control twice in the show. The first time is during the sexual encounter with Julie as detailed earlier in this analysis and ultimately when he hears the count ring his bell for service. When Jean hears that bell he follows through on his control of Julie if only to ensure his own survival, but

ultimately loses his self-determination to flee and returns to his subordination and duty to the count.

Values: Jean's values center on a strong desire to make a better life for himself in spite of his upbringing and position in life. He believes in respecting the class system but also desires a way to rise up within it to attain the same status as the count one day. This belief in and struggle against the class barriers drives him to reach his goals by any means necessary.

Christine:

Super Objective: Christine's super objective throughout is to continue her same routine and reach a level of security to make her plans with Jean feasible. She wants to have a life with Jean and understands the restrictions of her social status that also provide opportunities. She is the cook of the home which is one of the highest class positions within that comes complete with a level of respect and propriety that she has no interest in sacrificing. If she loses ground, that is longer for her to work to attain it again.

Major Quality: Morally grounded

Conflict: The major internal conflict Christine faces is how to reconcile what Jean has done with Julie against her feelings for him and how it may sacrifice the plans she has for her future. Her external conflict lies within her inability to compete with either Jean's physical prowess and virility and Julie's beauty and grace. She is lowest in terms of physical attraction and thus has to rely on her strict moral center to attain respect and further her position in life.

Strength of Will: Christine has a strong willpower throughout the show, she never fully wavers from her position and chastises the other two characters for their

transgressions. When she find out what Jean did she formulates how to best handle that situation by planning out their next steps all the way down to his eventual suicide that will ensure her survival.

Values: Christine has a very strong moral compass that guides all of her endeavors. She is religious and makes it an important point to note that had Jean and Julie kept their morals in mind or religious teachings, they would not have done what they did. She places strict importance on respect for those above her in social class as long as they behave in a way that warrants her esteemed respect. Christine has a high opinion of herself and in her mind this is a humble high regard. She does however plot out strategic moves to ensure her survival, no matter the consequence to everyone else as they have dropped to level that no longer demands or deserves her respect.

TEMPO:

The tempo of every part of this show falls to musical references to indicate the severity of responses along with the mania Jean and Julie both experience at some point with in the show. This director has experience with indicating and conducting these musical tempos. Table work will include work with actors to identify the tempo in music with major shifts in their characters dynamics.

MOOD:

Throughout the production, design team members must pay attention to the style of the show. This production will be conducted in the traditional Naturalist style staying true to the playwright's intentions on the given circumstances. This encourages the designers to

pay attention to the dark mood of the show. Survival of the fittest is important to note as are the given circumstances discussed earlier. The play is set at night or Midsummer Eve, these indicate a strong pull to the dark desires in people and giving them a chance to either enhance or destroy traditional values.

Appendix C. Director's Program Note

Miss Julie is a work that has followed me throughout my career as a theatre professional. I was introduced to the battles of this story as an under graduate and Strindberg's masterpiece has stayed with me as a testament to the power that psychological torment can inflict upon another human being. When I began to approach what play I would like to explore and direct for my Master's thesis project I immediately thought of this work. For so long I have been an artist driven by the need to explore major themes that are relevant to our society in its current state. The use of theatre as a medium to show how we as humans can discover prejudices about ourselves that we were not aware of opens up the possibilities for self-reflection. This reflection can often take us to a place that changes how we see and respond to the world around us. That magic and power in the theatre and the responsibility I have as the artist delivering that message truly empower not only myself but all of the students I have the opportunity to work with. Through their dedication and work on this script we have all learned valuable lessons from each other not only on our process but also about how we respond to the world around us.

Miss Julie follows the story of three people that are seeking to eradicate an oppression they face in their lives. Whether that oppression is classism, gender violence, or psychological predispositions, Jean, Julie, and Christine seek a change in their lives. The problems arise when this change they seek becomes dependent on the destruction of another. In our society today we face endless amounts of violence that is often geared toward some radical notion. The rape culture surrounding college campuses is wrought with debate over what kind of justice is appropriate for victims and perpetrators. Radical

extremists that seek to massacre people based on their sexual identity or religious ideologies fill new casts on a much too frequent level. Through our exploration of the themes of this show we involved study on several different cases to find a way to tell the story of both victim and perpetrator. Through Jean and Julie's encounters they are driven by a need to reconcile the violent tendencies they have toward one another. They are both victim and perpetrator at different points of the narrative. We sought to figure out why they responded this way while also examining what justice means for each party. What is justice for these two against their oppressor? How are they both liable for the damage they inflict and the consequences that follow? This was not meant to say that victims in sexual or physical assault have a responsibility to their attacker or their role in the attack but rather to examine how Jean and Julie are both assailants that verbally and physically assault each other. Through that duality of assault we had to examine what this says about how we encounter differing ideologies in our own lives. These characters all have very different ways of thinking and the resulting conflict of those ideologies and power dynamics provides a lesson in our tolerance of differing viewpoints.

The stage gave our team a way to explore how the delicate struggle between all three of these characters relates to how we approach our own biases. There are plenty of different mediums that offer a biased framework for storytelling but this production sought to encourage the audience to see that although we may be different, violence and assault against those ideas and principles is never justified. I sincerely hope this production opens a dialogue on who the victimized party is throughout this storyline. The answer can be quite subjective and I encourage you to communicate with each other

about this. Through that open exploration of differing ideas we can begin to more thoroughly understand the world around us.

Appendix D. K/ACTF Respondent Notes

- Sugar Plum Fairies Out
- Practical Lamp - Flicker
- Candles - Dimmable
- More Light SR wall
- More house light
- Something for windows
- Distress option
- More distress on Jean's feet
- Look @ different shoes
- Take window gobo out in 1st half of show
- ~~Julie~~ Julie (Diana) try different tactics to get what you want
- Something to break up Diana's dress
- Lengthen light dim
- ~~Please~~ make it harder to tell Julie your feelings 1st half
- Jean don't rush childhood monologue
- Find more rhythmic changes in monologues
- Crowd music to underscore
- Carriage music
- ~~more~~ more blue overlight on chorus dancing

A Judicator

- more dishevelment when they leave the room
- more of a moment on whore is a whore - pinch/ouch
- Christine's dresses too similar
- let bird take on life through Julie
- Julie - moment of realization when Jean hands you the razor
- more on the stairwell

Saturday Night

- Physical breath when things change
- Think like a person, not an actor
- Speck & Eye moment
- Actor voice
- Vowels are the emotional life, consonants give our emotional life intelligence

Appendix E. Student Response Papers

Intro to ~~Speech~~ ^{Theatre} MWF 1 PM

30 October 2016

Miss Julie Analysis

Miss Julie was the the first collegiate level theater production that I have seen. By having read the play beforehand, I feel as if I had a greater understanding of the play overall. I thought that the cast did an outstanding job of portraying their characters as they were portrayed in the script. I was impressed by the set, props, and lighting used to bring the story to life. I think that familiarizing myself with the play by reading it and seeing it, I had a fulfilling experience.

Miss Julie consisted of only three characters: Kristin, Miss Julie, and Jean. Having very few characters gave us a broader insight into each of the characters' personalities. It can be argued that either Jean or Miss Julie could be the play's protagonist because both are central figures in the main action. Jean is a foil character to Miss Julie. While Miss Julie is an elite member of society (a countess, no less), Jean is poor and a humble servant of Miss Julie's. It is clear, however, that Kristin is the confidant of the play. There are times at which both Miss Julie and Jean confide in Kristin. This reinforces the fact the either Miss Julie or Jean could be the play's protagonist.

Miss Julie would most definitely be categorized as a tragedy. The play is very serious with serious characters who engage in serious actions, causing serious consequences. Human decision is central to tragic action, and *Miss Julie* is full of

yes -
explan
ok -
you do

terms well
used

yes

human decisions: Miss Julie and Jean sleeping together, Jean taking advantage of Miss Julie's status, Miss Julie's presumable suicide, etcetera. *yes - good*

I had an easy time reading *Miss Julie*. The language is not difficult to pronounce or understand. My favorite element used in the *Miss Julie* was foreshadowing. I loved how Miss Julie's monologue about wanting to fall symbolized how she wanted to step down from a life of aristocracy and Jean's monologue following about wanting to climb up then branches of the tree symbolize his desire to climb the metaphorical branches of the same aristocratic society. The use of the foreshadowing gave opportunity for the element of surprise to make an appearance in the play. A surprise is a happening that is unexpected at the time but quite logical when viewed in retrospect. *yes - probable + necessary*. At the beginning of the play, it seems that Jean's love for Miss Julie is genuine, and it comes as a great surprise when he declares that it was all a lie in an attempt to bring himself up to the social level of Miss Julie. However, after looking at the monologues in the beginning of the play, it becomes so blatantly obvious that is hard to believe one might have seen Jean's feelings as sincere. *yes* I think that *Miss Julie* offers an excellent example of the element of surprise. *Aristotle would say*

Now, let's talk about the production. The first aspect of the production I would like to discuss is the acting. I thought it would be very difficult to be a cast member in the production due to the play only consisting of three characters. However, I thought that the actors chosen did exceedingly well portraying their characters. The cast was great at remembering lines and fully becoming their characters as they were portrayed in the script. I felt that the actress portraying Miss Julie displayed her character's given

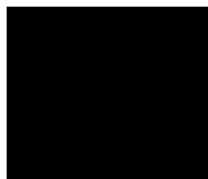
which Julie?

circumstances (her hatred of men and aristocratic lifestyle) clearly. When the actress vocalized anger, she successfully captured the audience's attention. As for the actor portraying Jean, he convincingly encompassed the deceitful character. He seemed to stumble over some of his lines. However, as mentioned before, he did exceptionally well given the amount of stage time required of the part. *on*

The style of the play successfully portrayed the style of the era. The costumes matched their time period, as did the diction used by the characters. The setting, which featured the old kitchen filled with cookware, also produced the same vibes. Even the props such as the old metal cups and wine glasses helped to create the style. The style was consistently prominent throughout the play. *expand*

The production paid close attention to detail, making the play more realistic. The glasses contained liquid which the characters drank from. After touching the "dead bird", Miss Julie's hands were covered in "blood", which was shocking to the audience to see. When Jean threw his apple to the ground and Miss Julie knocked dishes from the table, the both displayed a more realistic anger, that caught the audience off guard. Without these details, the production might have seen more abstract than realistic. *good point* *yes*

I am so glad that I was able to fully experience Miss Julie through reading the play and attending the production on campus. I feel that by participating in both I understood many of the chapters we discussed in class more fully. I saw several aspects while reading that I had not before. I also paid more attention to details during the production. This was a good learning experience for me, and I plan on using this method again in the future.



*You make a lot of good points
You use terms well paragraphs
are well organized. I might
like just a bit more description
of set/costumes (your style
paragraph) - still nice*

10-30-16

Theatrical Production Analysis

My overall opinion of Miss Julie is mixed. When I originally read the play script I found it very difficult to make it all the way through it. There were so many long monologues that were very confusing and dulled my senses more than getting me further invested into the script. Furthermore I felt that the play had an unsatisfying ending that left more questions than answers. The production itself however was much better. I went to the October 27th showing and I have to admit I was pleasantly surprised. The acting was great and the stage design looked phenomenal. It exceeded my expectations.

I think one of the most notable things about Miss Julie is its extremely small cast of just 3 characters, not including the chorus. Having such a small cast allows the audience to get more intimate with each character because they are on stage more often and speak more. If Miss Julie had had a larger cast I don't think that the play would have been as enjoyable. In this causal plot Miss Julie, a counts daughter, breaks off her engagement with her betrothed and flirts with Jean, the counts manservant. Jean was to marry Kristin, another servant of the count, but after Miss Julie flirts with him they have sex and then plan to leave the counts house because Miss Julie is not longer a virgin and would bring shame on her father. I consider Miss Julie to be the protagonist of this story and Jean the antagonist. These three people in the play, Miss Julie, Jean, and Kristin, all are trying to escape their current standing in life. Miss Julie wants to live a simpler life, Jean wants to become rich and powerful, and Kristin wanted to live a life with Jean and raise a family. None of them get what they want. At the climax of the story Kristin has told the gateman not to let Jean and Miss Julie leave, so seeing no way out of their current situation,

you discuss implications good

interesting

Jean tells Miss Julie to commit suicide. I believe that the idea of this play is that sometimes being content with your current life is okay, and that too much ambition can lead to misery if it consumes your life. If all of these characters had been more patient in their ambitions then this play would not be the tragedy that it is. This play also brings forward the idea of the double standard of a woman who is not a virgin and not married was considered a whore or a harlot while a man would be still be accepted in society. The language of this play was hard to follow at times, people today are not used to these long drawn out monologues with elevated diction and these monologues are all throughout the play. It did however show the greater intelligence of Jean and Miss Julie, and shows that even though Miss Julie is above Jean in social class she is not smarter than he is. It foreshadows that Jean has the capability of manipulating Miss Julie if she underestimates him.

you
cover
Aristotle
element

After reading the script originally I did not have high hopes for the production itself and I was pleasantly surprised. Besides not being able to hear the actors at the beginning of the show and a child crying at some points, the production was worlds above the script itself. I thought the stage design was great, when my girlfriend and I walked into the theatre the first thing we both commented on was how nice the kitchen looked, it looked like an actual kitchen that may have been used in a rich mans house in the late 1800's. The kitchen had multiple entrances and exits going into other rooms of the house and an exit leading outside the house. The illusion of this being a real house was better than I had originally anticipated. The actors actually drinking and eating food on the stage also helped to immerse the audience into the play. At one point when Miss Julie angered Jean he threw an apple to the ground and the apple exploded. This moment of surprise really drove up the tension in the audience. I remember that everyone was completely silent at that point. Everyone could tell that something was about to happen, I could see the anger

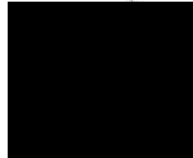
yes -
there
affect
performance

nic

in Jean and it really got my attention. There were other moments like this in the performance too, such as when Miss Julie threw all the dishes on the table to the floor and when Jean killed the bird. Moments like this are integral to performances with long monologues because it draws the audience back into focus on the performance. I think that the given circumstance of the play is made obvious by the characters costumes and dialogue. It is made apparent that Kristin is a religious servant while Jean, who is also a servant, is of higher intellect and is skilled at manipulation. From Miss Julie's costume the audience can see that she is wealthy and through her dialogue we can see that she and Jean are of similar vernacular capabilities and so are probably also similar in intellect. The director of this play also seemed to follow in line with the original play as it was set in the late 1800's. The play is originally set in Sweden and all three cast members were originally meant to be Caucasian. I found it interesting that the cast on the 27th was all African American. It did not change the meaning of the play at all but it was still an interesting change. The convention that the audience had to accept was that the play was set over 100 years ago when the caste system was much harder to move around in. I thought that they made this pretty clear through their costumes and dialogue. The style of the production was its strongest point in my opinion. The kitchen looked superb, the walls were made from dark wood, and the stove looked as a stove would during that time period. The kitchen was also extremely detailed, there was food on the table, alcohol on the shelves, and doors leading in and out of the kitchen. The actors interreacted with all of these props adding more to the immersion of the play. As soon as the audience walked in and saw the stage they could see that they were not in our current time and I thought that really set the mood for the play. The actors all got into their roles, especially Jean, at the times when Jean was angry he seemed genuinely angry. All of them moved around a lot and were never still or boring.

Overall I thought this plays script was a hard read, only through a great production can this play truly shine. If the play had been performed in a way that did not draw the audience back in at times I think that it would have been a flop, however the actors, director, and designers did a good enough job to keep the audiences attention throughout the play.

You use terms well.
You give examples of
the points you make.
You write succinctly.



Consider taking Comm 3163:
Writing for Performance in
the spring. I think
you would enjoy writing
plays.

Theatre 2273

Dr. David Eshelman

Theatrical Production Analysis: *Miss Julie*

I was a fan of the play script and the production of *Miss Julie*. I enjoyed the story. I would say that I liked the production more because it was easier to follow than the script. The script used a vernacular that was a little difficult to follow.

I liked the actress and actor selection. I respect them for being able to memorize all of the lines. I was impressed because there was only two, maybe three, times where the actor or actress stuttered in the way you would if you said something in the wrong order. But I think that they covered it up nicely. There were times when the actor who played Jean would stutter but it was more in a way to make the character more personalized. Characters in the play text are only revealed through the written words, but characters in the performance were revealed through the work of the actor. The actress who played Miss Julie did a good job in representing what was going to happen in the end. I thought that it was clear to see that she was going to kill herself. The plot was causal, new information lead to different things. Miss Julie was a dramatic character. The actress did a very good job with the vernacular and the way she presented it. I think that Miss Julie is the protagonist and Jean is the antagonist. Christine is the confidant because Jean talks to her about how Miss Julie has lost her mind. My opinion on the genre is that *Miss Julie* would be a tragedy. A tragedy is defined as a work of the highest seriousness with a serious protagonist in a serious action with serious consequences. Jean had told Miss Julie that her reputation was at risk and she made the decision to ignore that, until the people started to sing a bad song about her. She then made the decision to sleep with Jean and that only made

things worse. Based off of her decisions, she had consequences. She found her way out by making the decision to kill herself.

The set was really nice. I really enjoyed the way that it looked. I think that there was supposed to be suspense when Miss Julie and Jean went into the bedroom to get away from the people, but I did not feel it that much. ^{explain} There was a little but it was not too intense. I liked how they used surprise, from chapter 4. Some examples were when Jean threw the apple down, Christine pinned herself with her bobby pin, when the chorus came in, and when Miss Julie pushed things off of the table. ^{good} Like I said before, I was a big fan of the actress who played Miss Julie. She did a great job with the vernacular and the way she showed Miss Julie's attitude. ^{explain} The actor who played Jean did very good as well. He kind of stuttered and made it seem like the thoughts in Jean's head were running wild. It was like he was trying to find the right ideas to pick out to make Miss Julie believe him. The actress who played Christine was very good with showing the emotion of the character through facial expressions. You could tell that Miss Julie was in a higher social class than Christine and Jean. Miss Julie was in nicer clothes than Christine, and Christine acted more shy and more observant when a person of higher class (Miss Julie) was in her presence. Jean was dressed nice, but you could tell that he was in a different class than Miss Julie because of the way he talked. There were times when he just said that they were in a different class, but you could also tell by the way he acts as if he is envious of Miss Julie.

The play was acted out very well. A couple of things that I did not like about it was that there was a noise in the background ^{I wonder what it was} that you could tell was not part of the play (it was almost like a knocking noise), at the beginning Jean and Christine made it a little difficult to follow because I did not feel like they were really into their characters yet. I was a big fan of the overall

^{yes a hard play to start}

look of the play. The set was very nice, the clothes on the actor and actresses fit with the time period and the social classes, and the props were nice. I liked how the actor and actresses actually ate and drank things.

This is a fine paper.
You use lots of course
terms. You cite many
examples from the
performance. I think
you can explain yourself
a bit more. Sometimes
you introduce a course term,
but don't explain how
it applies. I like
how you assert your
opinions.

Intro. To Theatre, Dr. Eshelman

Oct. 29th, 2016

Miss Julie

The relationship between a theatrical text and a performance is very interesting. You can read "*Miss Julie*" one hundred different times and the text will still be the same each time, but you will never be able to see the exact same performance more than once. A written play is not theatre; however, the production and performance of that play is theatre. The only way to truly experience "*Miss Julie*" is to see it. Although the play is set in Europe in the late 1800's it makes a very compelling statement about class and gender that we can still apply to today's society. Whether you read the text or see the performance you will find that there is clear evidence of the inequality and struggle between men and women, and rich and poor. The text and performance use different tools to portray this, and this is why reading the play and seeing the play are two completely different experiences.

Aristotle described a play by breaking it down into six parts: plot, character, idea, language, music, and spectacle. The first four are all tools that are used when writing a script. The plot of "*Miss Julie*" focuses on just three characters in one setting. This makes following the plot easier for the reader but may present challenges in a production. When reading "*Miss Julie*" it is obvious that the plot is causal with one event leading to another. For example, Jean and Miss Julie having sex causes Miss Julie to commit suicide and ruins Jean's plans with Christine. The most difficult thing to fully understand when reading the script is the characters. When looking at the text it was difficult to understand the relationship between Jean and Miss Julie. Their

relationship and attitudes toward one another change many times throughout the play, and when reading the script, it was difficult to tell whether or not they liked or disliked each other at times. A reader has much more responsibility when it comes to visualizing and understanding a character when they aren't embodied by an actor. When reading the script, the play's idea was very clear. August Strindberg clearly wants readers to understand that there is inequality and unfairness between men and women, and rich and poor. Simply the choice of characters and the setting in which they are put help the reader understand the idea.

this is because much communication between them is subtextual

Aristotle's last two parts of a play, music and spectacle, exist only in a physical production and performance. Since "Miss Julie" is not a musical, the language itself embodies music. The language used in the performance revealed clues about the plot, characters, and idea. The tone in which Jean speaks to Miss Julie reveals that he is the one who controls the action. The actor who played Jean was at first very respectful and almost afraid of how he spoke to Miss Julie, but as the play went on and progressed through the plot he spoke down to Miss Julie in a very hateful and menacing way. Seeing this made the audience realize how much power Jean had even though he was Miss Julie's servant. The spectacle of the play is what drew me in as a viewer. As soon as the lights came on in the auditorium I was amazed at how detailed and accurate the set was for the time period. Actually seeing Christine cook in the kitchen and Jean chop the head off of Miss Julie's bird makes the play seem very real. It was hard to get lost in the script and forget that I was reading a story, but because of the spectacle of the performance I was completely caught in the world of the play from the very beginning. The performance followed the given circumstances of the script and, through the actor's performances, amplified the mood. The style of the script and the performance were the same. It was the detail in every aspect of the production that made the style of the performance so realistic. The set design was incredibly

well described

detailed. The candles and old fashion furniture on set fit the time period. The pots and pans in the kitchen fell off the wall when Miss Julie threw her apple at Jean. The blood from the dead bird that Miss Julie rubbed on her hands and Jeans clothes added to the realism and brutality of the bird's death. The characters actually took real bites of grapes and apples throughout the play. The bell that we associate with the count's power went off at a pinnacle moment in the play which created suspense. The costume design was equally as realistic. The clothing fit the time period and Jean even had a particular outfit he changed into for church. The Count's boots appeared onstage and were dirty just as Jean pointed out in the script. How the actors spoke and moved was perhaps the most important contributing factor to the play's realism. Watching the actors portray their characters through their displayed emotions made it much easier to understand the character's. Seeing Jean roll his eyes and Miss Julie cover her face in sadness helped me understand how they were feeling toward one another, which was difficult to do when reading the script. Since the play stuck to the realistic style of the script, the conventions of the performance were also realistic.

Theatre is perhaps one of the most complex art forms we have. Experiencing a theatrical play is unlike anything you will ever do. Theatre takes the ideas of playwright and transmits them to an audience in many different ways using many different tools. A performance of "*Miss Julie*" is much more enhanced than the script. You can read Shakespeare's "*Romeo and Juliet*" hundreds of times, but until you go see it, you will never truly have experienced it.

This paper is extremely well organized. You understand Aristotle very well and you refer to details well. You make strong arguments. I hope you will do some theatre or take more theatre courses at Tech.

Appendix F. “Genderlect as Character Study: Gender Communication Theory and *Miss Julie*”

Jenava Harris

Dr. Eshelman

TH 6893

6-27-16

Genderlect as Character Study: Gender Communication Theory and *Miss Julie*

Naturalist ideology relies on one overarching principle, that scientific reasoning and forces guide the natural world. Supernatural ideologies are not considered as the main governing body of the world is benefitted by an examination of the scientific forces at play. The dramatic vein of the Naturalist movement saw many deep and provocative works during its time. Throughout the naturalist movement many works were composed that sought to build upon the ideas of Realism in the works of Ibsen and Chekov. August Strindberg is arguably one of the foremost studies in naturalist literature. His play *Miss Julie* most specifically sought to explore the contrast of idealization and degradation of people and ideologies. The characters within all offer a wealth of complexity that is often subjective in its interpretation. When approaching *Miss Julie* for performance there are so many opportunities to be explored in how we work with young actors to identify with the complex violence within the show. The use of sociological and psychological theories has been employed in character exploration for many years. Through *Miss Julie* there is an opportunity that has not been tapped when approaching character analysis of Jean, Julie, and Christine. Gender Communication Theory offers an intensive addition to a character analysis workbook. Through this lens of analysis and discovery on these

characters, actors can intensify their ability to work and identify on a new level of intricacy. Through the exploration and implementation of gendered communication studies we can supplement the techniques of reputable acting theorists to create the world of *Miss Julie* as one enriched with specificity and truth for our actors.

The themes of Strindberg's *Miss Julie* offer a catalyst for exploration of the world around. When approaching the direction of a show it is important to wholly immerse oneself into the world of the play. The playwright has created a narrative ripe with possibilities to demonstrate human nature; the good, the bad, and the oftentimes very ugly. When exploring the dark themes inherent in *Miss Julie*, it is imperative to pay attention to the nuances Strindberg leaves behind. They are the trail of bread crumbs that leads to a full and immersive look at human capacity for idealization and manipulation.

Through his exploration of naturalist ideologies Strindberg sought to use the realistic setting to explore psychological and physiological wants and needs. Essentially, how do humans on a visceral level add depth to the world around us? How does exploration of these themes affect our response to the world around us? The complexities arise from Strindberg's desire to manipulate the seemingly mundane to offer the audience a place to form their own ideas about what they cannot necessarily see. In his foreword to the play he describes, "I have borrowed from impressionist painting the device of making a setting appear cut off and asymmetrical, thus strengthening the illusion. When we only see part of a room..., we are left to conjecture..., our imagination goes to work and compliments what is seen" (Strindberg 10). Strindberg manipulation parallels the manipulation of his characters and their idealization of the world around them.

The thematic element that stands out again and again is the danger of idealizing what we do not have. The use of a kitchen setting parallels the presence of these themes in our everyday lives. Everyday human interaction requires a transmission and receiving of messages, wants, and needs. The characters in this play Julie, Jean, and Christine all have specific desires in their lives and Strindberg's establishes these three characters as covetous at their core. They all idealize something about one another and the addition of watching that idealization lead to degradation sets the stage for an inevitable tragic end.

Strindberg's protagonist embodies an intense dissatisfaction with life and the resulting manic state of behavior that follows a desperation for escape. Julie is a woman that is ahead of her time in her feminist ideology but she lacks the ability to use that ideology for anything other than oppression. She relies on that ideology to guide her into a place of guarded acceptance into some sort of connection with a person that can match her. She wants to belong to something that she hasn't yet found in the detachment of her parents and the guarded manner around her friends. Through Julie's oppressive attitude toward men she has driven off her fiancé that would have been a ticket out of her father's home. She attempted to degrade him to a point that she could assume total power and control over him. Her mother taught her to never allow a man to hold all the cards in his hand, she has to have deceptions of her own in order to maintain some level of control on her own situation. To Strindberg this was indicative of a "weak and degenerate brain" as described in his foreword to the play (Strindberg 2). Julie was unable to perform and exist in her society because of a glitch in how her brain processed being a woman. Whether through nature or nurture, depending on which Darwinian side you chose to take, Julie was a woman that had the feminist ideologies of her mother along with the empathy for

her father that made her unable to be fully manipulative like or her mother or fully subordinate as a woman ought to have been in the Victorian Era. Not until the feminist movement of the mid-20th century would there be published and studied theory on how women communicate in a patriarchal hierarchy.

The latter half of the 20th century saw a rise in publications about how we classify not only gender itself but how the men and women communicated with themselves and each other. Structuralist Theory brought about definition on two different ideas about how women develop communication patterns in a patriarchal society. The two theories were Muted Group Theory and Standpoint Theory. Muted group theory relied on the idea that men dominated the linguistic and communication style and that women were thereby forced to adapt. In order for women to communicate it was necessary to adopt masculine communication styles or translate their message. This meant that women were muted, but not silenced. Even without this translation, women still found ways to communicate but the gap of understanding between the sexes seemed to be deepening. Standpoint Theory offered the idea that based on the status of being a woman, women were of a different viewpoint than men. This different viewpoint allowed them to reinforce and strengthen the more feminine communication patterns as they were just as worthwhile even if they were different. Women and scholars were led to reevaluate certain communication formats such as gossip (Kroløkke and Sørensen 172). These two theories offered an idea about why women and men adapt to and sometimes adopt certain communication styles and dialect patterns.

In her work on analyzing the gendered communication processes of men and women, Deborah Tannen coined a term that begins to describe the different syntax and

diction choices between the sexes. Genderlect refers to the specific vocabulary usage between the sexes that ultimately forms a sort of dialect unique to a gender or gender identification. Women have certain ways of speaking or structuring communication and men do as well. In the article “Genderlect and Participation in the College Classroom,” Sarah Galvin, Martha Dolly, and Judith Pula quote Tannen to illustrate the differences in male and female communication patterns and why they begin. Tannen asserts, “Typically, a girl has a best friend with whom she sits and talks, frequently telling secrets...For boys, activities are central...[they] tend to play in larger groups, that are hierarchal...[and] use language to seize center stage” (Galvin, Dolly, Pula 24). This pattern is seen in many different formats throughout television, theatre, movies, and real life. Tannen also asserts that this genderlect serves two different functions for both sexes.

Her ideas of “rapport talk” versus “report talk” focus on a female desire for connection versus a male desire to command attention and deliver information. These two functions shed much more light on how men and women use, exploit, and manipulate communication patterns for their own gain. The situation between Strindberg’s characters and their inability to understand and communicate effectively leads the plot through a series of events that illustrate Tannen’s theory. Through that inability all parties choose manipulation to translate their message to each other. That manipulation guides them toward destruction.

Jean is Strindberg’s master of communication manipulation in the narrative. When analyzing the character of Jean his psyche begins at a place of trying to find the greener pasture that he desires. He wants to elevate his rank and social status and he takes advantage of every situation that will get him there. While he does try to avoid Julie’s

advances, he ultimately realizes that she could be a viable option in moving past his current situation. His behavior seems manic throughout the major plot turns of the narrative. However, when analyzed through the lens of genderlect manipulation, Jean's calculating movements are overtly malicious.

The opening of the play centers around his delicate flirtation with Christine that underscores their conversation about the radical Miss Julie. When Julie enters the action both Christine and Jean are careful to remember their place as her subordinate while also trying to hide their horror at her lack of propriety. Julie imposes her will upon them and once Jean and Julie are alone the dialogue begins to shift. When Jean admits to Julie that he knows Christine snores in her sleep, he opens a door to intimate conversation and communication that would not be the norm. He vacillates back and forth between intimate admissions and indignant reminders of her to remember her place as a lady. Then Jean begins to talk of his dreams shortly after Christine goes to bed,

JEAN: No, my dream is that I am lying under a tall tree in a dark wood. I want to get up, up to the top, so that I can look out over the smiling landscape, where the sun is shining, and so that I can rob the nest in which lie the golden eggs (8).

Jean's admission of his dream alludes to his desire to rise above his current position and foreshadows the eventual loss of Julie's virtue, but it begins a process for him. This process is Jean beginning to adopt feminine communication patterns centered around sharing each other's confidence. He begins to admit intimate details to her and the reader must then decide if he is translating his message in a feminine speech pattern out of necessity or if he is using this as a manipulative tool to access Julie at her core. Is he trying to get Julie to submit to him through manipulating what she thinks she controls, the

conversation? Julie feels a strong kinship to her emotions and was taught to keep them guarded, especially from men. Jean uses this rapport talk to encourage Julie. This continuation of their open communication ultimately leads to Julie betraying herself in the most unforgiving way.

Strindberg's Julie is built upon the teachings and examples of her mother and father. Deborah Tannen's theories in her book *That's Not What I Meant* discuss the notion of nature versus nurture as mentioned earlier. Tannen says, boys and girls "grow up in different worlds, even if they grow up in the same house. And as adults they travel in different worlds, reinforcing patterns established in childhood" (Tannen 125). Julie is the epitome of this assertion. Strindberg tried to articulate this in a rather antiquated way. He writes in his character descriptions in the foreword, "Miss Julie is a modern character, not because the man-hating half-woman may not have existed in all ages, but because now, after her discovery, she has stepped to the front and begun to make a noise" (Strindberg 6). Julie is a continuation of the teachings of her mother and father.

Strindberg thought this to be indication of her degenerate quality but on closer inspection this is the very thing that establishes her as a tragic example of being ahead of her time. Strindberg also writes, "My souls are conglomerates, made up of past and present stages of civilization, scraps of humanity, torn off pieces of Sunday clothing turned into rags-all patched together as is the human soul itself" (Strindberg 6). His piecing these characters together is what decides their longevity. Essentially, Strindberg's antiquated misogyny meant to create Julie as a character whose fate was the result of bad breeding. In actuality the manipulation of his other characters exploits Julie's ignorance to her ideologies and encourages her to believe that her subordination to gender roles is how things ought to be.

Julie would have benefitted from a healthy understanding of how to pair her personality to her communication style in an effective way. Later studies in genderlect and gender communication allow *Miss Julie* to be a study of the dangers of ill-communication and the exploitation or manipulation once the styles are understood by one sex or the other.

So how do these parallels lend themselves to the performance space? How can actors best explore these themes? Does genderlect and communication theory lend itself to being part of the acting experience? These theories represent an ability to exercise complex understanding of these characters. Once the characters are understood and dialogue becomes verbal and defined by action, these gender theories offer ample room for actors to find specificity in their character portrayals.

Acting technique has a long and well-studied past. The teachings of modern performance technique by Constantin Stanislavski have morphed into many different variations that pull from different emotional response centers to encourage actors to connect to the character. Through that connection they are better able to understand and then step into the world of the character. When examining characters as complex as Jean and Julie or even Walter Lee and his Mama in *A Raisin in the Sun* the characters all need or want something from the other. When actors begin to dissect the action of a particular unit or beat these character relationships and cause and effect relationships are central to driving the plot forward. Julie seeks connection, Jean presents, Julie employs oppressive tactics to gain said connection. Those oppressive tactics are based around her use of masculine communication strategies to command the attention of the room. Jean wants Julie to back off, Julie will not, Jean sees opportunity, John seizes said opportunity. He relates to her and finishes the work of bringing them to the same level through feminine

communication strategy to encourage her to let her guard down. The possibilities for employing these gender studies to acting theory allow another facet of research for the actor and another opportunity for truth onstage. That truth is what is so important in the teachings of Stella Adler, Sanford Meisner, and others. The exploration of genderlect and communication theories allows a new skill set to actors that seek to reach a new level of identity in their characters.

The themes of *Miss Julie* are universal to understanding how communication can break down. When communication does break down there are ways to rehabilitate misunderstandings but more importantly there are ways to manipulate. Manipulation of communication tactics allows characters to drive their plot forward and allows actors to examine the character relationships and super objectives with a new eye. Strindberg's *Miss Julie* relies on the struggle of the two sexes to understand each other. Strindberg never wanted them to as this leads to the tragic end of the show. This allows his show to let audiences use their imaginations to fill in gaps as it suits their needs and deepens their understanding. However, reading and performing this show with a new eye to the gender issues and communication issues allows the evils of idealization to become a wide net over the entire play. Idealization of Julie, of Jean, of elevated status, of the count, of connection; all of these are based around how these characters communicate with themselves and each other. In working with a new production of this show, these gender communication theories could offer not only a way to understand the characters around you but also the people in everyday life.

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