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Directing

*Ms. Julie* by August Strindberg: An Analysis

1. Given Circumstances
2. Environmental Facts
3. Place:

Parenthetical notes state: *(The action takes place in the Count’s kitchen on midsummer eve)* Setting: “A large kitchen, the ceiling and side walls of which are hidden by draperies. The rear wall runs diagonally from down left to up right. On the wall down left are two shelves with copper, iron, and pewter utensils; the shelves are lined with scalloped paper. Visible to the right is most of a set of large, arched glass doors, through which can be seen a fountain with a statue of Cupid, lilac bushes in bloom, and the tops of some Lombardy poplars. At down left is the corner of a large tiled stove; a portion of its hood is showing. At right, one end of the servants’ white pine dining table juts out; several chairs stand around it. The stove is decorated with birch branches; juniper twigs are strewn on the floor. On the end of the table stands a large Japanese spice jar, filled with lilac blossoms. An ice box, a sink, and a washstand. Above the door is an old-fashioned bell on a spring; to the left of the door, the mouthpiece of a speaking tube is visible.”

All of the action takes place in the estate’s kitchen. Although many other locations are mentioned, the story never moves to those places. According to parenthetical notes, the kitchen is large and quite stocked. This is indicative of the wealth and grandeur of the Count’s family. The kitchen is full of utensils, pots and pans, appliances, and most interestingly, some more lavish decorations. This specific detail points to the elaborate nature of the rest of the house that even the servant’s kitchen has beautiful furnishings. The kitchen also houses such as an ice box, chopping block, candle, and speaking tube.

Directly outside of the kitchen is the rest of the lower level containing Kristine’s room, Jean’s room, lilac bushes and poplars, a fountain of Cupid, and stairs leading to the upper levels of the house. Mentioned in the upper level and outside area of the estate is Julie’s room, the Count’s study, the garden, pavilion, outhouse, terrace, stables, and the lake and stream.

Distant places referenced are frequent in this play, as Jean is a well-versed man. Switzerland (Lucerne), Malmo, Hamburg and its zoo, theater, and opera house, Munich, Frankfort, Basel, St. Gotthard tunnel, Rumania, the brick maker’s house, Jean’s childhood home, his grandma’s house, and Lake Como are all places farthest away referenced in the dialogue.

The choice to set the play in the kitchen emphasizes the dominance or comfort in the space given to the workers of the home. The locations both seen and unseen enlighten the viewer to the world of the story and the physical environments they inhabit.

1. Time:

The action of the play takes place over the course of roughly a night and a half. It begins on the night of the Midsummer Festival and ends that Sunday afternoon. There are also lapses in time in the sense that both Julie and Jean reflect on the past in the forms of long monologues describing their childhoods. Julie also speaks of her mother and father’s history, giving another layer to the sense of time. This adds an emphasis on the past because of its heavy influence on the present in the characters’ lives. As for the present time of action, it is a summer night, specifically Midsummer’s night, and the estate is holding their annual festival. Most of the action takes place over the course of that night, concluding in the following morning and afternoon. Time becomes imperative towards to the end of the play when the characters realize the Count has come home and they must make critical decisions quickly. The continuity of time in this play, mixed with the lingering sense of past, provide a window into the characters’ view on how precious their time is and how they choose to spend it. The differences in the three characters use of time supplies the audience with an understanding of their respective philosophies on responsibility and the goals they wish to accomplish in the time they feel they are entitled to.

1. Economic

Economic standing and its connotations are an essential part of *Ms. Julie.* The majority of the conflict stems from the clash of the economic privileges of the characters. Both Jean and Kristine are members of the house’s servants. Kristine is a cook and Jean is the Count’s valet. Ms. Julie, being the daughter of the Count, has a contrasting economic position. The amount of someone’s wealth directly decides their place in the world of the play. This gives Julie almost supreme authority over Jean and Kristine at the beginning of the play, despite being younger and less experienced than both of them. This dynamic shifts towards the end of the play and the previous “set-in-stone” ideals attached to economic status seem to dissipate. Things other than economic prosperity are valued as the story develops. The philosophy of gender, authentic love, and reputation are the most prominent of these ideas. All of the characters strive to maintain or uphold their reputation throughout the play. Julie specifically strives to articulate the importance of gender roles and authentic roles and discovers her wealth or poverty in those areas.

There is definitely a sense of luxury drawn over the lens of the story. Julie is a member of the aristocracy and thus, the narrative centers around the class struggle amongst the aristocracy and their staff. The desire of Jean to join the wealthy is also a prevalent idea. He values money and reputation extremely high and is ambitious in his drive to inherit it. As far as the Count’s journey to wealth, it was a tumultuous one. He was born and raised wealthy, but married a commoner, something unusual for the time. He and his wife lost a lot of money when they inherited the estate and needed to ask for a loan from a friend. In addition to this, there was also a scandal involving Julie’s mom’s friend, someone she trusted, stealing her money. Julie also steals her father’s cash from the study at the end of the play. This indicates Julie’s dedication to escape in contrast to her disregard for her father’s money. Economic position and valued ideals are poignant in the action of the play as they drive many characters to measures they didn’t anticipate.

1. Political

The political system of the story is not addressed as prominently as the other areas, but remains a looming presence over many of the decisions made. The system of power in the play is never directly identified but there are nobility and members of the aristocracy such as counts and dukes. The most powerful force governing politics isn’t necessarily any laws but more so the unspoken philosophies that dictate proper from improper. Things such the class struggle between Jean and Kristine and Julie demonstrate who has the power and who is possibly fighting for it. There is definitely a larger governing body at work in Sweden, but it is never stated. The story deals with more inner-estate politics and less national politics. In regards to insiders and outsiders, Jean tries desperately hard to not only be an insider, but to create the circle around himself. He wants to belong or control the power not only in being a member, but in being the founder of the so-called “insiders.” Politics may not be the most prominent theme of *Ms. Julie,* but their implications stir up the central conflicts of the story.

1. Social

The social dynamics are what make *Ms. Julie* in particular so fascinating. The opposition between the pressure to abide by class systems and the desire to follow one’s instinct drive the internal struggle of most of the characters. The class systems of the aristocracy floating above the common folk is evident as that is Julie’s relationship to her servants. Taking place in Sweden, the story follows European ideals. The family unit of Julie is a disjointed one with an interesting history (see Previous Action). Her father and herself do not have the most sincere of relationships, as did most people of that era, but Julie’s seems powered by an almost ill-natured motivation. The three main characters have a peculiar dynamic in how they interact between them. At first glance, they appear civil and even affable in nature to one another. The further along in the play one explores, the more complex and calculated these relationships become.

One interesting aspect of this story is that apart from the mention of their past selves, there are no children in this show. Everyone is relatively the same age, with Julie being the youngest. It is fascinating to see the maturity levels differ in ages that aren’t all that different. Julie and Jean are the most immature characters, and curiously, drive the story because of that immaturity. Meanwhile, Kristine and the Count become more secondary like characters in accordance with their sensibleness. There is a very strong sense of dominance and subordinance in this production. The journey of who is dominant in any certain scene is the propelling force behind the entire narrative. Both Jean and Julie crave this superiority, but for different reasons. Julie desires it because she feels entitled to it and Jean longs for it because it is the one thing he wants above all else. The methods each character employs to achieve this dominance is indicative of their past experiences and true identity. The sense of right and wrong largely comes from Kristine. She seems to be the moral compass of the three, despite her own depravity. She is the one most offended at Julie and Jean’s relationship and takes it upon herself to educate them of severity their misdeeds. Socially, this relationship was unacceptable and opened a window into the conscience and integrity of Jean and Julie. The interaction between the social classes and the indecency for them to have a relationship was strictly prohibited and extremely shameful. It demonstrated Jean’s disrespect for the upper class and Julie’s disregard for her own standing. This violation was even of offense when Julie asked Jean to dance a second time, much less when they slept together. The gravity of their actions is also reflected in their responses as they see fleeing the country and death the most appropriate actions to take to reconcile what they have done.

For Julie, the estate is only partially a home. She is comfortable there because she receives whatever she asks for. In contrast, she also feels confined and restricted by her father and the rules of the upper class. This social world is propelled by the understanding and violation of the hierarchy amongst the estate. It is when this world is jeopardized that the plot is set in motion. One interesting aspect of this play is that the characters are all from the same area. They all were born and raised in the same area and stayed in that space into adulthood. Jean, being a wine steward in Switzerland for a time, is the only one it seems that has traveled beyond the country. This provides an interesting lens with which to view the story when one considers how broad everyone’s understanding of the world is. Another one of the most important philosophies of this narrative is the concept of sexuality. To Jean and Julie, desire is something that drives many of their actions and also stipulates the major conflict of the story. Jean is led by his strong sexual cravings and also uses them as a power play to have dominance over Julie. He does not truly love her but instead is very tactful in his feigning desire as love. Julie, on the other hand, is so desperate for love and attention that she is willing to compromise her reputation just to feel something. She has moments where she realizes how much she has conceded and stands her ground on her beliefs on men. She even acknowledges that Jean probably doesn’t love her but still begs him to tell her he does. Even for Kristine, love is a commodity. She is engaged to Jean for social and financial security. Jean speaks about how for the lower class, love is something they engage in on their time off. It is a luxury many of their standing can’t afford. Concepts of opposition that set the backdrop of *Ms. Julie* include: master vs. servant, man vs. woman, dominant vs. submissive, sex vs. love, and happiness vs. discontent. The culture of the night of the story is reflected in the Midsummer’s celebrations and the protocols either obeyed or broken. The fact that Jean takes some of the Count’s liquor is a violation of his place in society. He also dances twice with Julie, as mentioned before. Infractions such as these prove Jean’s disregard for his place and the rules attached to it. The spoken and unspoken guidelines that govern this world are what not only keep this world intact, but also cause is to collapse.

1. Religious

The concept of religion in this story provides thoughtful insight into the character true fears and views of life. The characters claim to be Christian, but underneath the glossy exterior of their Sunday church plans, they prove a more lackluster commitment to faith. Jean, for example explains he attends church every other Sunday and does in fact, believe in God, to Julie’s surprise. Kristine seems to be quite a genuine believer. She goes to church and states that she has had this faith since she was a child. Her actions support this dialogue and she is by far the most moral of the characters. Despite her agreement with the butcher and grocer, she remains a morally sound woman. A compelling moment of dialogue in relation to religion is given by Jean as he states he believes suicide is “a sin against providence.” This is interesting in that Jean himself is the one who convinces Julie to commit that exact act. Although the characters claim to be spiritual, they all act of very humanistic impulses and tend to lean more towards the desires of the self than of God. Another point of interest is that they also see the Count as a god-like figure. He is this unseen figure who summons and judges and condemns based on their actions. The three act or don’t act out of more fear and habit in relation to God than out of love or adoration. These observations add such depth to the character’s development and offer yet another lens to view these complex ideologies.

1. Previous Action: The past has unknowingly pressurized the impact of the present as it relates to the characters’ decisions.

* Julie dances at Midsummer Festival (with the gamekeeper).
* Jean takes Count to the station and stops at the dance on the way back.
* Jean gets wine from the cellar.
* Jean promises to take Kristine to communion.
* Jean and Julie dream of climbing and getting to the ground, respectively.
* Jean goes to church every other Sunday.
* Julie breaks off her engagement (2 weeks).
* Julie’s makes her fiancé jump over the riding crop.
* Kristine takes commission from the grocer and butcher.
* Jean takes the boat out and hears a conversation.
* Jeans hears Catherine snoring.
* Jean is a wine steward in Switzerland.
* Ms. Julie was going to have Diana shot for running after the gatekeeper’s dog.
* Julie’s servant Diana is unfaithful to her.
* Jean lays down under the elder bush.
* Jean goes to church to see Ms. Julie.
* Jean sneaks into the outhouse at Ms. Julie’s house.
* Jean watches Julie from the bushes.
* Jean is sick because he can’t have the girl he wants.
* Jean reads newspaper about chimney sweeps.
* The Count decides to shoot himself, but doesn’t.
* Julie’s mom’s friend steals her money.
* Julie’s mother gets revenge on Julie’s father for forcing her into marriage.
* Julie’s father gets the loan to rebuild.
* Julie’s house burns down.
* The estate’s insurance expires because the courtier is late.
* Julie’s mother gets “sick.”
* Julie’s parents were married.
* Julie learns “boy” things, such as hunting and taking care of the horses, in addition to “girl” things.
* The servants switch jobs, in regards to gender roles.
* Julie’s mother has Julie.
* Julie’s mother (a commoner) is proposed to and she says he could be her lover.
* Ms. Julie’s ancestor was a miller who lets the king sleep with his wife.

The past choices made in conscience, and otherwise, culminate into a propelling force that tip the characters’ off the edge of rational action.

1. Polar Attitudes:

Julie is the protagonist and mover of the play. At the start of the play, she believes that under her superior title and upbringing, the extent of time and space must submit to and support her every move. She changes and realizes that once all prestige is dropped by the consequences of her actions, she is the one who must submit to the call of those she had commanded previously.

Jean is the antagonist and opposer of the play. He believes that the only thing getting in the way of his deserved social and economic success is the confines of the system he feels so trapped in. He changes and realizes that it is not these things, but rather his own cowardice and internal struggle that prevent him from obtaining his goal.

Kristine is the spectator of the play. She believes that Julie and Jean are deserving of her respect and possibly even affection. She changes and realizes their true identities are not worthy of her devotion or sympathy.

1. Dialogue:

The thoughtfully chosen words of this play communicate the covert hidden inside the obvious, as well as drive and develop the world around the characters and inside their heads.

1. Words:

These words are repeated or stressed in the dialogue to portray life in the aristocratic and common lives of the three characters and their respective worlds: crazy, count, kitchen, service, dance, engaged, hotel, dream, drink, servant, fall, obey, life, love, die, church, clever, swine

1. Phrases:

These phrases are the centrifugal force around which the subtext rotates:

“Shame on you,” “Order me,” “Kiss my hand,” “I don’t know,” “Help me,” “If you at least loved me,” “Listen to me,” “I can’t.”

1. Images:

Julie’s dress twirling wildly, alcohol sparkling in a glass, Jean kissing Julie’s shoe, a couple at Lake Como, Jean peaking out of the bushes, arms embracing one another, Julie wearing boy’s clothes, flames engulfing the estate, Julie’s fiancée jumping over the riding crop, the beheading of the bird, Julie shakily holding the razor, the bell ringing.

1. Dialect:

The dialect of this show is reflected in the sense of regality naturally surrounding Julie’s, and the same regality slightly strained in Jean’s speech. This is indicative of their background and social standing. Julie is a woman of high standing and grew up around those who only spoke in such a manner. Jean, on the other hand, clamored for a reason to use such dignified speech and has integrated it into his vocabulary as he has grown. It is noticed that this habit begins to slip when Jean experiences a sudden and intense emotion such as desire, anger, or fear. Because he doesn’t have time to “compose himself,” his speech becomes more common in nature. This acknowledgement can point to moments of lapsed composure in the characters.

1. Structure in Lines and Speeches:

Strindberg employs the use of certain dialogue structure to best communicate who commands the attention at any particular moment. For example, when explaining important previous action, he compiles it into long monologues with attention grabbing details or interjections to pull the audience back in. He also intensifies conflict by arranging lines to flow easily and rapidly as tension increases. These subtleties, when culminated, create an atmosphere that entrances the viewer and enfolds them in the intimate world of the characters.

1. Dramatic Action
2. *Ms. Julie* is divided into nineteen French scenes and ninety-seven units.

French Scene 1: from Jean’s entrance to Julie’s entrance

Unit 1: “Miss Julie is Crazy” Jean rants and Kristine affirms

Unit 2: “Relatives” Jean gossips and Kristine rationalizes

Unit 3: “Engagement” Jean exposes and Kristine engages

Unit 4: “Veal Roast” Kristine presents and Jean complains

Unit 5: “Leave my Hair” Jean fusses and Kristine pacifies

Unit 6: “The Drinking Fussbudget” Jean gloats and Kristine scoffs

Unit 7: “The Slop” Jean repulses and Kristine warns

Unit 8: “Promise?” Kristine persists and Jean assures

French Scene 2: from Julie’s entrance to Jean and Julie’s exit

Unit 1: “Violet Perfume” Julie flirts and Jean implores

Unit 2: “Dance with Me” Julie summons and Jean hesitates

Unit 3: “Go on Jean” Julie presses and Kristine concedes

Unit 4: “Playing Favorites” Julie questions and Jean explains

French Scene 3: from Jean and Julie’s exit to Jean’s entrance

Unit 1: “Mime” Kristine works

French Scene 4: from Jean’s entrance to Julie’s entrance

Unit 1: “A Sensible Wife” Jean coerces and Kristine softens

French Scene 5: from Julie’s entrance to Kristine’s exit

Unit 1: “A Charming Escort” Julie teases and Jean justifies

Unit 2: “Livery on a Holiday” Julie commands and Jean submits

Unit 3: “Fiancés” Julie implores and Kristine deflects

Unit 4: “Tres Gentil” Julie praises and Jean accepts

Unit 5: “Another Time” Julie persists and Jean evades

Unit 6: “Sleep Talk” Jean exposes and Julie questions

Unit 7: “Sit Down” Julie demands and Jean obeys

Unit 8: “Kiss my Shoe” Julie commands and Jean concurs

Unit 9: “That’s Enough” Jean defuses and Julie questions

Unit 10: “Wake Up” Julie harasses and Jean defends

French Scene 6: from Kristine’s exit to the Chorus’ entrance

Unit 1: “You Fell” Julie questions and Jean discredits

Unit 2: “Dreams” Julie expresses and Jean reciprocates

Unit 3: “To the Park” Julie encourages and Jean agrees

Unit 4: “A Speck in Your Eye” Julie gushes and Jean dismisses

Unit 5: “Kiss my Hand” Julie commands and Jean dissuades

Unit 6: “Attempted Kiss” Jean presses and Julie scoffs

Unit 7: “The Turkish Pavilion” Jean recollects and Julie listens

Unit 8: “Poor Children” Julie stimulates and Jean accepts

Unit 9: “Oat Bin” Jean maintains and Julie heeds

Unit 10: “Innocence” Julie reprimands and Jean rebukes

Unit 11: “Worried” Julie badgers and Jean defends

Unit 12: “Go to Bed, Julie” Jean directs and Julie humbles

French Scene 7: From the Chorus’ entrance to Jean and Julie’s exit

Unit 1: “The Chorus” The Chorus belittles

Unit 2: “What are they Singing?” Jean expounds and Julie questions

Unit 3: “To Jean’s Room” Jean entices and Julie succumbs

French Scene 8: From Jean and Julie’s exit to the peasant exit

Unit 1: “The Ballet” The peasant dance

French Scene 9: From Julie’s entrance to Jean’s entrance

Unit 1: “Powder” Julie tidies

French Scene 10: from Jean’s entrance to Kristine’s entrance

Unit 1: “We Can’t Stay Here” Jean badgers and Julie ponders

Unit 2: “Salt the Bill” Jean persuades and Julie inquires

Unit 3: “Call me Julie” Jean fumbles and Julie observes

Unit 4: “Nothing Happened” Jean directs and Julie hesitates

Unit 5: “Capitol” Jean bullies and Julie submits

Unit 6: “Your Lover?” Julie admonishes and Jean listens

Unit 7: “Attraction” Julie spirals and Jean steadies

Unit 8: “Father’s Burgundy” Jean coaxes and Julie evades

Unit 9: “Newspaper” Jean embarrasses and Julie represses

Unit 10: “The Hawk’s Back” Julie raves and Jean heckles

Unit 11: “Menial” Jean berates and Julie appeals

Unit 12: “Already Above Me” Jean boasts and Julie defies

Unit 13: “Spicy Wine” Jean woos and Julie withdraws

Unit 14: “Don’t Drink Fast” Julie gorges and Jean cautions

Unit 15: “Sometimes a Friend” Julie reveals and Jean decelerates

Unit 16: “Julie’s Childhood” Julie recalls and Jean engages

Unit 17: “Hate Men” Julie festers and Jean comprehends

Unit 18: “Lake Como” Julie hardens and Jean inquires

Unit 19: “The Insult” Jean insults and Julie ignores

Unit 20: “Honorable Heritage” Jean criticizes and Julie defends

Unit 21: “What do You Want?” Jean discredits and Julie retreats

Unit 22: “Love is a Game” Jean accosts and Julie aches

Unit 23: “Help Me!” Julie begs and Jean calms

Unit 24: “Before the Count Returns” Jean plots and Julie appeals

Unit 25: “Get the Money” Jean orders and Julie insists

French Scene 11: from Julie’s exit to Kristine’s entrance

Unit 1: “Adding Figures” Jean assembles

French Scene 12: from Kristine’s entrance to Kristine’s entrance

Unit 1: “What a Mess!” Kristine reprimands and Jean queries

Unit 2: “Dressed for Church” Kristine reminds and Jean remembers

Unit 3: “Shame on You!” Kristine scolds and Jean defuses

Unit 4: “Why Respect?” Jean contradicts and Kristine defends

Unit 5: “I’m Leaving” Kristine resolves and Jean persuades

Unit 6: “Who is That?” Kristine dreads and Jeans cautions

French Scene 13: from Kristine’s exit to Julie’s entrance

Unit 1: “The Sun Rises” Jean composes

French Scene 14: From Julie’s entrance to Kristine’s entrance

Unit 1: “Kristine’s Awake” Jean frightens and Julie submits

Unit 2: “You Look Awful!” Jean criticizes and Julie shrinks

Unit 3: “Enough” Jean interrogates and Julie entreats

Unit 4: “Greenfinch” Julie pleads and Jean denies

Unit 5: “The Beheading” Jean terrorizes and Julie blasts

Unit 6: “My Father” Julie hardens and Jean calms

French Scene 15: from Kristine’s entrance to Jean’s exit

Unit 1: “The Plea” Julie entreats and Kristine disregards

French Scene 16: from Jean’s exit to Jean’s entrance

Unit 1: “Listen Kristine!” Julie confides and Kristine distances

Unit 2: “The Plan” Julie persuades and Kristine contemplates

French Scene 17: from Jean’s entrance to Kristine’s exit

Unit 1: “Do you Believe This?” Julie unravels and Kristine pacifies

Unit 2: “Self-Respect” Jean chastens and Kristine rebukes

Unit 3: “Bribes” Jean exposes and Kristine retaliates

Unit 4: “Kingdom of God” Kristine reprimands and Julie presses

French Scene 18: from Kristine’s exit to Julie’s exit

Unit 1: “What a Witch!” Jean repulses and Julie denies

Unit 2: “Differences in Gender” Jean criticizes and Julie combats

Unit 3: “Love and Hate” Julie revels and Jean offers

Unit 4: “The Count’s Back!” Jean frightens and Julie fumbles

Unit 5: “I Can’t” Julie pleads and Jean denies

Unit 6: “I’m Already Asleep” Julie entrances and Jean hesitates

Unit 7: “The Razor” Jean pushes and Julie agrees

Unit 8: “You’re the Last” Jean comforts and Julie settles

Unit 9: “I Can’t: Again” Julie resists and Jean blames

Unit 10: “The Bell” Jean alerts and Julie deliberates

Unit 11: “There’s No Other Way” Jean commands and Julie executes

French Scene 19: from Julie’s exit to blackout

Unit 1: “Out the Door” Julie fulfills and Jean wrestles

1. Characters
2. Julie:

At the start of the play, Julie believes that under her superior title and upbringing, the extent of time and space must submit to and support her every move. She changes and realizes that once all prestige is dropped by the consequences of her actions, she is the one who must submit to the call of those she had commanded previously.

Julie desires more than else love. It may seem at first glance as if she desires respect, but after closer consideration, she ultimately yearns for love. It is the reason she is so distraught when her greenfinch is killed. She is also so willing to follow Jean’s direction because she believes he could love her. She has been deprived of a lot of authentic love in her life, so she clings on to any degree of attraction in her current life. Her will is one of conviction and determination. She never does anything half-way. All of her philosophies are strongly stood behind and unwavering. She has an air of indecisiveness about her, but this only comes through doubt after she sleeps with Jean and her confidence is shaken. Nonetheless, her inner strength is fortified.

Julie’s moral stance seems blurry, but underneath all the clouded judgement, she remains a fairly moral character. She knows when Jean is acting indecent and isn’t afraid to let him know. That being said, growing up in a life of luxury and entitlement, she is prone to selfishness and egotism. This is demonstrated when she attempted to have Diana shot for running after the gatekeeper’s dog. She is also the character that mentions God the least, pointing to her lack of spirituality. In the core of her being, she is an ethical person, but her position and influences have made her default in the immediate to immoral decisions.

Adjectives: headstrong, flirty, outspoken, demanding, contradictory, impulsive, cultured, passionate.

1. Jean:

Jean believes that the only thing getting in the way of his deserved social and economic success is the confines of the system he feels so trapped in. He changes and realizes that it is not these things, but rather his own cowardice and internal struggle that prevent him from obtaining his goal.

The thing Jean wants more than anything is power. He wants to be respected, even almost feared. He has spent his whole life looking up to the society above him and yearns for that same sense of authority and supremacy. He is willing to put aside other’s well-being to obtain this goal, as he does with Julie. He, also, has a strong will. Jean is motivated and willing to sacrifice to achieve more power, driving him to encourage thievery and suicide from Julie. This intensity provides engaging conflict between Jean and his companions.

Jean’s moral fibers are a bit frayed, to state it metaphorically. Overtime, he has molded into a man that must do whatever will help him, and only him, succeed. He proves time and time again his selfish motivations and the little remorse he feels because of those choices. There is one moment where the viewer sees the portion of him hidden deep down that is affected by his actions. This occurs when Julie first agrees to commit suicide and he is taken aback by her response and the severity it could inflict on everyone’s future.

Adjectives: ambitious, cold, conniving, charming, determined, tactical, unsatisfied, stately

1. Kristine:

Kristine believes that Julie and Jean are deserving of her respect and possibly even affection. She changes and realizes their true identities are not worthy of her devotion or sympathy.

Kristine’s ultimate desire is for self-respect. She is a sensible woman and is content in the story until she realizes she is working with and for people with whom she does not respect or respect her. This motivates her to actions she would not have taken otherwise. She is appalled that Jean would continue to serve the Count and his family after the way Julie acted. She also is disgusted by Jean’s indecency with Julie because she sees the lack of respect he has, which in turn affects her. She is willing to find a new job in search of self-respect. Her willpower is fairly strong as well. She knows what she wants and is willing to endanger her future to obtain it. Kristine is full of conviction and determination once her goal is jeopardized.

Kristine’s morale is the strongest of all the characters in the show. She is flawed, like everyone is, but she exhibits the strongest conscience. She does the “right” thing most of the time and is strongly affected when Julie and Jean make immoral decisions. She feels so strongly she actually speaks up against their actions, supporting her moral fibers. She is also the most religious of the characters. She speaks about being faithful since she was a little girl and living that faith out into adulthood. She attends church and references Jesus and the Bible as well. It is clear that faith is an important piece of Kristine’s life and the impact it holds on her decisions.

Adjectives: sensible, level-headed, humble, hypocritical, religious, callous

1. Idea
2. Meaning of the Title

The title, *Ms. Julie*, is simple yet effective. It clearly delineates with whom the story should center around. Without this method, one might wonder if Jean is the main character. Now that the reader has established the idea that Julie is indeed the main character, the formality of her name should be addressed. Strindberg chose to use the prefix Ms. in his title, a detail that should not be overlooked. This provides an air of superiority and high class to the audience and informs them of the type of person the plot centers around. In saying this, the title is also vague enough to invite curiosity about what *Ms. Julie* entails. The title, simple and concise, communicates an elusive yet authoritative prologue to the main character and her companions.

1. Philosophical Statements

“No one’ll believe you stepped down voluntarily. People will always say you fell.” “Are you still a child at twenty-five?” “You play games too seriously, and that’s dangerous.” “You were a symbol of the hopelessness of ever rising out of the class in which I was born.” “What terrible power drew me to you? The attraction of the weak of the weak to the strong? The falling to the rising? Or was it love?” “It hurts like watching flowers beaten down by autumn rains and turned into mud.” “There’s never a shortage of love-even if it doesn’t last long!” “Love is a game we play when we have time off from work, but we don’t have all day and night off, like you.” “If they’re no better, what do we have to strive for to better ourselves?” “You think I love you because my womb craved your seed.” “There’s someone behind it-a hand that sets it in motion- and something else that sets the hand in motion.”

1. Mood

The overall mood can be described in the metaphor: The hypnotic process of stoking and fueling a fire from embers to flame and the sudden realization that your hair is on fire as well.

1. Tempo

The ebbs and flows of the dramatic action create a undercurrent that pinpoints the climaxes of the story and give purpose and drive to the narrative. Strindberg keeps the sequences in which the characters reminisce on the past as a bit more somber and adagio-like feel. This displays the effect the past has on the psyche of the present. In the scenes when tensions are increasing, he keeps the dialogue moving and increases the intensity until it combusts. As a wave crashes against the rocks, so does the conflict erupt in Strindberg’s story. The majority of the play is the swelling and release and swelling again of tensions stacking one on top of another. The audience can feel this pressure increasing and is wrapped up inside the tide of conflict. The height of the story is reached when the Count’s bell rings and Julie and Jean realize their future must be sealed. The tempo stays rapid until the very moment Julie walks out of the door. From there, it falls quickly and the silence lingers in the air like the final chords of a song held in a fermata. The pacing employed in *Ms. Julie* keeps the viewer engaged and invested in the lives of its characters.

1. Tone

The opposition between regard for the values of a class system and the longing for fulfillment of one’s greatest desires cause a rift in the very fabric that binds the characters livelihood. The power plays and manipulation that in the moment seemed effective in order to achieve their objective prove to be the catalyst of their undoing.