

The Female Response to the Walby's Patriarchal Model in the August Strindberg Plays the Father and Miss Julie

Sabah H. Alyousif* & Ahmad Kamal Basyah Sallehuddin

University Technology MARA, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

Email: akamalbasyah@uitm.edu.my

Corresponding Author Emails: sabah.h.alyousif@gmail.com

To Link this Article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARPED/v14-i1/24439> DOI:10.6007/IJARPED/v14-i1/24439

Published Online: 04 January 2025

Abstract

The examination of female reactions to patriarchal institutions in August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and *The Father* may be framed using Walby's approach, which emphasizes the interaction of social, cultural, and economic variables. This research demonstrates how Julie's character represents the battle against patriarchal tyranny and cultural expectations. The play *Miss Julie* delves into female hysteria and patriarchy, which may represent the influence of 19th-century neuroscience, **demonstrating** how cultural beliefs of mental illness overlap with gender roles. The two Strindberg plays emphasize that even aristocratic society engages in unethical behavior. The two plays are loaded with class strife and repressive reality, exposing the psychological effects of their social status. This interplay of deception emphasizes the constraints imposed by patriarchal and class hierarchies, distorting their relationships and personal identities. While Strindberg's work criticizes patriarchal standards, it also raises questions about the more significant implications of gender and class in literature, implying that the fight against oppression is multidimensional and deeply established in societal conceptions. Contemporary versions of *Miss Julie* use cinematographic techniques to explore these topics, highlighting the unseen tensions and complexity of gender and class in modern society. While Strindberg's writings usually depict women as victims of patriarchal oppression, they also encourage a closer examination of female agency and resistance within these boundaries, revealing a more complicated picture of gender relations during his time.

Keywords: Strindberg, Miss Julie, the Father, Patriarchy, Walby's Model

Introduction

In 1888, Strindberg wrote the play *Miss Julie*, in which the action appears momentarily at its highest concentration and develops rapidly in a short time. In the famous programmatic "Preface" to *Miss Julie* (1888), the Swedish playwright declares the basic principles of building a new type of drama and the ways it embodies the stage, which he develops in subsequent plays, and also discusses the ephemeral nature of the idea of gender equality. The writer

strives for everyday contrasts and storms, which, in his opinion, are an integral and important part of the life of any person. From the "Preface" to *Miss Julie*, he states:

Recently my tragedy *The Father* was reproached for its tragedy, as if thereby demanding the creation of a merry tragedy; there is a cry about the joy of life, and the directors of the theatres order farces, as if the joy of life consists in fooling around and describing people as if they were all suffering from Witt's dance or idiocy (Strindberg, 1888).

Indeed, Strindberg's *Miss Julie* delves into several profound themes, including the interplay of delusion and reality, gender dynamics, and class conflict. The characters' interactions and corporate duties are intricately interwoven with these themes. The play emphasizes the conflict between the aristocratic *Miss Julie* and her servant Jean, illustrating the struggle for power and identity within a rigorous class structure (Demiray, 2022). Their sadomasochistic relationship, which Carr (2016) describes as being characterized by the dictate of their interactions through their social status, further complicates this dynamic and ultimately leads to tragedy. Strindberg explores the intricacies of gender roles, depicting Julie's struggle against societal expectations and her eventual downfall as a manifestation of misogynistic attitudes (Lisovskaya & Naumova, 2022). The play also investigates the psychological implications of these roles, mainly through Julie's portrayal as an overwrought woman influenced by contemporary neuroscience (Alanazi, 2023). The theme of vital falsehoods is central, as characters construct illusions to contend with their harsh realities, thereby exposing the fragility of their identities and relationships (Demiray, 2022). Although *Miss Julie* offers a critical perspective on societal structures, it also encourages dialogue regarding the potential for personal agency within oppressive systems. It implies that seeking recognition and fulfillment can result in empowerment and devastation.

In this paper, a critical engagement of the two selected plays by August Strindberg, *The Father* and *Miss Julie*, will be examined in terms of the female response to the patriarchal cultures. *The Father* and *Miss Julie* reflect the fundamental patriarchal system supported by the conventional symbols in literature. The symbolization of patriarchy was reinforced in the texts, as was the use of excerpts and secondary sources to analyze how the female protagonists refuted the male dominance and oppression. Strindberg's two plays share common themes and elements, including the exploration of the battle of the sexes, the clash between feminine and masculine qualities, the depiction of mental illnesses such as hysteria, and the portrayal of societal issues like class struggle and oppression (Xu, 2019; Davari & Sadeghi, 2017). These plays delve into the complexities of human relationships, particularly focusing on the psychological, social, and intellectual conflicts prevalent in the late nineteenth century. Strindberg's characters, like Julie and Jean, often embody his own ambivalent feelings and psychological dualism, reflecting the playwright's deep engagement with the struggles and tensions between individuals and society. Moreover, the influence of scientific theories, such as Charcot's research on female hysteria, can be observed in the nuanced portrayal of mental illness in his works, highlighting the intersection between scientific progress and cultural perceptions of mental health. Furthermore, another other similarity between the two plays is the reflection on the imbalances within society and the destructive consequences of power misuse among people and relationships.

In particular, the female response to patriarchal cultures in *The Father* and *Miss Julie* has been explored in various critical analyses. Strindberg's portrayal of female characters like Laura in *The Father* and Julie in *Miss Julie* reflects the power struggles and victimization within patriarchal structures. These characters navigate societal expectations and confront the dominance of male figures, showcasing the complexities of gender dynamics and power imbalances (Kareem, 2024). Through a lens of naturalism, feminism, and the battle of the sexes, Strindberg delves into themes of misogyny, moral decay, and the deconstruction of marriage, shedding light on the challenges faced by women in oppressive patriarchal societies (Hussain, 2021). The plays serve as a platform for examining the impact of cultural norms and power dynamics on the agency and autonomy of their female characters, highlighting the intricate interplay between gender, power, and societal expectations in Strindberg's works.

The depiction of women navigating societal expectations and power dynamics, as seen in the characters' interactions and manipulations, highlights the complex relationship between gender roles and power in Strindberg's works (Lisovskaya & Naumova, 2022).

Aside from the commonalities in the two texts, there are also significant differences between Strindberg's two plays, such as the settings and context deployed in the plays. For instance, while Strindberg used the tragic downfall of the characters in *Miss Julie* to challenge traditional roles and social norms, the author emphasized the complexity of human connections and the destructive nature of emotional ties to achieve the same result (Strindberg, 2013). Also, each play employed unique characterizations and emphasized related, but different, themes such as class, fear, societal norms, or emotional manipulation. Summaries of each play are provided in the subsequent paragraphs.

Gender Conflicts in the Father and Miss Julie

The question of the relationship between a man and a woman in all its acuteness occupied Strindberg largely for personal reasons. The external circumstances helped him to concentrate and acquire the appearance of a cross-cutting theme of the writer's work. The writer protested the indisputable fact that women rebelled not only in the streets but also in the most intimate places—the family union—thereby distorting it. In the writer's interpretation, the family union of a man and a woman is an irreconcilable struggle, calling it "a struggle of minds." In other words, "Strindberg's achieves dominance over woman, meeting the same competitive feeling in response" (Lisovskaya & Naumova, 2022). Strindberg imagines a woman as an alien creature, lacking self-reflection and a "culture of introspection."

According to Szalczar and Stenport (2012), it becomes clear why Strindberg's marriages (both in life and in art) were doomed. A woman was the creature with whom one wanted to live one's life, while Strindberg's terrible individualism and inflated intolerance could not allow him to live the same life with anyone. Then, with tragic passion, summarizing his romantic failures, Strindberg curses woman, as all his kind curse her. Strindberg called his torment honesty, and he was correct.

He was incapable of remaining faithful to an idea or a woman without love. He utters to the end, not only to himself but to humanity, everything that stirs in the darkness of his soul, no matter how monstrous it may seem (Szalczar & Stenport, 2012). Beginning with his first marriage to the failed actress Siri von Essen, the writer gained experience that he would later

transfer to all his other relationships with the opposite sex, while also making the same motif central to his plays of the late 1880s.

Commenting on the peculiarities of the caustic and tragic Swedish genius, Szalczar and Stenport (2012) declare that "destruction was Strindberg's element" and define him as "the genius of the hammer, the genius of dynamite." Strindberg's numerous hobbies and his thirst to absorb as much as possible from different fields caused him to suffer from an illness known as individualism. Freedom and pride are its inherent features. Indeed, his pride had excessive forms, while his freedom acquired a touch of unhappiness, but together they had an undeniable, romantic charm. "Strindberg's biography and his writings are, in my opinion, the death of individualism, but before such a death, opponents of individualism must take off their hats (Szalczar & Stenport, 2012).

By the time his plays *The Father* (1887) and *Miss Julie* (1888) were written, Strindberg had sufficient life and existential experience to talk about the problems facing people as a whole, as well as those facing men and women individually. Many researchers of the writer's work were inclined to consider these naturalistic plays primarily as Strindberg's admission of misogyny, which appeared through the images of his heroines.

In the play *The Father*, Captain Adolph's wife, Laura, is an evil woman. Out of hatred for her husband, she drives him to madness (Lisovskaya & Naumova, 2022). The playwright depicted her as a parody of the ethics of a woman from a bourgeois environment and of the ugly forms of emancipation in a possessive, predatory society (Olenina, 2020).

The captain is full of the same gender hatred as his wife; he is as much a misogynist by nature as she is a man-hater. The difference between them is that it is stronger in his character and will. Laura is aware of this from the very beginning. Here, Strindberg finally and forever humbles himself, thinking that woman should win the struggle between the sexes (Olenina, 2020).

Of course, already in *The Father*, the "vampiric" concept of the relationship between a man and a woman is clearly manifested; one of the two must certainly be a "parasite" on the soul and intellect of the partner. In this case, the woman, being stronger and more insidious, empties the soul juices of the captain and destroys him.

Lisovskaya and Naumova (2022) wrote that *The Father* was the most unconditional of Strindberg's anti-feminist plays. The triumph of a woman who manages to declare her husband, an intelligent and noble man, a great scientist, insane, means in the play her exposure as a merciless, predatory, and cunning creature.

If in Strindberg's later play, *Comrades*, a woman was treated as a creatively inferior and parasitic person, then in *The Father* the goal of woman is the enslavement of man (Cardullo, 2011). In such a family, looters already live, who are ready to profit from the humiliation of their partner. However, the main attention is still attracted by the figure of the man in this play. Balsamo believes that the captain in *The Father* is a weak character. He is a "creature without essence" who does not have a core and is easily influenced by others (Lisovskaya & Naumova, 2022).

However, he never uttered a blasphemous word or encroached on the feminine; he turned away from the feminine only to show that he was not an ordinary man who “hates women” as easily as he falls under their comfortable influence.

In an article on the death of August Strindberg, Lisovskaya and Naumova (2022) defined the writer's personality:

He combines both an artist and a person; one who, in addition to a great name that thunders throughout the world, has a small, intimate name. The artist and the man, the creator and the craftsman; Strindberg belonged to those models of humanity, the type to which many people sooner or later begin to aspire. The duality that haunts Strindberg is more than once noticed in the definition of his appearance.

The great dramas *The Father* and *Miss Julie*, which he left for future generations, are largely valuable precisely because of this attempt to capture the picture of the world at the moment it was collapsing.

Patriarchal Model of Sylvia Walby

Sylvia Walby is a feminist sociologist who has significantly contributed to studying gender inequality. One of her most significant contributions is her Patriarchal Model, which is represented by a theoretical framework that aims to explain the numerous ways patriarchal dominance functions in society. According to Walby, patriarchal power is a complex and varied system of social interactions rather than a single entity (Walby, 2023). The Patriarchal Model emphasizes the interconnectivity of various power systems and the significance of tackling gender inequity holistically. It has impacted feminist study and activity and continues to be a valuable paradigm for comprehending the complexity of patriarchal authority. The Patriarchal Model highlights six fundamental patriarchal power structures, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Walby's Six Fundamental Patriarchal Power Structures

Patriarchal Type	Explanation
Family	The family is a key site of patriarchal power, as it is where gender roles are learned and enforced and where men often hold the most power.
Paid Work	Patriarchal power is also present in the workplace, where women are often relegated to low-paid, low-status jobs and where men dominate positions of power and authority.
The State	The state is another site of patriarchal power, as laws and policies often reflect and reinforce gender inequalities.
Sexuality	Patriarchal power also operates in the realm of sexuality, where women are often subject to sexual violence and where male sexual desires are often privileged over female desires.
Cultural Institutions	Patriarchal power is also present in cultural institutions, such as the media and education system, which often promote gender stereotypes and reinforce gender inequalities.
Violence	Patriarchal power is also manifested in various forms of violence against women, including domestic violence, sexual assault, and female genital mutilation.

The Main Characters

The Father

The Father is a tragic play written by Swedish playwright August Strindberg, which tells the story of the power struggle between a husband, Captain Adolph, and his wife, Laura, while debating the future of their daughter, Bertha. The captain is a military officer with strong ideas about how Bertha should be raised, while Laura manipulates him by accusing him of having mental health issues. Laura, on the other hand, believes that Bertha should pursue her passion for painting. Thus, Laura employs psychological tactics to use against the captain, such as questioning his sanity. She also makes up a lie to make the captain question whether he is the biological father of Bertha. This lie made Captain Adolph increasingly paranoid as he began to feel a sense of insecurity and confusion.

Throughout the play, the author characterized the female protagonist as possessing certain psychological tactics to connive with other characters such as the doctor, nurse, and their daughter to subdue the authority of Captain Adolph and achieve shifting power dynamics between Adolph and Laura. Strindberg employed the questioning of the nature of truth, sanity, and the blurred lines between dominance and submission. However, the underlying themes in the play are the power struggle between genders, societal expectations, and the manipulation of the truth. With this, Strindberg was able to reflect the toxic consequences of patriarchal dominance, which is the tragic reflection of a broken marriage.

Miss Julie

Strindberg's second play, *Miss Julie*, is an 1888 play written to explore the volatile relationships between aristocrat Miss Julie and her father's valet, Jean. Julie is a young girl who rebels against the societal norm by engaging in a relationship with Jean, who is of lower status than she. Jean was already in a relationship with the family's chef, Catherine, when Julie, after suffering heartbreak from her fiancée, initiated a seductive mind game with Jean and, as such, was able to blur the lines of authority and class. Both Julie and Jean have several conversations that reveal their fears, tensions, and beliefs. These conversations were used to show themes of repulsion and attraction, dominance, and submission.

Their relationship is challenged by different complications and insecurities. Both Jean and Julie faced certain obstacles because of the strict social hierarchy between them, while both characters struggled with their internal conflicts as well. As events unfold, the affairs between them take a darker turn, as Julie always wants to have her way, claiming that she is submissive to no man. Also, all their plans to run away due to the consequence of breaking the social norm for allowing a relationship between people of different classes are thwarted. The play ends tragically as Julie is seen leaving the stage to commit suicide, revealing the consequences of a love affair riddled with power struggles and societal expectations. Throughout the play, Strindberg was able to capture the vulnerability, ambitions, and struggle for dominance between the social classes and the gender roles.

The Patriarchal System in Strindberg Selected the Two Plays

The two plays show patriarchal instances that express how society is attached to patriarchal structures against women. That is, the plays of Strindberg are typically a reflection of society. In this section, the authors show the views of both men and society about women and, additionally, how the women also view themselves. These instances were taken from the

original texts of the two plays, supported by dialogues between the characters and their thoughts. The analysis is based on Walby's six patriarchal structures for analysis as described in the previous section.

In both *The Father* and *Miss Julie*, there are identified instances of patriarchal structures, which were systematically deployed by August Strindberg to portray how the patriarchal society works against women and how the system has been used to marginalize women in the society. However, the plays of Strindberg are typically the reflection of society as seen through the dialogues between the characters, symbolic imagery, the characterization of the casts, and the underlying tones. Having critically engaged the selected texts, only five out of the six patriarchal structures of Walby were identified, and these include the patriarchy in family/household production, patriarchy in society, patriarchy in the state, patriarchy in the culture, and patriarchy in sexuality. Generally, ten instances of patriarchy in the family and eight instances of patriarchy in society were identified, while other forms of patriarchal structure are identified twice throughout the selected texts. These texts are further critically engaged.

Walby's patriarchy model as the theoretical framework to identify how the patriarchal system and society are portrayed in the two selected plays of August Strindberg. In this chapter, the two plays of August Strindberg are critically and carefully assessed line by line to pinpoint the instances of the patriarchal system as portrayed in *The Father* and *Miss Julie*. To this effect, the instances identified are further categorized for easy analysis using the six Walby models. Meanwhile, the tables below identify only five out of the six patriarchal structures of Walby. These five models were family/household production, patriarchy in society, patriarchy in the state, patriarchy in the culture, and patriarchy in sexuality. Generally, ten instances of patriarchy in the family and eight instances of patriarchy in society were identified, while other forms of patriarchal structure are identified twice throughout the selected texts. These texts are further critically engaged.

Patriarchy Walby's Scale

The six structures of patriarchy, according to Walby (2023), include:

1. Patriarchy in Paid Work: For instance, poor opportunities, not being able to work, poor paying jobs, etc.
2. Patriarchy in Family: For instance, women do most of the house chores and homework and men exercise authority at home, etc.
3. Patriarchy in Culture: For instance, stereotyped expected behaviors for genders.
4. Patriarchy in Sexuality: For instance, condemnation of women who are sex active compared to men who do the same.
5. Patriarchy in Violence: For instance, seeing violence against women as a form of male control.
6. Patriarchy in the State: For instance, a small attempt to improve women's position in society.

The Father: Identified Patriarchal Instances

In *The Father*, the structure of the play is based on the central theme of the gender roles of men and women in society. The play emphasizes the supremacy of men's power and dominance over women through the gendered division of labor and reinforcement of the

traditional societal norms that preached the subordination of women in society. Critically examining the text using Walby's patriarchy structures (Table 2), the instances of patriarchy in the play are identified and categorized into patriarchy in the family/household production, patriarchy in society, patriarchy in culture, and patriarchy in the state.

Table 2

Tabular Representation and Categorization of Instances of the Patriarchal System in Strindberg's the Father

Patriarchal			
	Instances	Explanation	Category
1.	Adolph's belief to have the right and power to dictate values and principles for Bertha.	This belief reflects the man's entitlement to direct the affairs of the family.	Family
2.	The marginalization of Laura's opinion and her desire for freedom.	This reflects the subjugation of women's status in society.	Family
3.	Pastor and Captain's subservient views about women as negative influence.	This portrays that society sees men's dominance over their wives as the norm.	Society
4.	Laura seeks the assistance of the male doctor and the pastor to defeat her husband instead of the nurse.	This portrays that society is structured to favor men, and for women to destroy this structure, they need the favor of men.	State
5.	Laura plans to declare that the captain is insane so she can take over responsibility of the house.	This reflects the desperation of women to overcome men's domination and rigidity.	Family
6.	Adolph's confinement of Bertha to the societal norms about females.	This reflects that society has biased expectations from both genders.	Society
7.	Men's authority to ascertain being the father of their child.	This shows men to be self-centered and dominant.	Family

Miss Julie: Identified Patriarchal System

Through the radical feminism approach, *Miss Julie* by August Strindberg is a seminal play that explores the complexities of class, gender, and power dynamics in late 19th-century Swedish society. Throughout the play, instances of the patriarchal system are starkly portrayed, highlighting the oppressive nature of the societal norms of the time. Critically examining the text using Walby's patriarchy structures (Table 3), the instances of patriarchy in the play are identified and categorized into patriarchy in the family/household production, patriarchy in society, patriarchy in culture, and patriarchy in the state.

Table 3

Tabular Representation and Categorization of Instances of the Patriarchal System in Strindberg's Miss Julie

Patriarchal			
	Patriarchy System Instances	Explanation	Category
1.	Jean's manipulative power to want to use Julie, an aristocrat, for what he wanted	This shows the superior gender role of men over women.	Family
2.	Objectification of <i>Miss Julie</i> to want to be acquired or possessed by Jean and her ex.	This reflects the fact that women are ridiculed as property that should be acquired.	Culture
3.	Expectations of other characters and society confining <i>Miss Julie</i> to particular roles and behaviors.	This reflects that society has placed limitations on the behaviors expected of the gender.	Society
4.	Failure of <i>Miss Julie</i> to assert control over men despite her social status.	This reflects the superiority of men over women.	Family
5.	<i>Miss Julie's</i> desire to gain freedom and her rejection of maternal roles.	This reflects that society placed limitations on the freedom of the female child more than the male.	Society
6.	<i>Miss Julie's</i> inability to take decisions on her own, her vulnerability, and her reliance on men to move on.	This shows that women can't do without men and that men are wiser.	Culture
7.	The condemnation of <i>Miss Julie</i> for having affairs with Jean with less attention on the other party.	This reflects the partial position of society on sexuality.	Sexuality

Analytical Analysis

In the following sections, the author conducts an analysis expressing the main categories mentioned in *The Father* and *Miss Julie* separately as expressed in Table 2 and Table 3, respectively.

The Father: Analysis

The role of Captain Adolph is an embodiment of the traditional values of a man who believes in his inherent rights and supremacy over his family. The author, through this plot, can show how household production reflects a patriarchal structure in society. However, one of the significant instances of such is the general perception of Captain Adolph, whose characterization, dialogue, and roles show his belief to have a supreme right and power to dictate values and principles over their daughter, Bertha. With this approach, the author

shows that, in the family dynamic, the husband or father is the head of the household, and it is the man that should make pertinent decisions for the family, including deciding the career of their child, Bertha.

As an example, Captain made his perception about the family gender role, and the dominance of the male or the superiority of the father in the house is sighted in Act 1, scene IV, in the conversation between the Captain and Laura. In this dialogue between Laura and the captain, she asked about the captain's decision on the education of their child. The captain's response explicitly shows that the father has all the rights over his wife and children once the woman has agreed to come under his abode. This instance shows the patriarchal nature of the household or family. In fact, their conversation depicted that the gender role of women is entirely relegated to nothing, and the only thing that women have the right to enjoy is the care she receives from the man. The dialogue is depicted thus:

CAPTAIN: The law declares that children are to be brought up in their father's faith.

LAURA: And the mother is to have no voice in the matter?

CAPTAIN: No, none whatsoever. She has sold her birthright by a legal transaction and surrendered her rights in return for the man's undertaking to take care of her and her children (Strindberg, 1887).

Again, in Act I, scene IX, Captain confirms his right to decide for his family when an argument ensues between Laura and Captain on whether their child should decide her faith or not since both parents cannot agree. Captain reiterated:

CAPTAIN: No, I let no one usurp my rights, neither women nor children. Bertha, leave us (Strindberg, 1887).

In addition, a dialogue between Laura and Captain in Act II, scene V, shows the male's supreme influence on the upbringing of their children. Clearly, Captain gets sick and tired of the suspicion that he is not the father of the child because he will lose control and power over the child. Laura intentionally raised this suspicion, hoping to weaken the assertive power of her husband, trying to reveal the truth to him; however, instinctually, she still found a way to evade telling the truth because in it lays her power to compete over the child's destiny.

The father's suspicions and the mother's behavior in not telling the truth work together for the benefit of the mother because she knows telling the truth could benefit her husband by abandoning the child; that is the only link between them. Psychologically, Laura's action represents the state of revenge regarding the gender role's power and what it means to the captain, as he is afraid to hear the truth about the paternity of the child so as not to lose his power over her.

CAPTAIN: Laura, save me and my reason. You don't seem to understand what I say. If the child is not mine, I have no control over it and don't want to have any, and that is precisely what you want, isn't it? You will have the power over the child, and I shall be left to maintain you both (Strindberg, 1887, p. 66).

The family patriarchy appears throughout the conversation between the captain and the pastor that shows the captain's obsession with preserving his right to raise his child while also considering women inferior in making the best decisions for their children, as it described in Act I, Scene III:

CAPTAIN: Yes, but it was surely not about the confirmation, particularly, but the whole of her education. This house is full of women who all want to educate my child. My mother-in-law wants to make a spiritualist of her; Laura insists on her being an artist; the governess wants to make her a Methodist, old Margret a Baptist, and the servant-girls a Salvationist. It won't do to try and make a soul in patches like that, especially when I, who have the chief right to form her character, have all my efforts opposed. I am determined to get her out of this house (Strindberg, 1887, p. 9).

Further, another instance of family or household production patriarchy in the play is the marginalization of Laura's opinion and her desire for freedom. In the play, Laura sought all means to get her freedom from the perceived family gender role. One of the tactics she used was to raise suspicions about who is the father of Bertha, and the second was to make everyone believe that the captain was sick so that no one would take him seriously, and then he would feel angry with himself. One of the conversations between Laura and Captain depicted this in Act II, scene V:

CAPTAIN: That I may keep my reason. Deliver me from my suspicions, and I throw up the struggle.

LAURA: What suspicions?

CAPTAIN: About Bertha's origin

LAURA: Is there any doubt about that?

CAPTAIN: Yes, I have doubts, and you have awakened them (Strindberg, 1887, p. 65).

From the above conversations, it is explicitly depicted that Laura intentionally raised concerns about the father of Bertha, and she used it as her fight strategy against the marginalized gender role of women in the family.

Another excerpt that reflects the struggle of Laura for freedom from the marginalized gender role in the family is depicted below in Act I, scene IX:

LAURA: Well, that was quite simple and perfectly legitimate. Is Bertha to leave home?

CAPTAIN: Yes, she is to start in a fortnight.

LAURA: Is that your determination?

CAPTAIN: Yes

LAURA: Have you spoken to her about it?

CAPTAIN: Yes

LAURA: Then you must try to prevent it (Strindberg, 1887, p. 41).

With the above excerpt about Bertha leaving to study away from home, it is apparent that Laura's questions are not just to know the final decision of her husband but to know how to challenge him. The last turn of Laura in the conversation showed both her determination and helplessness in making decisions for her child. She used the word "try" to show that she is

already marginalized and used the word “must” to show her determination to change the narrative.

However, what has been established with the instances of conversations shown to reflect the power struggle between the two couples so far is to show those women’s roles and opinions about the family are portrayed to be insignificant even when there is a struggle to regain it.

In addition to what has been discussed so far, Laura also employed the tactic of portraying her husband as being insane to take control of the affairs of the house and be able to make a choice over the career of her daughter. Laura’s action in this sense is to challenge the power dynamics within the household and the traditional patriarchal structure present in society. However, one of the instances of such a case is provided in the statement of the captain, who was frustrated having been exposed to the tactics of Laura in Act II, Scene V, thus:

CAPTAIN: I see you have a high opinion of me; it appears from these letters that for some time past you have been arraying my former friends against me by spreading reports about my mental condition. And you have succeeded in your efforts, for now there is not more than one person from the colonel down to the cook who believes me to be sane. Now the facts about my illness are these: my reason is unaffected, as you know, so that I can discharge both my duties to the service and my duties as a father (Strindberg, 1887, pp. 62-63).

In the above excerpt, the extent to which Laurel is determined to relegate the dominance of her husband is reflected. Apart from the fact that this depicts that there is a clash of opinion in the family gender role, it also shows that women are aware of this marginalization, and they are putting up a fight against such patriarchy even today. Also, the author raises concerns about the potential dangers or consequences that the patriarchal structure and male hegemony in the family can cause. Moreover, the author establishes that women will go to any lengths to gain their freedom from the patriarchal structure of society.

In addition, the earlier conversation between the doctor and Laura in Act I shows that Laura is deceptive, dangerous, and desperate to gain her freedom and exercise control over the house and her daughter. She was able to send the old doctor away and hire a new doctor so that she could form a new opinion about the captain. Knowing this, the captain was able to challenge her decisions and became suspicious in Act I, scene IX.

CAPTAIN: Yes, you have a fiendish power of getting your own way, but people who are not ashamed of inferring always have. How did you get Doctor Nordling away, for instance, and how did you get the new man here?

LAURA: Yes, how did I manage that?

CAPTAIN: You insulted the first until he went, and made your brother scrape votes together for the other (Strindberg, 1887)

Of course, this communication shows the manipulative power of women, as the captain declared that she will always have her way. It also shows the extent to which women can go to gain their freedom from the existing patriarchal structure in the family.

In furtherance of Laura's plan, she is shown to have manipulated the new doctor to gain his support, making the captain believe that he is really ill. With this, Captain believed that no one can know the father of a child, and coupled with his suspicions about the true father of Bertha, the doctor plans for him to be declared certifiably insane.

LAURA: I have no idea. He has such wild fancies now.

DOCTOR: Should you like me to stay till he returns? I could say, to avoid suspicion, that I had to come to see your mother, who is unwell (Strindberg, 1887, p. 50).

The above conversation exposes the momentum at which Laura's plan to take charge of the affairs of the family is coming to fruition, fully supported by the doctor, so she will be able to deny the captain his rights and authority over his family. However, she was able to achieve her aim in her conversation with Captain in Act II, scene V.

CAPTAIN: I realize that one of us must go under in this struggle.

LAURA: Which?

CAPTAIN: The weaker, of course.

LAURA: And the stronger will be in the right.

CAPTAIN: Certainly, since he has the power.

LAURA: Then I am right.

CAPTAIN: Have you the power already, then?

LAURA: Yes, the power of the law, by which I shall put you under control to-morrow (Strindberg, 1887).

The above dialogues showed the change of power in the gender role in the family. It shows the success of Laura's plot against Captain. Also, the play, using this excerpt above, predicted that, in the future, women will gain their freedom through the law and be able to crumble patriarchy to its feet.

The presence of patriarchal structure is not only evident in the family or household production; Walby also identified that there are patriarchal structures as well in society. In reference to the Strindberg play, *The Father*, there are instances of social norms and values that confine women to their traditional roles as dutiful wives and mothers. In the play, this is depicted through the characterization of Bertha and the position of Captain. Further, instances of such patriarchal structure in society through the play are identified and analyzed below.

The opinion of the captain about his daughter shows that there are certain patriarchal beliefs and influences that are used to shape the lives of females in society, like, for instance, in the conversation between the pastor and Captain about how the captain has decided to raise Bertha based on patriarchal societal expectations, as seen in Act I, Scene III:

CAPTAIN: You mustn't think that I wish to make a prodigy of her or a copy of myself. I will not play the pander to my daughter and educate her exclusively for matrimony, for in that case she would have bitter days if she remained unmarried. But I will not, on the other hand, persuade her into a masculine career that requires a long course of training, which would be entirely thrown away in case she should wish to marry" (Strindberg, 1887).

Based on this excerpt, it is glaring that the captain believes that even a male child's education should align with the traditional gender roles that dictate women's domestic responsibilities. With the above, women's chances to pursue opportunities and careers are limited, and this justifies the captain's claim that he will never allow his daughter to pursue a masculine career that requires a long course of training. Also, it is obvious from the statement that society has patriarchal expectations about the career a woman should pursue and those that are inherently meant for males. Also, this excerpt reinforces that the societal measure of women's success is tied to marriage and family life, not to her education. As reflected in Captain's statement, it is the societal expectation that a woman does not need a certificate or need to pursue a career if she wants to marry.

Additionally, this societal norm is further affirmed by a lack of critical decision-making ability in Bertha to decide what she wishes to pursue in her life. The conversations between Captain and Laura and Captain and Bertha show the societal expectations that the female gender cannot make the best decisions for themselves, and it is the responsibility of the father to raise her in his faith, and when she marries, she will be under the dominance and dictatorship of her husband. One of the instances of their discussions that reflects this is in the dialogue between Bertha and her father in Act I, Scene III:

Captain: H'm, then you will go to town.

Bertha: Yes, yes.

Captain: But suppose Mother will not let you go?

Bertha: But she must let me.

Captain: But what if she won't?

Bertha: Well, then, I don't know what will happen. But she must! She must! (Strindberg, 1887, p. 38). (P.38-39)

In the above dialogue, the captain was asking Bertha's opinion on her career choice and what would happen if her mother opposed it. However, the conversation affirms Bertha, being a woman, must concur with the decision of her father even when she does not know the consequences that such a decision will have on her future, and then she expected her mother to do the same. Not just that, the lack of criticality reflected in Bertha's responses to her father shows the weakness of the female gender to make decisions. In the turns of the dialogue, Bertha does not bother to question why her father wanted her to go to town, nor inquire on why her mother will not agree. This shows a weakness of the female gender. As well, Bertha's assertive answers that her mother must let her go confirm the societal consciousness of the societal patriarchal notion that men should have the final say in the family.

Further examining Strindberg's *The Father*, another form of patriarchy identified based on Walby's patriarchal structure is the state's patriarchy. Although there is no direct mention or instances of such in the play, there are a lot of dialogues from which we can deduce the prevalence of patriarchy in the broader context of the state. Mainly, during the time that the play was written in the 19th century, there were a lot of societal rules and laws that favored men's rights and privileges over women. There were also a lot of patriarchal values that structured the society, and some of the prominent ones were those that disempowered women in legal matters. During this time, women lacked representation and were

marginalized. However, one of these state patriarchal structures is evident in August Strindberg's *The Father* and is further discussed below.

In the play *The Father*, there are a lot of instances where the captain makes references to the law to support his authority over his child and his family. Particularly, the captain's statement about his exclusive right to raise Bertha and choose her career, as seen in Act I, Scene IV.

CAPTAIN: The law declares that children are to be brought up in their father's faith (Strindberg, 1887).

With the above excerpt, it is evident that there are norms and legal frameworks prevalent in society that support male hegemony and that reinforce the traditional gender roles and power dynamics in the state. The captain's reference to the law signifies the state's endorsement of patriarchy over issues that must deal with the family. It indicates that the father has the authority to determine the upbringing of the child and thus assigned secondary roles to the women.

Another excerpt in the play that indicates the state's hierarchical superiority of the male gender through the support of the law is reflected in the conversation between Captain and Laura over his right to dictate the future of the child, as seen in Act I, Scene IX:

LAURA: Assume that I was prepared to bear anything, even scorn and rejections, for the sake of being allowed to keep and dispose of my child, and that I was truthful just now when I declared that Bertha is my child, but not yours. Assume..."

CAPTAIN: Stop!

LAURA: Only assume this: In that case your power would be at an end" (P. 43) (Strindberg, 1887).

It is obvious by this dialogue that both Laura and Captain are aware of the state's empowerment of the male gender to hold exclusive rights to decide the fate of his child, and for Laura, the only way to make the law ineffective is to simply declare that Captain is not Bertha's father. By implication, this shows that the state does not regard women in certain matters and intentionally favors men. When Laura said that the power of the captain will soon end if she declares that he is not the father of Bertha, it can be inferred that men do not intrinsically have a superpower over women, but the support of the state through the law gives them the rights and authority over them.

In sum, the instances identified so far reflect Walby's patriarchy in the state through the support of the law. This further leaves inferences that the perpetuated unequal power dynamics and marginalization of women in the state are based on the state's legal framework. Even today, women have consistently fought that the constitutions and other state patriarchal structures be remodeled to recognize the rights of women and give them voices in politics, among others.

Miss Julie

Through the radical feminism approach, *Miss Julie* by August Strindberg is a seminal play that explores the complexities of class, gender, and power dynamics in late 19th-century Swedish society. Throughout the play, instances of the patriarchal system are starkly portrayed, highlighting the oppressive nature of the societal norms of the time. Here's an overview of some key instances of patriarchy within the play.

First, from the outset, the titular character, Julie, is portrayed as a character bound by the constraints of patriarchy. Despite her aristocratic status, she is still subject to the dominance of her father. Julie's actions are often dictated by societal expectations of femininity, and her desires are stifled by the patriarchal expectations placed upon her. In Act 1, Julie expresses her feelings of entrapment, stating:

JULIE: I want to live for myself for once, but I can't. Everything I do is wrong. I'm always in the wrong, always punished. I'm punished if I laugh and if I cry. I can't bear it any longer!" (Strindberg, 1888).

This behavior is absolute subjugation to the external influences, known or unknown.

For these reasons, Miss Julie herself serves as a symbol of resistance against patriarchal norms. Her attempts to break free from the constraints of her gender and class are met with severe consequences, ultimately leading to her downfall. Her desire to engage in a romantic relationship with Jean, a man of lower social status, challenges traditional gender roles and threatens the established patriarchal order.

Second, there is another influence caused by Jean, the servant, who represents the embodiment of patriarchal power within the play. For example, in Act 2, Jean exploits Julie's vulnerability, stating

JEAN: You know you can't get away from me now because you need me. You don't have any money left (Strindberg, 1888).

Throughout the play, Jean exerts control over Miss Julie, asserting his authority in their interactions. His interactions with Miss Julie are often characterized by manipulation and dominance, reflecting the societal expectation of male dominance over women, asserting the masculine authority.

This type of patriarchal system dictates strict social expectations for both men and women. Miss Julie is expected to adhere to the ideals of femininity, which include purity, obedience, and submission to male authority. Jean, on the other hand, is expected to embody traits of masculinity such as strength, assertiveness, and control. These rigid gender roles limit the freedom and agency of both characters, illustrating the oppressive nature of patriarchal norms.

Third, Miss Julie's father, the Count, appears, serving as a symbol of patriarchal authority and control. His looming presence is felt even in his absence, as Julie is haunted by the expectations and demands placed upon her by her father. In Act 1, Julie laments her father's influence, stating:

JULIE: My father's name is like a curse in my ears. I hear it in every heartbeat, and in every sound, I dread to hear his footsteps in the passage (Strindberg, 1888).

Fourth, ultimately, Julie's fate serves as a poignant commentary on the destructive consequences of patriarchy. Her attempts to break free from societal expectations result in tragedy, highlighting the suffocating nature of patriarchal norms and the limited agency afforded to women in Strindberg's society. The culmination of Julie's struggle against patriarchal constraints is seen in the tragic conclusion of the play, where she meets her demise. This serves as a stark reminder of the consequences of defying patriarchal norms in Strindberg's world. In *Miss Julie*, August Strindberg masterfully exposes the oppressive nature of the patriarchal system, portraying its detrimental effects on both men and women. Through nuanced character interactions and societal critique, the play serves as a powerful exploration of gender and power dynamics in late 19th-century society.

Fifth, it seems that there is an overarching patriarchal structure evident in the power dynamics between the characters. Jean, the valet, occupies a position of authority over Kristin, the cook, and ultimately over Miss Julie herself due to his gender and social standing. Despite being Miss Julie's servant, Jean can manipulate and control her to a certain extent, highlighting the power men held over women in that era.

Sixth, the play also explores the double standards imposed by the patriarchal society. While Jean can engage in sexual encounters with women without severe repercussions, Miss Julie faces condemnation and ostracism for her affair with Jean. This highlights the unequal treatment of men and women in matters of sexuality and reinforces the patriarchal norms of the time.

Eighthly, the patriarchal system perpetuates a culture of violence and dominance, as seen in the interactions between the characters. Jean's manipulation and coercion of Miss Julie can be interpreted as acts of violence aimed at asserting his dominance and maintaining control over her. Similarly, Miss Julie's eventual self-destructive behavior can be viewed as a response to the oppressive forces of patriarchy that surround her. These instances from *Miss Julie* underscore the pervasive influence of the patriarchal system in shaping the lives and relationships of the characters. Strindberg's exploration of gender dynamics and power struggles remains relevant today, offering insights into the enduring legacy of patriarchal oppression.

Miss Julie: Analysis

The six fundamental patriarchal power structures described by Walby (1990, 2023) appeared again in the second Strindberg play of *Miss Julie*; however, only five could clearly be detected.

Violence and Dominance

The first fundamental patriarchal structure is about violence and dominance. Historically, August Strindberg was a Swedish playwright whose works are marked by a deep exploration of human psychology, societal norms, and existential themes. His plays, particularly those from the late 19th century, often challenged conventional theatrical conventions and delved into the darker aspects of the human condition. Here, the researcher will discuss and review some of his notable plays, citing references where appropriate. *Miss Julie* (1888) is perhaps

Strindberg's most famous work, depicting the tragic consequences of a forbidden affair between the titular character, Julie, and her father's valet, Jean. Set during Midsummer's Eve in the kitchen of a Swedish count's estate, the play explores themes of class struggle, sexual desire, and the destructive nature of societal constraints.

Strindberg's *Miss Julie* is a masterclass in naturalistic drama, with its intense exploration of power dynamics and psychological warfare. Through the characters of Julie and Jean, Strindberg exposes the complexities of human relationships and the inherent tensions between social classes. The play's shocking climax leaves a lasting impact, challenging audiences to confront their own prejudices and assumptions. (Smith, 2005). Strindberg portrays the titular character's struggle against the constraints of her patriarchal society, and her interactions with Jean, her father's valet, exemplify power dynamics shaped by gender and class. Strindberg uses symbolism such as the kitchen, representing the traditional female domain, to highlight Julie's rebellion against societal expectations. Recent analyses, such as those by feminist scholars like Laura Rattray and Margaretha Fahlgren, explore how Strindberg's portrayal of Julie reflects the patriarchal norms of his time and critiques the oppression faced by women.

One of the most notable instances of this thematic use of nature is in Strindberg's play *Miss Julie*. Set on Midsummer's Eve, the play unfolds in the Count's manor house kitchen but is imbued with the presence of the natural world outside. The oppressive heat of the night, the sounds of animals, and the looming threat of a storm all contribute to the tension between the characters. The wildness of nature mirrors the inner turmoil and passions of the protagonists, particularly Julie, who is torn between her social status and her desire for freedom.

Moreover, the setting plays a crucial role in mirroring the characters' internal struggles and societal tensions. Midsummer's Eve, with its oppressive heat and impending storm, creates an atmosphere charged with passion and conflict. The brewing storm symbolizes the impending downfall of the characters and the societal norms they represent. As the temperature rises and the storm approaches, so does the tension between the protagonists, Miss Julie and Jean, leading to a climactic confrontation. In *Miss Julie*, Strindberg employs the image of a bird to symbolize the titular character's desires for freedom and escape from societal constraints. Miss Julie, like a caged bird, longs to break free from the confines of her aristocratic upbringing and the expectations placed upon her by society. This symbolism of a bird captures her yearning for liberation and autonomy.

Class Conflict

Strindberg vividly portrays the class divide between Miss Julie and Jean. Miss Julie's attempt to transcend her social status by engaging in a forbidden romance with Jean challenges societal norms. However, their union ultimately proves unsustainable, highlighting the insurmountable barriers imposed by class differences.

Gender Dynamics

The play delves into the oppressive gender roles of the late 19th century. Miss Julie rebels against traditional femininity, seeking power and agency in her interactions with Jean.

Conversely, Jean initially appears to assert dominance over Miss Julie but ultimately becomes ensnared in her emotional turmoil, complicating the power dynamics between them.

Sexuality and Desire

Strindberg explores the destructive force of desire and its intersection with power. Both Miss Julie and Jean are driven by their carnal desires, which ultimately lead to their downfall. The sexual tension between them serves as a catalyst for their psychological unraveling, highlighting the raw and primal aspects of human nature.

Symbolism

The setting of Midsummer's Eve serves as a metaphor for the characters' inner turmoil and the fleeting nature of their desires. The symbolic significance of the kitchen, typically associated with domesticity and servitude, underscores the power dynamics at play between Miss Julie and Jean. *Miss Julie* remains a timeless masterpiece that continues to captivate audiences with its exploration of human nature and societal conventions. Strindberg's acute understanding of psychology and his skillful use of symbolism imbue the play with depth and complexity. The intense interplay between the characters keeps viewers on the edge of their seats, while the themes of class, gender, and desire resonate across time and culture. Moreover, *Miss Julie* challenges conventional notions of morality and invites viewers to confront uncomfortable truths about power and privilege. While the play may be unsettling in its portrayal of human frailty and moral ambiguity, it offers valuable insights into the complexities of the human condition. In conclusion, *Miss Julie* stands as a seminal work in the canon of dramatic literature, showcasing Strindberg's mastery of the form and his profound insight into the human psyche. It remains a thought-provoking and relevant piece that continues to spark discussion and analysis in both academic and theatrical circles.

Significance of the Study

The themes of patriarchy and rebellion in August Strindberg's plays, *The Father* and *Miss Julie*, resonate deeply with Walby's Model of patriarchal society, which outlines the systemic structures that perpetuate male dominance. The play highlights the tragic victimization of the captain, representing the oppressive nature of a patriarchal society that limits both genders' autonomy (Lisovskaya & Naumova, 2022). The feminine response to the patriarchal cultural model in August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and *The Father* is essential for understanding the relationship between gender, class, and mental health within a patriarchal framework. This investigation demonstrates how sociocultural institutions influence female identity and agency. Strindberg's two plays illustrate the constraints imposed by a patriarchal culture in which social status and gender norms significantly impact female identity (Mohammed & Jassim, 2023). Alanazi (2023) contended that the character's struggle with these constraints might represent the more significant effects of patriarchy on women's autonomy and mental health. The connection between Julie and Jean is a strong example of sadomasochistic dynamics founded in class and gender inequalities, illustrating how these frameworks distort human relationships and self-perception. The dialectical class clash highlights societal boundaries and their tragic repercussions, as Julie's pursuit of recognition leads to her collapse (Demiray, 2022). Another depth of the *Miss Julie* play shows the limitations imposed by her gender, showcasing the oppressive structures of patriarchy even though Miss Julie was an aristocrat (Xu, 2019). However, contrary to the above explanation, other interpretations

believe that Strindberg's work may also critique the patriarchal systems he depicts, thus encouraging a more nuanced view of gender dynamics in his plays.

Conclusion

Studying the feminine response to patriarchal culture in August Strindberg's *The Father* and *Miss Julie* exposes intricate power relations, identity, and societal expectations. Both plays portray women's fights against repressive systems, emphasizing the psychological and societal consequences of patriarchy. The themes of patriarchy and rebellion in August Strindberg's plays, *The Father* and *Miss Julie*, resonate deeply with Walby's Model of patriarchal society, which outlines the systemic structures that perpetuate male dominance. *Miss Julie* depicts Julie as embodying the notion of female hysteria, which was informed by 19th-century neurology. This representation reflects social attitudes towards women's mental health and duties within a patriarchal framework (Alanazi, 2023). The drama explores how people, such as Julie, negotiate their reality through deceit, mirroring psychological difficulties caused by society conventions (Demiray, 2022). Society is plagued by psychological disorders, as seen by the sadomasochistic connection between Julie and Jean, which exemplifies the complexity of gender and class. Julie's status as a female master is weakened by her reliance on Jean for recognition, highlighting the terrible consequences of their hierarchical relationship (Demiray, 2022). The conflict between the sinister and sublime in both plays highlights the fight between masculine and feminine energies, demonstrating Strindberg's critique of gender dynamics and societal expectations (Lisovskaya & Naumova, 2022). While Strindberg's works frequently represent women as victims of patriarchal tyranny, they also urge a closer look at female agency and resistance within these limits, implying a more complex picture of gender relations during his period.

References

- Alanazi, M. S. (2023). Examining the Impact of the Advancements in Nineteenth Century Neuroscience on Drama: An Analysis of Jean-Martin Charcot's Stages of Female Hysteria in August Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 13(9), 2347-2355.
- Cardullo, B. (2011). *An Idea of the Drama: Six Modern Playwrights in One Movement: Essays in Revisionism*. Peter Lang.
- Carr, N. R. (2016). *Misreading Mammy: Towards a Sexual Revolution of Contemporary/Third Wave Black Feminisms* (Doctoral dissertation, University of Miami).
- Davari, H., & Sadeghi, M. (2017). A Dialectical Reading of Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. *Journal of Humanistic and Social Studies*, 8(2), 65-79.
- Demiray, M. (2022). Vital lie in Strindberg's *Miss Julie*: Illusion versus reality. *RumeliDE Dil ve Edebiyat Araştırmaları Dergisi*, (31), 1236-1244.
- Hussain, A. (2021). *A Critical Analysis of the Creditors: A Play by August Strindberg*.
- Kareem, S. A. (2024). The Defective Image of Man in Modern Drama: A Critical Study of August Strindberg's *The Father*. *International Journal of Literature Studies*, 4(1), 52-63.
- Lisovskaya, P., & Naumova, A. (2022). The clash between the sinister and the sublime in Strindberg's *The Father* and *Miss Julie*.
- Mohammed, Z. T., & Jassim, A. K. (2023). Self-Denial and Forceful Social Engagement in Ibsen's *Hedda Gabler* and Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. *International Journal of Research in Social Sciences and Humanities (IJRSSH)*, 13(II).

- Olenina, A. H. (2020). *Psychomotor Aesthetics: Movement and Affect in Modern Literature and Film*. Oxford University Press.
- Strindberg, A. (2013). *Miss Julie*. A&C Black.
- Szalczar, E., & Stenport, A. W. (2012). Stockholm–Berlin–Moscow: Strindberg and Avant-Garde Performance in the 1920s. *The International Strindberg: New Critical Essays*, 27-49.
- Walby, S. (1990). *Theorising Patriarchy* (Basil Blackwell, Oxford).
- Walby, S. (2023). What is femicide? The United Nations and the measurement of progress in complex epistemic systems. *Current Sociology*, 71(1), 10-27.
- Xu, X. (2019, May). The Subversion of Gender, the Immensity of Desire: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. In 2nd Symposium on Health and Education 2019 (SOHE 2019), 483-487.