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**Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House* (1879) and August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* (1889):  
A Freudian Study.**

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## **Dedication:**

To our families, friends and relatives.

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## Abstract

The present dissertation has dealt with a psychoanalytical study of the literary works, *A doll's House* (1879) by the Norwegian dramatist Henrik Ibsen's and *Miss Julie* (1889) by the Swedish playwright August Strindberg's. Our main concern in the following works is to analyse the protagonists' psyche and explore their repressed feelings by highlighting their lives, personal experience as well as the way they attain their ideal selves; in addition, through the course of the plays, Nora and Miss Julie seem to forget about their reality and continue to denounce their control until they realize that they should seek for their true identity and move into their ideal selves and escape the world they were living in. Furthermore, Nora Helmer and Miss Julie are both influenced by their parents which led them to develop the Freudian notion of Oedipus complex. Finally, we are going to explore Miss Julie's dream as well as Nora Helmer's dream world. For the fulfilment of our work, we borrow from Freud's *Complete Works 2007* some analytical concepts such as: Oedipus complex to treat the first chapter, Id, Ego and Superego for the second chapter and the concept of the Interpretation of Dreams to deal with the last chapter of our memoir.

## **I. Introduction: Lives and times of Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg**

The ‘Victorian Era’, which is known as the longest reign ever in British history, revolves around the political career of Queen Victoria’s reign from 1837 till 1901. Even though the people of that period witnessed so many political conflicts and social issues like poverty, child labour, famine, and struggles, but they also experienced a period that was known as ‘high Victorian England’ (1851-1867). During this period, thought, work, and progress were the central Victorian values. The Victorian age brought a significant change in all areas of everyday life; the most noticeable changes are related to the technological inventions and medical progress, politics, gender roles, religion, and also social changes that influenced the attitudes and values of society and many writers of that time. Allen confirms it in *English Literature in Context (2008)*, where she defines the Victorian age by three main words – “progress, expansion, and mobility”<sup>1</sup>.

The Victorian period was rich in thoughts and ideas. The literature of the time was reborn from ideas we had never heard of. Since the time was the middle of the Industrial Revolution, it changed the way people thought about all the new discoveries and inventions and even literature, which led them to question their beliefs that later created religious struggle. The different types of literature and a significant number of technological and scientific advancements made the Victorian era a unique period in time.

The Victorian Age is one of the most significant periods that literature passed through. It was characterized by its true reflection of the social image in all respects. It was described as the golden age of the English novel. However, this kind of literary genre was concerned with serious social issues which were mostly related to the social classes and the Victorian women. During the reign of Queen Victoria, the role of women was limited in the private sphere, mainly the home. They suffered from their patriarchal society which dealt with them

as inferior to men. There were harsh customs that prevented women from different rights like education, freedom, right to vote, taking essential jobs, even choosing their husbands. This society marginalized them and obliged them to live as weak and believe that men are the superior sex and the controller. At that time, women lived only to obey men's orders. This inequality between both genders reduced the Victorian females to slaves. They were not allowed to express their ideas or think about themselves. They were described as evil if they did so.

Victorian values, which heavily influenced Norway and Sweden, emerged in all classes and reached all facets of Victorian life; Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg are respectively Norwegian and Swedish dramatists, however, during their literary career, they lived in what is known as Scandinavia, a political union of Norway, Sweden and Denmark. The period was Victorian in moral principles, and people lived according to the values held sacred by society. The values of the period which can be described as religion, morality, personal improvement took root in Victorian morality. The Victorian era is often thought of as a time when society and its rules were rigid and strict. Victorian social norms directed how Victorian people were expected to interact with each other. People of a higher social class expected a greater level of respect. Women were treated as delicate, though frail, and children were expected to learn from their parents and superiors<sup>2</sup>.

Victorian-era plays were supposed to be moral dramas with noble protagonists opposed to darker forces; every drama had to come to a morally appropriate conclusion, meaning that kindness had to bring happiness and the immorality of pain<sup>3</sup>.

Henrik Ibsen challenged this notion and the beliefs of his times and shattered the illusions of his audiences; he founded the modern stage by bringing a critical eye and free vision into the circumstances of life and moral issues. Ibsen completely rewrote the rules of drama with a realism which was meant to be a direct reflection of human behaviour. Realism

emerged in France in the 1840s, around the 1848 Revolution. It began as a way to hold a mirror up to society and rejected Romanticism. Realist works portrayed people of all classes in situations that appear in ordinary life; they involved the lower class, the poor, the rich; they included all genders, classes and races and often reflected the changes brought by the Industrial and Commercial Revolutions<sup>4</sup>. The primary focus is placed on the mental lives of characters, their motives, and the reactions of others which allows for the audience to watch the characters develop and see their emotions to very real-life situations in a real-life setting. <sup>5</sup>Realism “awakens people to the history of its times”. It shows how widely their problems are shared by others, and so creates a sense of affinity among people with everyday lives and problems<sup>6</sup>.

Ibsen entered a transitional era for which he continued to deal with modern, realistic themes, but progressively used symbolism, metaphor, characterization and unity of opposites of his moral and socio-political ideas and criticism. The themes of Ibsen's plays are manifestations of his own spiritual and socio-political points of view. They seem to be some of the key problems of the modern, bourgeois and capitalist age. Ibsen wrote in the second half of the 19th century, the time when the Scandinavian societies went through a massive transition by the improvement of modernization, capitalism and bourgeois society. In many of his plays, Ibsen concentrated on the challenges of mature and patriarchal society<sup>7</sup>.

The Scandinavian realists tried to discuss social problems in order to bring about social change. The question of women is a good example they had no right to vote, could not hold political office, and were not allowed to control their own property. They did not have access to higher education; they were supposed to spend their lives as wives and mothers. An unmarried woman could usually look forward to a rough old age in the home of a brother or sister<sup>8</sup>. A woman was considered by society as a doll because she was expected to be subordinate to the desires of her husband. Victorian society looks upon women's intelligence

as no better than a child's, whereas, men teach a woman how to act as a parent to a child, how to dress for a public event as an owner to a doll, and how to keep her thoughts to herself as a master to a slave. Most of the reforms that improved the lives and economic situation of women were first advocated by writers of novels, short stories, and plays<sup>9</sup>.

### **Review of Literature**

Throughout our reading of the literature written on Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, we have noticed that both authors and their works have been considerably criticized.

Ibsen's *A Doll's House* has been approached from different perspectives; most of the critical perceptions addressed to it highlight the centrality of the issue of Feminism. The first study is conducted by Vivi Yulian entitled "*Nora's Idea about Feminism Reflected in Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House: Feminism Approach*"<sup>10</sup>. This study concerns the social problem of a woman's rights and an individual woman asking for her rights; it discusses three problems. The first is discussing the characterization of the female character in the play, Nora Helmer. The second point seeks to see what oppressions Nora undergoes. The last point documents Nora's revolt from injustice.

In a thesis entitled "*The Women's Right in Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House*"<sup>11</sup>, Fatemah Ghafourina, focuses on the incorrect system of marriage, stressing on the individuality of women and fighting for their freedom, in addition to protesting against all restrictions in society. She states that several critical social issues are developed in Ibsen's works and according to him, social instructions and conventions are the enemy of every individual because they restrict the characters' personal identity and freedom. In particular, Ibsen develops this perspective on women, whose individuality and freedom are taken by a

masculine society. For example, Nora, as a woman, a wife, or a mother, behaves like a doll; she is under the control of the invisible hands and the pressures of a patriarchal society which Ibsen strongly rejects.

In an article entitled “*Gender Struggle over Ideological Power in Ibsen’s A Doll’s House*”<sup>12</sup>, Yue-Hua GUO argues that in Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House*, ideological elements are explored to reveal male misunderstanding of women and causes that involves men’s power. By analyzing gender relations in the form of power struggle, various conflicts between the male and the female are exposed to indicate the intensiveness of the gender struggle in winning over their control. Though men manipulate their power in an open way, women demonstrate their ideological strength with their powerful challenge of masculine power in a more thoughtful way, and deconstruct the traditional myths of gender roles.

From a psychoanalytic view, Hannah Norton in “*A Doll’s house through a Psychoanalytic Lens*”<sup>13</sup>, argues that the Helmer household and their friends have more issues than meet the eyes. Each character of this play has a personal conflict hidden within him/herself, some more obvious than others. She claimed as she analyzes each character, that she will be able to see them for who they really are. She adds that the characters who create conflict in this play are Nora, Torvald, and Dr Rank. According to her, everyone in *A Doll’s House* has his/her issues that just seem to grow throughout the story. In the beginning, everyone seemed to be quite normal, but as the story unfolds, everybody’s characteristics begin to show. And finally, she argued that a person’s inner thoughts could definitely affect other’s lives and change everything for either the better, or the worse.

August Strindberg’s *Miss Julie* has also been studied from different perspectives. The majority of criticism about this work, however, revolves not only on feminism but on

Marxism and sexuality as well. For instance, in an article entitled “*Sexual, Textual and Traumatic subjectivity: August Strindberg’s Representation of Class and Sexual Conflict in Miss Julie*”<sup>14</sup>, Aman Deep Singh aims at understanding the importance of sexuality and the ways in which sexuality is accorded central status in an attempt to understand human relations, pleasure and satisfaction, sexual subject in culture, to reveal varying degrees of fear and anxiety about the ambiguities of sexuality. In terms of class and gender, this paper explores the patriarchal and misogynistic frameworks in which gender and sex were constructed in late 19th and early 20th centuries. In terms of traumatic theory, this paper aims at understanding how sexual trauma takes form of a psychological and ontological angst after reaching sexual maturity.

Another study entitled “*A Marxist Reading of Miss Julie*”<sup>15</sup>, written in the Victorian era by Hossein Davari, a unique period for its strict ideological dictates, claims that *Miss Julie* is a sociological play in which the dominant social paradigms control, alienate, and bring about psychological problems for the subjects. If this play be read from a Marxist perspective, it can be obtained how the repressive ideologies of the capitalistic government such as hierarchy and religion are manipulated to control the exploited and dominated class symbolized here by Jean and Kristin and their petty bourgeois mistress, Julie. Both class hierarchy and religion are understood to oppress the individuals, to make them subordinate subjects who internalize the ideological values and belief system of the bourgeoisie. In *Miss Julie*, Strindberg shows how Jean and Julie are obsessed to achieve their personal needs by any means; what the bourgeoisie strongly supports. Other Marxist terms such as hailing the subject or interpellation, false consciousness, sign-exchange value, and commodification are also recurrent in this play.

In “*A Feminist Reading of Women's Identity in Miss Julie*” (2007)<sup>16</sup>, ZHAN Chun-Juan argues that *Miss Julie* is an important play by Swedish playwright Strindberg in the middle phase of his writing career. From the perspective of feminism, the tragic root of the heroine is analyzed. Both hypocritical moral principles and male-centered society should be accused of persecuting Miss Julie and causing the tragic fate. In the end, her suicide not only frees her from the dark control of traditional prejudice but also poses a great protest against the unfair social system.

Finally, the play has also been studied through a psychoanalytic view, Sonali Jain, in his paper entitled “*Miss Julie: A Psychoanalytic Study*”<sup>17</sup>, seeks to explore the dynamics of human relationships that are relevant today as they were in Strindberg’s time. He proposed to examine Strindberg’s *Miss Julie* through a psychoanalytic lens. His analysis of the play deals with issues of culture and psyche and draws on Freud, Melanie Klein, Lacan, Luce Irigaray and other contemporary feminists. According to him, *Miss Julie* is a discourse on hysteria which is always at the heart of psychoanalysis. Philosophers like Hegel and the psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan have written about a relationship, characterized by dependence, demand and cruelty, which is known as “the Master and the Slave” which means that the Master consciousness decides that the most important value is that of freedom — without freedom, life is not worth preserving. The Slave makes the opposite judgement, deciding freedom is worthless if one’s life is lost. From this fact, Sonali Jain argues that Miss Julie subverts the slave-master relationship.

### **Issue and Working Hypothesis**

In spite of the similarities found in their life and time experiences, in their respective plays as family dramas, little criticism relates to the concept of family and marriage to Freudian reading of the plays. True that initiatives like, Hannah Norton in “*A Doll’s house*

*through a Psychoanalytic Lens*” and Sonali Jain, “*Miss Julie: A Psychoanalytic Study*” have been carried out but they are not as inclusive as ours. To the best of our knowledge, no comparative study of *A Doll’s House* and *Miss Julie* has been carried out through the lens of Freudian concepts.

It is our purpose, in this dissertation, to propose an encompassing Freudian study of *A Doll House* and *Miss Julie* on the ground of textual evidence and hints or innuendos which relate to psychology and which previous criticism has ignored or only partly explored.

Our major interest is to explore the protagonists’ psyches and show how they reach ideal selves at the end of the plays, therefore, for the fulfilment of this work as we have already mentioned above, we intend to use some concepts of the psychoanalytical theoretician Sigmund Freud which are the Oedipus complex, the Id, Ego and Superego and the Interpretation of Dreams as they are presented in Freud’s “*Complete Works*” (2007).

### **Methodological Outlining**

At the methodological level, our memoir will follow the IMRAD method: the introduction, method and materials, and finally, results and discussion. The introduction of our theme, review of the literature written on *A Doll’s House* and *Miss Julie*, issue and working hypothesis are introduced in the first part of the memoir.

Concerning the method and materials section, we summarize Freud’s concepts of Oedipus complex, Id, Ego and Superego and the Interpretation of Dreams as developed in Freud’s “*Complete Works*” (2007). In addition to the explanation of the analytical categories in the first part of this section, we will also provide a biography of each author of the selected primary sources, followed by a small synopsis of their respective works in the second part. As far as the result section is concerned, it will display the findings of the present memoir, it will tackle the similarities that we have found so far between the two plays.

The Discussion section comprises three chapters; the first chapter will focus on how the two protagonists Nora Helmer and Miss Julie deal with their Oedipal Complexes, we are going to talk about their sexuality, how both of them are influenced by their parents and particularly, how they manage their Oedipal Complexes; this will be realized by relaying on Freud's Oedipus complex which refers to the attachment of the child to the parent of the opposite sex, followed by aggressive feelings toward the parent of the same sex. These feelings are always repressed because of the fear of punishment by the parent of the same sex.

In the second chapter entitled, Id, Ego and Superego, we will deal with these protagonists psyches, we are going to present how they behave during the plays, their desires, how they live and finally how they reach their ideal selves as it is defined once again by Freud. In the third chapter, we will present the protagonists as dreamer persons, we will focus on their dreams and also their dream lives. Finally, the Conclusion section is devoted to the summary of the main issues discussed in the present work.

End notes:

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<sup>1</sup>Allen, Valerie. *English literature in context*. Edited by Paul Poplawski. (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2008) p.364.

<sup>2</sup><http://victorian-era.org/victorian-era-morality.html>.

<sup>3</sup>Jan, Sjavik, *Historical Dictionary of Scandinavian Literature and Theater*. (United States of America: Scarecrow Press, 2006).

<sup>4</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism\\_\(art\\_movement\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Realism_(art_movement))

<sup>5</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Warisara Emily Sawin *The influence of The Industrial Revolution on Nineteenth-Century Literary and Artistic Movement*, (University of Mississippi).

<sup>7</sup>Amir, Hossain. *Symbolic Realism in Ibsen's A Doll's House: An Overview*. (Department of English, IBAIS University, 2014).

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup>Vivi Yulian, *'Nora's Idea about Feminism Reflected in Henrik Ibsen a Doll's House: Feminism*. (Sanata Dharma University, Yogyakarta,. 2000)

<sup>11</sup> Fatemah Ghafourina, *"The Women's Right in Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House"* .(Islamic Azad University- Boroujerd Branch, Iran, 2014).

<sup>12</sup> Yue-Hua GUO, *"Gender Struggle over Ideological Power in Ibsen's A Doll's House"*. (Canadian Social Science, 2009).

<sup>13</sup><https://fhs9honors.wordpress.com/2013/03/14/a-dolls-house-through-a-psychoanalytic-lens>

<sup>14</sup> Aman, Singh. *Sexual, Textual and Traumatic subjectivity: August Strindberg representation of class and sexual conflict in Miss Julie*". (Indian Institute of Information Technology Vadodara, Gujarat · Humanities, 2014).

<sup>15</sup>Hossein Davari. *"A Marxist Reading of Miss Julie"*. (International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences, 2015).

<sup>16</sup>Zhan, Chun-Juan. *A Feminist Reading of Women's Identity in Miss Julie*.(School of Foreign Studies, Anhui University, 2007)

<sup>17</sup> Sonali, Jain. *MISS JULIE: A PSYCHOANALYTIC STUDY*. (University of Delhi, India, 2015).

## **II. Method and Materials**

### **1) Method**

In the discussion of our problematics, we are going to appeal to Freudian Psychology as it emerges from several works of the Austrian psychologist and psychoanalyst Sigmund Freud. Among these works are *General Introduction to Psychoanalysis* (1917) *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Unconscious*, *The Ego and Id*, and *Oedipal Complex*. These concepts would be explained as they are developed in Freud's *Complete Works* (2007).

#### **A) Psychoanalysis**

We have chosen Freudian psychology as a critical paradigm because there is textual evidence in both plays that corroborate this choice of family dramas which are reminiscent of the Oedipus complex, of the figures of mothers and patriarchs. Besides, the study of Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and Strindberg's *Miss Julie* has shown that they share thematic issues and a mode of writing in common even if Strindberg shows a more naturalist approach. Notwithstanding critics charging Strindberg as misogynist, and Ibsen as precursor of woman's emancipation in Norway, the sources we have relied on stress the idea that both are rather interested in human rights rather than in gender differences. In one of his public pronouncement, Ibsen refuted that his play is about woman. Marriage, love and family whether bourgeois, middle class, or aristocratic constitutes the core of the two plays.

As a branch of psychology, psychoanalysis was first born out of Sigmund Freud's analysis<sup>1</sup>. It is a field that influences and helps, in many ways to understand philosophy, religion, and culture and [and most important thing, to understand and to analyze the codes] of literature"<sup>2</sup>. According to many scholars, literature is "disorganized, confusing, and riddled

with disagreements”<sup>3</sup>, which is due to the use of modernist techniques such as: symbolism, stream of consciousness, flashbacks, expressionism which come as a result of psychoanalysis’ influence on literature. Sigmund Freud fathered psychoanalysis and theorized the notions of conscious, unconscious, dreaming, repression, transference or even the Oedipus complex. The latter revolutionized the conception of the human psyche and contributed more to the modern psychological research landscape than any of his contemporaries. However, in this work, we are not concerned with such influence but rather with the role of psychoanalysis and its importance in analyzing literature. Sigmund Freud, the father of psychoanalysis; as many thinkers affirm, coined some concepts that made a valuable transformation in the field of understanding the personality of the individuals and their troubles. Freud states that personality is composed of three elements known as the id, the ego, and the superego, the unconscious and the interpretation of dreams. These elements work together to create complex human behaviours.

#### ***A. The Id, Ego and Superego:***

As human beings, our attitudes, our thoughts and actions, are the result of our psyche<sup>4</sup>. In order to explain why we act as we do, it is important to recognize the structure and development of the human psyche. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) analyzes the human psyche in terms of the three components he called Id, Ego, and Super Ego. Each aspect of personality appears at different points in life. The id, ego, and superego have most commonly been conceived as three fundamental parts of the human personality.

The Id is the only component of personality that is present from birth<sup>5</sup>. This aspect of personality is entirely unconscious and includes instinctive and primitive behaviors<sup>6</sup>; it is the source of our bodily needs, wants, desires, and impulses; particularly our sexual and

aggressive feelings. Freud believed that the Id acts according to the pleasure principle and that it includes the libido, which is the primary source of instinctive energy that does not respond to the demands of reality. The Id is driven by the concept of satisfaction, which aims at the immediate fulfilment of all desires, wishes, and needs. If these needs are not fulfilled immediately, the result is a state of anxiety or tension<sup>7</sup>, for example, an increase in hunger or thirst should produce an immediate attempt to eat or drink. The id is very important early in life because it ensures that an infant's needs are met. If the infant is hungry or uncomfortable, he or she will cry until the demands of the id are satisfied. Young infants are entirely controlled by the id, there is no reasoning with them when these needs demand satisfaction. Imagine trying to convince a baby to wait until lunchtime to eat their meal. The id demands immediate satisfaction, and since the other components of personality are not yet present, the child will cry until these needs are fulfilled<sup>8</sup>. However, if we were totally controlled by the pleasure principle, we might find ourselves taking the things we want out of the hands of others to meet our own needs.

The desires of the Id give rise to the Ego, which is generally the component of the psyche that ensures that the desires of the Id are expressed in a way that is acceptable to the real world. The Ego operates according to the reality principle. According to Freud, the Ego develops from the Id and ensures that the impulses of the Id can be expressed in a manner acceptable in the real world<sup>9</sup>, it is identified as being “a coherent organization of mental processes”<sup>10</sup>. It is a part of the psyche that attempts to control all of its constituent functions. Freud claimed that even as one went to sleep at night, the Ego tended to practise censorship in one's dreams. It is from this perspective of the Ego that it becomes important to address its position in the unconscious. The Ego has a collection of psychic functions capable of distinguishing between imagination and reality; it is a personality aspect that is responsible for confronting reality, it organizes thoughts and makes sense of the world, it reflects reason and

common sense. The ego is said to represent three masters: the external world, the Id, and the Super-Ego. It attempts to fulfil the needs of the id in a practical and socially acceptable manner.

The Super-Ego is the third part of Freud's system, it begins to emerge at around age five<sup>11</sup>. It reflects the internalization of cultural rules, moral standards, and ideals that we acquire from our parents and society; it provides instructions for making judgments and aims to perfect and civilize our behaviour. It is the "conscience" of the personality, and it can retaliate against the imperfections of the ego by introducing guilt<sup>12</sup>. It works to overcome all unacceptable impulses of the id and tries to make the ego behave on idealistic standards rather than on realistic values. The superego is present in the conscious, preconscious, and unconscious. It works in contradiction to the Id because it aims to act in a socially appropriate manner. As a result of the Super-Ego conflicting with the demands of the Id, the Ego often has to mediate between the two, its function is to control the id's impulses, especially those which society forbids, such as sex and aggression. It also has the role of persuading the ego to turn to moralistic targets rather than simply realistic ones and to strive for perfection. The superego consists of two systems: The conscience and the ideal self. The conscience requires information about things that are viewed as bad by parents and society. These actions are often forbidden and lead to bad consequences, punishments, or feelings of guilt and regret. For example, if the ego gives in to the id's demands, the superego may make the person feel bad through guilt. The ideal self (or ego-ideal) is an imaginary picture of how you ought to be, and represents career aspirations, how to treat other people, and how to behave as a member of society<sup>13</sup>. It includes the rules and standards for behaviours that the ego aspires to. Behaviour which does not correspond to the ideal self may be punished by the superego through guilt. The super-ego can also reward us through the ideal self when we act properly by making us feel proud. If a person's ideal self is too high a standard, then whatever the

person does will represent failure. In childhood, ideal self and conscience are primarily defined by parental values and how you were brought up.

Freud explains that these three parts of personality are always in an internal conflict, the latter may be conscious or unconscious. The pleasure-seeking desires of the Id conflict with the moral judgments of the superego. The ego on the other hand uses a variety of strategies also called “Defense Mechanisms”<sup>14</sup> to reduce this conflict, in Freud’s words “an extraordinarily large number of methods or mechanisms, as we say used by our ego in the discharge of its defensive functions”<sup>15</sup>. These defense mechanisms as Freud suggests are designed to defend the ego against anxiety and hysteria. The ego wants to protect itself at the conscious level, so whatever threatens or attacks him, the ego will push it down to the unconscious, as Freud asserts the ego uses these defensive mechanisms to avoid dangers. When talking about the id, the ego, and the superego, it is important to remember that these are not three separate entities with clearly defined boundaries.

### ***B) The Interpretation of Dreams***

Freud entirely differentiates himself from everything that preexisted him concerning the dream. He believed that the dream is generally connected with what happened the day before or in the dreamer's past. Freud considers that the dream is always linked to the dreamer’s life.

The interpretation of dreams is the process of explaining the meaning of the way the unconscious thoughts and emotions are processed in the mind during sleep<sup>16</sup>. According to Freud, dreams represent a disguised fulfillment of a repressed wish.

Freud had his own dream that was to form the basis of his theory. He had been worried about a patient, Irma, who was not doing as well in treatment as he had hoped. Freud, in fact, blamed himself for this, and was feeling guilty. Freud dreamed that he met Irma at a party and

examined her. He then saw a chemical formula for a drug that another doctor had given Irma flash before his eyes and realized that her condition was caused by a dirty syringe used by the other doctor. Freud's guilt was thus relieved. Freud interpreted this dream as wish-fulfillment. He had wished that Irma's poor condition was not his fault and the dream had fulfilled this wish by informing him that another doctor was at fault. Based on this dream, Freud (1900) went on to propose that a major function of dreams was the fulfillment of wishes<sup>17</sup>.

He believed that studying dreams provided the best way to understand the unconscious processes of the mind. His theories state that dreams have two parts: a manifested content, which is the remembered dream after we wake, and a latent content or the dream that we do not remember which is considered part of the unconscious<sup>18</sup>. He suggested that the latent or unremembered dream content is constituted of three elements: the sensory impressions during the night of the dream, the residues left from the day before, and the id's drives that are already part of the dreamer. Freud distinguished between the manifest content of a dream, what the dreamer remembers, and the latent content, the symbolic meaning of the dream. The manifest content is often based on the events of the day. The process by which the wish is transformed into the manifest content is called dream work. Its purpose is to turn the forbidden wish into a non-threatening form, thus reducing anxiety and allowing us to continue sleeping. Dream-work involves the process of condensation, displacement, and secondary elaboration<sup>19</sup>.

### ***C) Oedipus Complex***

In his theory of psychosexual stages of development, Sigmund Freud used the concept of Oedipal Complex, which is the generic term for both Oedipus and Electra complexes. “[his

theory of] Oedipus complex is among the most often discussed and contentious issue of modern psychology and literature”<sup>20</sup>.

The Oedipal Complex is a set of emotions and feelings that a young boy experiences during what is called “the phallic stage”. From an early age, the little child of 5-6 years old tends to have certain “erotic desires” toward his mother as well as a kind of jealousy and hatred towards his father whom he considers to be his competitor<sup>21</sup>. The Electra complex is a term used to describe the female version of the Oedipus complex. It involves a girl, aged between 3 and 6, becoming unconsciously sexually attached to her father and increasingly hostile toward her mother.

The so-called hatred towards the father increases to reach the need of getting rid of him if not killing him. This is what is referred to as parricide. In the section, “Dostoevsky and Parricide” (1928), Freud defines it as: “a death-wish against the hated father” and “it is in any case the main source of the sense of guilt [within the self of a young boy]”<sup>22</sup>.

However, the state of the Oedipal Conflict does not last a long time, for there are various factors that would push the boy to look for what is referred to as the Oedipal Complex Resolution. Always within the same book, more precisely, in the part that is entitled The Dissolution of the Oedipus complex (1924), Freud argues that this resolution resides in the fact that the boy makes a transition from hatred of his father to identification with him. This identification comes as a result of castration made to the boy either by men or women<sup>23</sup>.

## **2) Materials**

In this part of our work, we will provide some biographical elements of Henrik Ibsen and August Strindberg that we think are of great relevance to explore our subject under study. We will also include a brief synopsis of the two plays under

study; *A Doll's House* and *Miss Julie*. Our justification for the study of these two plays lies in the striking similarities of the lives and the times of their authors and their professional and personal experiences. Both plays are family dramas which are reminiscent of the Oedipus complex, of the figures of mothers and patriarchs. Another reason is that there figure the name of Kristin and Christine as characters in both plays. Both plays include elements of realism and naturalism.

### **Biographies of the authors**

#### **HENRIK IBSEN**

Henrik Ibsen was born in Skien, in the south of Norway, in 1828. When he was fifteen, his father sent him to the remote provincial town of Grimstad to become an apothecary's apprentice. During this time, he started writing poems, and studied Latin in preparation for applying for university. After six years in Grimstad, he moved to the capital, Christiania. His first play, *Catiline*, was published under the pseudonym Brynjolf Bjarme, soon followed by *The Burial Mound*, Ibsen's first play to be written. In 1851, Ibsen traveled to Bergen, Norway to become an assistant at the Norske Theater, an important apprenticeship for his profession as a dramatist. He wrote and staged plays for the theatre, as well as directing while gaining experience in all facets of theatrical production. He moved back to Christiania in 1857 to become the artistic director of the Norwegian Theatre and married Suzannah Thoreson. Dissatisfied with Norwegian politics and his lack of success as a writer, Ibsen moved his family to Italy in 1864<sup>24</sup>.

In 1865, he published what is considered his first major work, *Brand*. Ironically, this play was a great Norwegian success and earned him a state stipend and financial stability. His success continued with *Peer Gynt*, a fantastical verse drama for which Edward Grieg composed the music.

Ibsen moved from Italy to Germany in 1868 and began to work on his first contemporary realist drama *The Pillars of Society*, first published and performed in 1877. A *Doll's House* followed in 1879, along with *Ghosts* in 1881, and *The Wild Duck* (1884). Late in his career, Ibsen turned to a more subjective drama such as *Hedda Gabler* (1890) and *The Master Builder* (1892).

Beginning in 1900, Ibsen experienced a series of mini strokes that left him unable to write. He managed to live for a few more years after, but he was not lucid very often. Ibsen died on May 23, 1906, and was considered a literary pioneer when he passed away<sup>25</sup>.

### **AUGUST STRINDBERG**

Johan August Strindberg was a Swedish playwright, novelist, poet, essayist and painter. He began writing plays when he was a student at Uppsala University. His first full play, *Master Olof* (1872), was written when he was 23 years old and is now considered Sweden's first great drama. However it was rejected by the Royal Dramatic Theater because of its "disrespectful" portrayal of Swedish national heroes. It was also composed in prose, which was unusual for tragedy at the time.

Strindberg combined psychology and Naturalism in a modern type of European drama that developed into Expressionist drama. He was a prolific writer who often drew directly on his personal experience. His career spanned four decades, during which time he wrote over 60 plays and more than 30 works of fiction, autobiography, history, cultural analysis, and politics. His chief works include *The Father* (1887), *Miss Julie* (1888), *Creditors* (1888), *A Dream Play* (1902), and *The Ghost Sonata* (1907). Strindberg is considered the "father" of modern Swedish literature and *The Red Room* (1879) has frequently been described as the first modern Swedish novel. However, it stirred up controversy with its radical depiction of Swedish history and he was forced to flee Sweden with his family in 1883<sup>26</sup>.

Strindberg married three times, but his outbreaks against the feminist movement and emancipation scandalized society and lost him the support of his liberal friends. He was asked back to Sweden on a charge of obscenity brought against him by his growing number of enemies. Although Strindberg was acquitted, the trial marked the beginning of his descent into insanity, which would reach its peak a decade later. After studying mysticism, Strindberg recovered and went on to write about his experience of near madness. He died alone in Stockholm in 1912<sup>27</sup>.

### **Synopses of the plays**

#### **A Doll's House (*Et Dukkehjem*) 1879**

*A Doll's House* is a three acts play published in 1879 by the Norwegian writer Henrik Ibsen. It is a provocative representation of a woman struggling in a man's world. Nora and Torvald Helmer have a traditional nineteenth-century marriage. Torvald adores his wife, in spite of the fact that he patronizes her and belittles her perception of the world. In any case, Nora has lived with a secret for several years. She forged her father's signature to borrow money to take her husband to Italy for recovery after an illness. Her husband, Torvald, is currently a senior bank officer and Nora has been paying off the loan in installments. However, her secret is almost to be exposed when Torvald threatens to fire Nils Krogstad, the man from whom Nora borrowed the money. Nora's friend, Kristine Linde, tries to help Nora, revealing that she and Krogstad used to be in a relationship and she still loves him deeply. However, when Krogstad reveals Nora's actions in a letter, Torvald dismisses her sacrifice, caring instead only about his own reputation. Although Torvald forgives his wife when he discovers that Krogstad will not publicly reveal her indiscretion,

Nora realizes that Torvald does not value or truly know her as an individual. In an attempt to discover herself, Nora decides to leave her husband and her children<sup>28</sup>.

### **Miss Julie (1889)**

Published by August Strindberg, *Miss Julie* is probably the most popular play in the style of naturalism; it centres on Miss Julie, a confused aristocratic woman who recently shamed her family by breaking off her engagement. She is attracted to Jean, an educated servant who works for her father. The action takes place in the kitchen of Miss Julie's father's manor, where Jean's fiancée, a servant named Kristin, cooks and sometimes sleeps while Jean and Miss Julie talk. One night the relationship between Miss Julie and Jean deepens quickly to feelings of love and is then ended. During the play, Miss Julie is worried about bringing more dishonor to her family, she battles with Jean for the upper hand in the relationship, and struggle with a plan to move forward with their lives. Jean finally convinces Julie that the only way to escape her predicament is to commit suicide<sup>29</sup>.

End notes:

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<sup>1</sup> Stephane, Michaud. *Literature and Psychoanalysis*. (University of the Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris, France, 2012).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Agnes Potocz. *Freud, Psychoanalysis and Symbolism*. (Australia, Cambridge University Press, 2003), 1

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-the-id-2795275>

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Daniel Lapsley. *Id, Ego, and Superego*. (2012).

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> McLeod, S. A. *Id, ego and superego*. (September 25, 2019).

<sup>12</sup> Daniel Lapsley. *Id, Ego, and Superego*. (2012).

<sup>13</sup> McLeod, S. A. *Id, ego and superego*. (September 25, 2019).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> Ivan, Smith. *Freud- Complete Works*. (2000, 2007, 2010). p.4829.

<sup>16</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychoanalytic\\_dream\\_interpretation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychoanalytic_dream_interpretation)

<sup>17</sup> <https://www.simplypsychology.org/Sigmund-Freud.html>.

<sup>18</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychoanalytic\\_dream\\_interpretation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychoanalytic_dream_interpretation)

<sup>19</sup> [www.simplypsychology.org/Sigmund-Freud.html](http://www.simplypsychology.org/Sigmund-Freud.html).

<sup>20</sup> Sofa, Ahmed. *Sigmund Freud's Psychoanalytical theory Oedipus complex: A Critical Study with reference to D.H Lawrence's Sons and Lovers*, last modified on March 2012, viewed 10 June 2015.

<sup>21</sup> Sigmund Freud. *Female Sexuality, in Complete Works*. (2010) p.4593-4595.

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid, *Dostoevsky and Parricide*.p.4559.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, *Dissolution of Oedipus complex*. P.4091- 4083.

<sup>24</sup> Catherine, Dillon. *A Biography of Henrik Ibsen*. (Daytona State College, 24 November 2017).

<sup>25</sup> Ibid.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.coursehero.com/u/file/7856600/Background-Info-August-Strindberg/>

<sup>27</sup> Ibid.

<sup>28</sup> <https://www.thoughtco.com/a-dolls-house-overview-4628164>.

<sup>29</sup> <https://stageagent.com/shows/play/5121/miss-julie>

### III. Results:

*A Doll's House* represents a Realistic drama owing to the issues involving women, illnesses, and laws within the play Ibsen tries to address society and bring change within the Norwegian society without openly talking about these issues. A common woman in Norway, such as Nora, lives an everyday life of oppression, fear, and inequality, which reveals social mistreatment. Society and Torvald Helmer are pushing Nora to look pretty and happy. Ibsen's identification and attempt to change society, thus, symbolizes a rational desire to find solutions to problems.

August Strindberg was like Ibsen, a strong supporter of the Naturalist Movement. He felt that *Miss Julie* was an essential step in making a truly naturalistic drama. Although *Miss Julie* is not about ordinary middle class people in a situation the audience can identify with, Strindberg also wanted his actors to act naturally. He wanted them to turn their back on the audience when it was realistic for them to do so. He preferred the stage to be a space with one wall removed so that the audience could look inside with the actors moving and saying their lines as the scene required, rather than keeping their faces to the front at all times in an unnatural way. This was very much what Ibsen was trying to achieve in *A Doll's House*.

Therefore, the study of the plays allows us to reach some provisional findings; relying on psychoanalysis to study these two works has led us to uncover the following results.

In the first chapter, we have discovered that in both these plays women are the protagonists; both playwrights had surprised their audience by discussing taboo themes such as sexuality and divorce<sup>1</sup>. Nora Helmer and Miss Julie are both influenced by their parents which led these to develop the Freudian notion of

Oedipus complex. Nora is described as being like her father who taught her the values and thoughts which led her to seek independence and leave her family at the end of the play; Miss Julie is referred to as being a degenerate woman and hated men just like her mother taught her. Both protagonists had feelings towards their parents which became as repressed wishes that led them to live the way they did. These ideas have been discussed according to Sigmund Freud's Oedipus complex.

In the second chapter, which is oriented through Freud's concept of Id, Ego and Superego, we come to identify both the protagonists' desires and wants; in addition, through the course of the plays, Nora and Miss Julie seem to forget about their reality and continue to denounce their control until they realize that they should seek for their true identity and move into their ideal selves and escape the world they were living in, which involved independence for Nora and leaving her family after realizing that she must discontinue the role of the perfect doll and seek out her individuality; however, Miss Julie did not have enough courage to take her independence, more she was dependent to the men of her life that's why she rather committed suicide.

Finally in the third chapter, by relying on Freud's Interpretation of Dreams theory, we can understand and analyse more the two protagonists and what they went through. Miss Julie's dream reflects her situation, the fact that she lowered her social status and ruined herself by having an intimate relationship with Jean represent her desire to fall and, in fact, this happened at the end of the play when she committed suicide. Whereas Nora was living in a dream world where she was treated like a doll; however, as this part reveals, Nora wanted to put an end to the life she was living and stop being manipulated by her husband, once she realized that,

she gathered her courage and put her dream on work, so she abandoned her children and husband to seek for her independence and individuality.

#### **IV. Discussion**

*A Doll's House*, by Henrik Ibsen, sets up a mirror into the lives of a family in the Victorian Era. The play portrays a female perspective in a male-dominated society. The values of the society are described through the agency a woman, Nora, who rebels against the injustice inflicted upon her gender. Women's equality with men was not recognized by society in the late 1800's. Instead, a woman was considered a doll, a child, and a servant. Nora's alienation reveals society's expectations and values about gender.

The play was a reflection of Ibsen's life; on the one hand, when writing his play, he based it on the life of his friend, Laura Kieler. Most of the events and conflicts that happened between Nora and Torvald happened between Laura and her husband, Victor. When Victor found out about Laura's private loan, he divorced her and admitted her into a refuge<sup>2</sup>. On the other hand, the story's central themes reflect the social and economic problems faced by Ibsen. From his parent's joyless and dysfunctional marriage to his financial insufficiency, one can see the noticeable distinction between his life and his works. The story essentially reveals his perception of marriage, his struggles with poverty, and his existential views which have arisen from his life experiences. It also exposes the anxiety of modern life and truths about society that many people thought to be irreligious but suggests other significant issues in Ibsen's life<sup>3</sup>. The title "*A Doll's House*", shows Ibsen's perception of a woman's role in society, which was influenced by his parents' relationship. It means that the marriage is superficial and seemingly happy on the

outside, but lacks passion and love on the inside. It reveals the reality of the struggles that women had faced at that time. Women were always seen as inferior to men and were never individuals of equal position. Ibsen only knew women to be submissive to men because of his parents. His mother was not one with a determined nature, and anyone who is would just disgrace the men. Any competent woman would inevitably want to be liberated from a marriage based mainly on the service of men<sup>4</sup>.

Another recurring theme in Ibsen's works is financial insecurity in middle-class families. Since Ibsen's father went bankrupt, he worked for years to gain enough money to maintain a safe and stable life. It is a relevant theme in "*A Doll's House*", where Nora and Torvald become consumed by thoughts of money and repaying their debts. Nora is obsessed with the idea of having excessive amounts of money which could be interpreted as Ibsen's desire to have money that he never had in his life, and shows his dream of gaining money for happiness.

"*A Doll's House*" is an echo of Ibsen's life; the themes in the play portray his parents' unhealthy marriage, existentialistic nature, and his financial instability. His perception of marriage as well as his play were heavily influenced by his parent's relationship. One of the central themes in *A Doll's House* is the quest for financial security, as he aspired to live a comfortable life just as Nora and Torvald did. He incorporated his existential ideals by creating an ending where Nora discovers her real purpose in life, which does not include her arrogant and superficial husband, Torvald. This realization shed new light on the truths of the roles of women in society and marriage<sup>5</sup>.

Realism turns toward naturalism; however, while still critical of society, the naturalists had little hope of reforming it. Naturalism in literature is the writer's

attempt to apply scientific principles of objectivity and detachment to the study of human beings<sup>6</sup>. The evolution theories of Charles Darwin influenced naturalistic writers. Whereas Realism seeks to describe subjects as they really are, Naturalism also attempted to determine “scientifically” the underlying forces such as the environment or heredity<sup>7</sup>. Naturalistic works exposed the dark harshness of life, including poverty, racism, sexism, prejudice, disease, prostitution, filth. They were often pessimistic and tragic. The naturalists adhered to the doctrine of determinism, according to which human beings act according to their biological inheritance and the influence of their social milieu. The movement was based largely on the theory of social Darwinism, which proposed that individuals fight for position in society much as animals fight for their survival in the wild, and that, in humans as in animals only the strongest can survive to suggest that the upper classes are doomed to be replaced by the more forceful lower classes.

The Swedish playwright, August Strindberg has been considered highly as one of the founders of the modern theater<sup>8</sup>. He established his status as an excellent contemporary playwright with *Miss Julie*, which demonstrates his preoccupation with what he considered to be inevitable conflict between men and women. *Miss Julie* is generally considered as the most important drama to originate from the literary movement known as naturalism. In the play, both of the major characters, Julie and Jean, are weak when faced with a combination of temptation and opportunity. The movement derives from social Darwinism, in other words, humans' behavior in society resembles animals in nature, as both have to fight to survive and find their places. The play focuses on Julie's and Jean's struggle for survival in their society. Like Ibsen, Strindberg claimed that the basis for the plot of *Miss Julie* was a true story he had heard of a young noblewoman who had had sexual relations with a

servant, although that young woman did not commit suicide<sup>9</sup>. Strindberg lived in a time in which gender and class roles were becoming more fluid, and the play reflects the conflicts that are inevitable in a society struggling for change.

Strindberg combined psychology and Naturalism in a new kind of European drama that evolved into Expressionist drama. He was a prolific writer who, like Ibsen, often drew directly on his personal experience.

Interestingly, the discussion of the social-sexual image in Strindberg's *Miss Julie* shows that Strindberg sees a reflection of himself in *Miss Julie*, as he is a son of an aristocratic father and a common woman. His life is also embroidered by pain and suffering like Julie who suffers from her father's weakness who has taught her to hate men and women and her mother, an emancipated woman, who encourages her to dominate men. Being tortured by two opposite forces, being not in total sex-hatred, nor in her class arrogance leads her to dirt and death.

In *Miss Julie*, one can understand that Strindberg introduces Julie, who symbolizes the modern woman, as a victim of her unmerciful parents. However, in reality, Strindberg believes that "woman already by nature is instinctively villainous"<sup>10</sup>. He believes that woman has no truth in her love, and just like a vampire who tries to suck the blood of man. Strindberg had been inspired to write *Miss Julie* when he observed the portrait of Munch, an expressionist painter. This portrait depicts the "kisses" of women as vampires sucking the blood of men. Strindberg consider woman as evil and inferior to man, even if she belongs to aristocracy.

Actually, the similarity of Ibsen's and Strindberg's views is introduced in their plays that reflect their understanding of the social, sexual and cultural context

of modern man. Besides, they dramatize the forces of modern life and enlarge the territory of modern drama themes by using their psychological insight and skillful manipulation of scientific advances. In so doing, both playwrights become members of “the theatre of thought” by their introducing “drama of ideas”.

“In brief, the echoes of Ibsenism are strongly reflected in Strindberg’s drama, whether in terms of themes or of techniques. Both dramatists introduce naturalistic drama and set their names as landmarks not only as great writers in the dramatic world but also as great explorers of the unconscious world”.

The study of Ibsen’s *A Doll’s House* and Strindberg’s *Miss Julie* through a psychoanalytical lens shows that both protagonists namely Nora and Miss Julie share many similar psychological characteristics in terms of Oedipus complex, Id, ego and Superego and also in terms of dreams; but at the same time, they are complementary of one another, when one went from black to white, the other turned from white to black.

### **Chapter One: The Oedipus complex**

At the early stage of child development, parents or family is the first influential aspect since the family determines the child’s future. In order to make the child have a good personality or behavior and attitudes, parents should help him by avoiding anything which might disturb his or her development. Both Nora and Julie, the protagonists of the plays, are influenced by their parents. Importantly, both are daughters of the fathers who, although absent from the stage, still manage to influence their children. There is a striking number of similarities in both these plays. Both Nora and Julie are daughters of families belonging to the upper-class aristocracy which means a governing body or upper class usually made up of a hereditary nobility, for example: a member of the British aristocracy.

In the play *A Doll's House* the parental influence can be seen throughout Nora's actions. Her father was overprotective and treated her first like a doll, then by her husband, and she is never allowed to grow as a person.

Throughout the course of the play, Ibsen shows the faults of Nora's father and their impact on her adult life. The immorality of Nora's father in acquiring and wasting money is blamed both on Nora's spendthrift nature and on the fraud she committed, which ended her marriage to Helmer. Nora is referred to as being like her father, having inherited a lot of his qualities<sup>11</sup>. Both Helmer and Mrs Linde, Nora's friend, believe that Nora inherited her carelessness of spending money from her father. Mrs. Linde states that she is "not her father's daughter for nothing"<sup>12</sup>. Nora's father inked in her personality the values and the ideas that lead her to seek independence and abandon her family. Helmer stated that Nora has no religion, and no moral values just like her father: "I say your father's dishonesty you have inherited: no religion, no morality, and no sense of duty."<sup>13</sup>

Even Nora recognizes the faults in her personality, and she too recognizes her father as the source of her problems. As is shown by Ibsen's persistent demonstration of Nora's internal conflict through her nervous gestures and fractured speeches, Nora fights to both identify and rebel against these foreign and external influences. In the final moments of clarity she has at the end of the play, Nora realizes that she has been "wronged greatly"<sup>14</sup> by her father since she has been subjected to his views. Nora's entire personality was based on the beliefs taught in her from childhood that had driven her throughout her entire life. Nora could not become her own person while she was busy being the "doll child" her father wanted her to be; her final act of the play is to renounce her father's influence and control, thus reclaiming her personality as her own.

On the other hand, Miss Julie is influenced by her mother, who was a man-hater. Julie's father is an aristocrat with a sense of honour who aims to raise his daughter to be respectable in society, and her mother was a person of modest origin who treated her like a boy. She was made to do tasks that were more suitable for a man or a boy to do. Julie's mother creates a manly daughter to revenge on her husband, for the coming of her daughter breaks her words that she would never marry Julie's father. Usually, women were asked to dance by men, not the contrary. Julie, who came from a noble family, asked one of her housekeepers to dance with her. She behaved like this because she never thought about the etiquette of how to be a good lady since she was taught to be a man by her mother. Julie had destructive and aggressive behaviour even though she was a nobleman's daughter. As the daughter of a nobleman, she should behave well to keep her family's honour in front of the public, but her parents did not teach her how to behave as a good woman and her mother taught her to act like a boy. They never gave her religious education, they were busy with their own problems, and that's why she became an aggressive person. Since her parents did not have love and affection for each other, Julie hated men because she saw and found her mother suffered from the condition. Julie released her feeling of hate for her fiancé. She treated him like an animal:

“KRISTIN. No—did you see it?

JEAN. Yes, indeed, I did. They were out in the stable yard one evening and she was "training" him as she called it. Do you know what happened? She made him leap over her riding whip, the way you teach a dog to jump. He jumped it twice and got a lash each time; but the third time he snatched the whip from her hand and broke it into pieces. And then he vanished!”<sup>15</sup>

It seemed that Julie really hated men that's why she treated him like that. She broke her engagement to make her father embarrassed because the man was her father's choice. Besides, she was afraid that she would suffer because of a man just like her mother. So, she

made him suffer first, and then she broke the engagement. She had no morality as a human being or even as a woman because her parents never introduced her to what morality was. The conflict that occurred between her father and mother made her grow as a woman without having a sense of humanity. She treated her valet as if he was not a human that had a feeling. When she talked to Jean, her valet, she asked him to kiss her shoe.

“JULIE. Bravo! Now you must kiss my slipper. Then the thing is perfect”<sup>16</sup>

Julie grew up as a woman who did not have self-confidence. Her mother has taught her to hate men including her father. The influences made her suffer and painful. At the end of the play, as she could not stand the suffering and pain that she was an unwanted child by her parents, she ended her life by committing suicide.

In his theory, Sigmund Freud used the concept of Oedipus and Electra complexes which is a set of emotions and feelings that a young boy or girl experiences during what is called “the phallic stage” which involves an unconscious sexual attachment towards the mother for boys and the father for girls. This means that basically, at a young age, the child starts to feel sexual desires towards his or her father or mother.

In the play “*A Doll’s House*”, the relationship between Nora and Helmer is explicitly paternal. This can be related to the notion of Freud “*Electra Complex*” where the daughter seeks a romantic affiliation and is attached to the father figure and becomes very hostile towards the mother.

In act I, Nora is playing a childish role occupying a doll’s house, a child who has exchanged a father for a husband without changing her childlike manners or maturing in any way; she is occupying herself as more of a child’s role rather than an adult. She saw in Torvald a father figure; she was treated the same way as her father did with her, she says to him:

He used to call me his doll child, and play with me as I played with my dolls,  
then I came to live in your house (...) I mean I passed from father's hands  
into your!!.<sup>17</sup>

As one can notice, Nora was looking for someone who resembled her father in characteristic traits. She says that she was a doll to her husband and also a doll to her father when she was younger. Even Nora herself refers to her as Torvald's "doll" in the second act when she and Torvald are fighting and Nora wants to leave, she says, "Perhaps- when your doll is taken away from you"<sup>18</sup>. In her eyes, she still sees herself as her father's little doll and even in her adult life, she finds a way to replace her father with another man so that she may still have that child-like feeling.

Furthermore, through the course of the play, Nora doesn't mention much about her mother; she was probably very close to her father. Besides, we get impressions into the strong feelings Nora had for her father. In Act One Nora admits to Torvald: "I wish I had inherited many of my father's qualities"<sup>19</sup>. And later in the same act, she confesses to Mrs Linde that when he passed away she felt bad that she couldn't take care of him before he died even though her husband was extremely sick at the meantime, "I never saw him again...That was the worst time I've known in all my marriage"<sup>20</sup>.

Torvald takes care of Nora very well and gives her a lot of money and calls her his little "squirrel" "spendthrift" and other playful names like a father would. Perhaps because Nora misses her father and Torvald treats her like a child, she likes the feeling of having a father-like figure in her life again; she is possessed by both her husband and her father.

However, Nora finds a way to break free from this Electra complex. She leaves her husband, after realizing that the crisis is over and that Torvald had turned out a disappointment as a Father figure. Torvald breaks down hysterically in order to save his reputation, thus Nora realizes that he cannot be relied upon to provide her with gratification as that Father figure, as someone she may rely upon as a source of maturity. Then, she decides "I

have to stand completely alone, if I'm ever going to discover myself and the world out there. So I can't go on living with you"<sup>21</sup>

It seems that her failure in marriage is a subconscious try to continue the father-daughter relationship. However, in the play *Miss Julie*, the concept of Oedipus complex is presented differently. In his preface, Strindberg describes Julie as a "man-hating half woman"<sup>22</sup>; Julie grew up to hate men as her mother did "I loved my father, but I took my mother's side because I didn't know the whole story. She had taught me to hate all men"<sup>23</sup>. However, as she reached the oedipal phase where she experienced a desire for the father, she did so by devaluing her primary object, her mother, and turned her deep love towards her father. Her father was perceived by her as extremely exciting. As a result of this fixation, Miss Julie finds men strong and exciting and moves away from homosexual wishes "which are perhaps there in her unconscious" to hetero-sexual love and desire. She sees women; herself included as weak and insignificant. Miss Julie knows how to manipulate her sexuality and her seductiveness and uses sex defensively because she is too scared of men's abuse of power and influence.

But before getting to this, through the analysis of Miss Julie and her mother's relationship, it is revealed that there is little evidence that a pleasant relationship existed between them "I came into the world, against my mother's wish as far as I can gather"<sup>24</sup>. Though, Miss Julie has both feelings of love and hatred towards her mother, first, for the natural relationship between a mother and a child, second, for the mother's inability of fulfilling her desires. Juliet Mitchell explains that the usual reason for a daughter's hatred toward the mother stems from the "situation in which the girl blames the mother for the fact that she is a girl and therefore without a penis"<sup>25</sup>. However, in *Miss Julie*, it is her mother who is reproaching her for lacking a penis thus Miss Julie should act as a male,

She wanted to bring me up as a child of nature,

and into the bargain I was to learn everything  
that a boy has to learn, so that  
I might be as an example of how a woman can be as  
good as a man. I had to wear boy's clothes...<sup>26</sup>

Julie's problems originate from her heritage as well as the way she was educated. Her mother has a strong objection towards marriage which is expressed in her refusal to let her daughter to marry the count; she insisted on reversing gender roles and went insane, as her daughter, Julie could not escape the legacy of her feminist mother. She is a half-woman, struggling with her own sexual nature; she belongs to a class that no longer has a meaningful role to play in society. Julie is the victim of her mother's crime, of uncertain modern thinking. Despite being an aristocratic child, she has to work with the servants under her mother's order. As a noble lady, she incurs the breaking in engagement by a middle-class boy. Julie is waving between her mother's toughness and father's weakling, suffering from the most contradictory feelings: masculine and feminine, love and hate, tenderness and contempt, ecstasy and irony, erotic desire and chaste modesty, attempting to escape an existence cramped by social mores<sup>27</sup>.

The relation between Julie and the count is, at some points, a father and daughter relation. Despite being rebellious, to some extent, her life is influenced by males and the male authority frightens her; it can be seen in the play that the fear of her father's arrival makes her anxious which can be concluded that she was subject to the authority of the count.

She is the victim of this relation just for being a woman. The male manipulates and uses her; it shows how patriarchal society works. She lives with the constant fear of her father who represents the male authority whose presence is for her a source of endless fear. However, Miss Julie tries to give orders to Jean that don't work because she is a dependent woman now. The fact that she is a woman makes her a depressed person. Even if Jean has misused her, she cannot publicly criticize him because in the eyes of the patriarchal society she is a sinner, not the man.

As it has been said above, Julie is described as “half-woman”, the play portrays her “halfness” in consisting of her mother's emotions and her father's thoughts. Julie's mother believed in equality of sexes and, indeed, hated men; thus Julie inherited her mother's hatred for men. Julie's father was a misogynist and from him, she inherited hatred for women, thus Julie's parents are the cause of her behaviour. Miss Julie's confusion over her gender identity leads her to destruction. She is a man-hater who makes her fiancé jump like a dog. Her androgyny came since the day she came into the world, unwanted by her frustrated mother who recreates in her daughter a male partner she could not find in her husband. In addition to her conventional education, Miss Julie was made to wear boys' clothes, perform boys' chores and ride horses to demonstrate her mother's predicament that woman is as good as any man and that she is not weaker than men are.

However, Julie certainly did not possess enough independence to leave her family as Nora did in the end of *A Doll's House*. Instead of creating a self-governing lady, Strindberg creates his character Julie to have man-like autonomy, but on an extreme level. The character interprets her independence as meaning she can do as she likes, with a disregard to social constructs as the same as her mother.

End notes:

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<sup>1</sup> [http:// Chapter-4-a-comparative-study-of-the-portrayal-of-women-in- henrik-ibsen-s-a-doll-s-house and-august-strindberg-s-miss-julie.html](http://Chapter-4-a-comparative-study-of-the-portrayal-of-women-in-henrik-ibsen-s-a-doll-s-house-and-august-strindberg-s-miss-julie.html)

<sup>2</sup> <https://prezi.com/71jg0jjcwmad/psychoanalysis-of-henrik-ibsen-s-a-dolls-house/>

<sup>3</sup> <https://testmyprep.com/subject/english-literature/ibsen-s-life-portrayed-in-a-very-dolls-house.>

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Campbell, Donna M. "Naturalism in American Literature." *Literary Movements*. ( Dept. of English, Washington State University, 1984).

<sup>7</sup> Meg, Upton. *Miss Julie Teachers' Notes, Part A*. (February 2016) p.7.

<sup>8</sup> The Subversion of Gender, the Immensity of Desire: —A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Strindberg's Miss Julie, may 2019.

<sup>9</sup> <https://www.coursehero.com/file/1152079/Miss-Julie/>.

<sup>10</sup> Mithal Madlool, Chilab. *The Echoes of Ibsenism in Strindberg's Drama*. (University of Al-Qadisiya, 2008).

<sup>11</sup> [https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/events/files/2014/05/A\\_Dolls\\_House\\_Education\\_Pack.pdf](https://www.edgehill.ac.uk/events/files/2014/05/A_Dolls_House_Education_Pack.pdf)

<sup>12</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (Act II, page 31).

<sup>13</sup> Ibid (Act III, page 107).

<sup>14</sup> Ibid (Act III, page 114).

<sup>15</sup> PLAYS: The Father; Countess Julie; The Outlaw; The Stronger by August Strindberg, translated by Edith and Warner Olan.

<sup>16</sup> Ibid.

<sup>17</sup> Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (Act III, page 114).

<sup>18</sup> Ibid (Act III, page 121).

<sup>19</sup> Ibid Act I, page 7).

<sup>20</sup> Ibid (page 50).

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<sup>21</sup> Ibid (Act III, page 115).

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.litcharts.com/lit/miss-julie/themes/natural-vs-unnatural-womanhood>.

<sup>23</sup> PLAYS: The Father; Countess Julie; The Outlaw; The Stronger by August Strindberg, translated by Edith and Warner Olan.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Boyko-Head, B.A. *A Lacanian Analysis of Miss Julie by August Strindberg and The Balcony by Jean Genet Christine*. (Brock University, 1990).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup> *The Subversion of Gender, the Immensity of Desire: A Psychoanalytic Interpretation of Strindberg's Miss Julie*. (May 2019).

## Chapter Two: Id, Ego and Super-Ego

Freud classified the human psyche into three sections: id, ego and superego. The id is our primal sector for basic instinctual drives such as pleasure and satisfaction<sup>1</sup>. The ego develops to mediate between the unrealistic id and the true natural world. It is the decision-making component of personality<sup>2</sup>. Ideally, the ego functions on the basis of reason, whereas the id is unpredictable and irrational. The superego incorporates the values and principles of society that are taught from one's parents and others. It also has the function of persuading the ego to turn to moralistic goals rather than simply realistic ones and to strive for perfection<sup>3</sup>.

The id works with the pleasure principle to satisfy the human's desire to make him free from stress or at least to reduce stress. It is most concerned with the present moment: what feels good and what makes us happy at the moment. It is not based upon a clear perception of the world around us but is much more child-like. Its objective is to satisfy what Freud calls Primary Process, including hunger and self-protection.

In the play, *A Doll's House*, Nora is presented as a spoiled woman who likes shopping, worldliness and dancing. Nora is a faithful and patient woman, which is expressed when she buys all the things to all family members at home.

Helmer. When did my squirrel come home?

Nora. Just now. (Puts the bag of macaroons into her pocket and wipes her mouth).

Come in here, Torvald, and see what I have bought.

Nora. Yes but, Torvald, this year we really can let ourselves go a little. This is the first Christmas that we have not needed to economize.

Helmer. Still, you know, we can't spend money recklessly.

Nora. Yes, Torvald, we may be a wee bit more reckless now, mayn't we? Just a tiny wee bit! You are going to have a big salary and earn lots and lots of money<sup>4</sup>.

This states that Nora Helmer is a woman who likes to spend money not to save it. When she wants something, she always behaves in different ways to get some money from Torvald. Moreover, Nora is a character who does whatever it takes to satisfy Torvald; she is like a doll, playing in the house, dresses up to please him and lets him treat her like a child that has no understanding of the "real" world, and in fact, she does not because he sees her as a woman with no ability to understand the complexities of a "man's" world. Even when Nora borrows the money to save Torvald's life, she does not ask herself what cost there may be in dealing with the corrupt Krogstad.

In *Miss Julie*, the Id is found out in the character of Miss Julie, in her desire to experience the intensity of life has become stronger than her sense of self-preservation. Thus Miss Julie is innately self-destructive. She embodies the Freudian Id without the dominating presence of the superego. She wants sex, alcohol and pain; she wants life to be as dangerous as it can, so she can experience a constant sense of stimulating enthusiasm. In Freud's the pleasure principles, he suggests that the intensity of pleasure we feel is corresponding to the quantity of tension released, which explains to some extent miss Julie's desire for pain and danger.

It is shown when her father travelled to make a family visit, Miss Julie stayed at home to celebrate midsummer with the servants and currently asking many of them to dance with her without being worried about her social class and she also wants that Jean, the servant, to dance with her who warned her about the danger her reputation but later agreed to dance with her; Jean is conscious of Miss Julie's reputation and social position, while Julie seems to be ignorant of it. This further suggests that Julie does not understand the workings of aristocratic society.

- JEAN: "Well said—but not wishing any offense I wonder if it is prudent for Miss Julie to dance twice in succession with her servant, especially as people are never slow to find meaning in..."<sup>5</sup>  
-JEAN: "As Miss Julie commands. I'm here to serve"<sup>6</sup>

When they came back to the kitchen, they flirted together, then she ordered Jean to change out of his servant's livery and come have a drink with her, "Sit down then. But wait, can't you get me something to drink first?"<sup>7</sup> Which explains that Miss Julie doesn't care about her status since she flirts with a servant; she just wanted to fulfil her desires.

The ego, unlike the id, functions according to the reality principle. Its function is to decide what to do by considering in both Id and Superego; it strikes a balance between these two competing forces and makes sure that fulfilling the needs of the id and superego conform to the demands of reality.

In *A Doll's House*, Nora handles her ego-driven Electra complex by repression and self-punishment before she liberates herself by allowing her superego to take over, accepting reality and moving onto her ideal self. Nora is allowing her ego to control her actions and lifestyle. She is married to Torvald and their relationship is predicted on several psychological issues but one particularly is controlled by the ego, at the beginning of the play, Nora finds herself playing out the blame of leaving her dying father with her husband. In act 1 Torvald calls Nora as a weak little bird and addresses to her: "Is that my lark twittering there?"<sup>8</sup> Nora replies with vigour: "Yes"<sup>9</sup>. She allows him to treat her like a weak and continues to denounce her control "I shouldn't think of doing what you disapprove of"<sup>10</sup> because for her, this is her reality and the ego is allowing her reality to continue, repressing her guilt about not being there for her father at the time of his death and when he needed her the most. Actually, Nora's id requires satisfaction so, she needs to feel as if she did the right thing by saving her husband

instead of being there for her father thus, replacing Torvald as a husband for a father figure without harming the self-guilt, allowing him to treat her like a daughter or child in need.

She had a close relationship with her father, therefore, she married someone similar to him; both of them treated her like a doll. Her true feelings towards Torvald and her father had been repressed into her unconscious until they were awakened and reached her subconscious when she realized that Torvald never loved her for the right reasons.

Nora: "You never loved me. You only thought it fun to be in love with me"<sup>11</sup>

Nora: "Our home has been nothing but a playroom. I have been your doll-wife."<sup>12</sup>

Nora: "I've been wronged greatly... first by papa, and then by you"<sup>13</sup>.

As Nora begins to realize her real situation about the loan for the first time, her guilt and sadness about her father's death, she starts to realize her reality with Torvald and her family. She has always been Torvald's savior at his weakest moments to prove her proud existence in her family "I saved Torvald's life"<sup>14</sup>, "I, too, have something to be proud and glad of"<sup>15</sup> Nora is realizing and receiving gratification for her ego, however, she is now also simultaneously allowing her superego to make a decision about her reality and what she wants. By releasing her own secret, Nora is progressively letting go of her repressed feelings of guilt, renouncing the need for satisfaction of her id, releasing the repression of the ego, allowing her superego, to move onto her ideal self, the person she wants to be.

From another perspective we can see that Nora thinks about how she can get out of the authority of her husband to be herself in the way she has left her husband and her family. She is not aware of the proper way, but by what she has, she is able to become an independent woman.

Nora: "Indeed, you were perfectly right. I am not fit for the task. There is another task I must undertake first. I must try and educate myself—you are not the man to help me in that. I must do that for myself. And that is why I

am going to leave you now”<sup>16</sup>.

Nora seems to neglect her family and cares more about her own need to be free, to escape from responsibilities as a wife and mother. By leaving home, she thinks that she is going to be free and leave her responsibilities behind.

Helmer: “Before all else, you are a wife and a mother”<sup>17</sup>.

In *Miss Julie*, Julie seems to forget a little about her social standing and behaves as an equal with the servants. The context is the celebration Midsummer as she asked them to dance with her, in some points, she denounces her control and her aristocratic position and acts as if she was equal to them. Indeed, Miss Julie asked Jean to take her out on the lake in a row boat but he refuses and told her again to think about her reputation and to go to his room before she makes a decision that she would regret because the servants were trying to catch them together and discover their secret relationship which would destroy her reputation, but Miss Julie does not trust him because for her the servants love her and would never talk about her reputation “I know the people and I love them and they respect me. Let them come, you shall see”<sup>18</sup> Julie’s insistence that her servants “love her” is just a way that she refuses to understand the reality of the social hierarchy. Julie’s belief that she can easily move freely between her world and Jean’s is misguided; in fact, “the mob” forces her to escape into Jean’s room, where she consummates a relationship that will eventually cause her downfall. Later on, Jean tells her that the only option to escape is to travel abroad,

Jean: There, you see, and you heard them. Do you think it's possible for us to remain here any longer?

Julie: No, I don't. But what's to be done?

Jean: Fly! Travel—far from here!<sup>19</sup>

Then he tells her about his dream of travelling to “Switzerland—to the Italian lakes”<sup>20</sup>; Miss Julie agrees but still not convinced until he expresses his love to her,

JULIE. All that is well enough, but Jean—you must give me courage. Take me in your arms and tell me that you love me”<sup>21</sup>

In fact, this is another example of how Miss Julie forgets about her reality and continues to be submissive to her servant after she had sex with him.

The Superego is defined as the element of personality that contains all of our internalized moral values and beliefs that are inherited from both parents and society. The Superego provides us with rules for making decisions and our sense of right and wrong.

Hall states that superego is morality element branch of justice from personal system; superego is the internal representative of traditional values and evaluative norms. (Hall, 1988:35)<sup>22</sup>.

This story of *A Doll's House*<sup>23</sup> tells about Nora's secret, that she borrows some money to get her husband recovered in Italy. Nora borrows some money from Nils Krogstad. He is a bank employee in Torvald's Helmer Company.

Nora looks nervous and scared by the threat of Krogstad. She asks Krogstad not to give the letter to her husband. She also asks Mrs Linde to witness all that Krogstad says is not true. Nora tries hard to get the money to pay all debts for Krogstad so her husband doesn't know that she has made a mistake.

In act III, Nora is ready to move onto her ideal self. This means that she will have to renounce her current self and leave behind her family including her children to fully achieve satisfaction with the superego: “There must be perfect freedom on both sides.”<sup>24</sup> Nora needs to be freed from her guilt entirely, which includes Torvald and the whole family, she allows herself to release the Electra complex, as well as the repression of guilt, that the ego was

defending, by vocalizing her existence and what she wants to become. This means that Nora will have to sacrifice everything surrounding her “childish tendencies and love” to move onto the ideal self. Nora projects what she needs to do in order to reach her perfection and continue the self-sacrifice; she has left behind all the repressed feelings, opening her psyche up to the idealistic goal.

Her superego is now controlling her morality and conscience. By saying “never see him again”<sup>25</sup>, and “Never see the children either”<sup>26</sup>, she knows what she must do in order to leave her childish dependencies behind. She lets go of her guilt in order to change within her life. Nora lets go of her guilt, being repressed by her ego, leaving Torvald, the children, the family, and the Electra complex. she finally sees she has done all she can for both Torvald and her father and is allowing the change to occur by leaving it all behind, stopping the perpetuation of guilt and allowing her children to live to reach their ideal selves without repression.

Though in *Miss Julie*, Julie was the daughter of a count who has high-status, she needed to satisfy her desires through Jean because her engagement was broken when she tried to train her fiancé with a whip like a dog. In the course of the play, Miss Julie sees Jean is engaged with the count's cook and both society and her background stops her from pursuing this relationship. Then both of them were trying to find a solution to escape from it; she figures out that they are not from the same level, Julie says, "But I am born of a count that you can never be"<sup>27</sup>. Julie feels bad when Jean asks her some financial help who dismisses her when she says she does not have money, so she becomes hysterical and wonders how she can live with everyone cheating her back; Jean is heartless and calls her a whore and besides reveals that his story of love was a lie. Julie is horrified since staying would mean she would live with a ruined reputation as Jean's mistress who continues to be cruel and intensifies his abuses by calling her a whore. Miss Julie loses her control over Jean which led to her suicide.

Rather than providing her with opportunities, her higher social status becomes her burden since her reputation led her to downfall, saying to Jean, “Help me, help me. Only tell me what to do—show me a way out of this”<sup>28</sup>

The superego punished her behaviour through guilt when she realised she was deserving of Jean’s abuse since she was attracted to him first. So, Miss Julie loses control over herself then commits suicide as an escape from all that she went through.

We can conclude the above discussion by restating what has previously been announced, the id ego and superego are part of our personality that work together to create human behaviour the id creates the demand, the ego adds need of reality and superego adds morality to the action which is taken. Characters in the stories acquire these components of personality, the id is driven by pleasure, the ego serves as reality and this function is done by Miss Julie and Nora Helmer. The last component of personality which covers manners and personality is the Superego; this is documented at the end of the plays when Nora and Miss Julie have shed their earlier personality traits to strive for an ideal Ego.

End notes:

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<sup>1</sup>McLeod, S. A. *Id, ego and superego*. (September 25, 2019).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (Act I, page 3).

<sup>5</sup>PLAYS: The Father; Countess Julie; The Outlaw; The Stronger by August Strindberg, translated by Edith and Warner Olan.

<sup>6</sup>Ibid.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid.

<sup>8</sup> Ibid.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

<sup>10</sup> Ibid (page 8).

<sup>11</sup>Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (Act III, page 113)

<sup>12</sup>Ibid (page, 114).

<sup>13</sup>Ibid.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid (Act I, page 18).

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Ibid (page, 115).

<sup>17</sup> Ibid (page, 117).

<sup>18</sup>PLAYS: The Father; Countess Julie; The Outlaw; The Stronger by August Strindberg, translated by Edith and Warner Olan.

<sup>19</sup> Ibid.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ibid.

<sup>22</sup>Agwiadam Putra Pramsurya. *Hesitancy in Edith Wharton's The Age of Innocence Novel (1920): A Psychoanalytic Approach*. (University of Surakarta, 2015).

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<sup>23</sup>

<sup>24</sup>Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (Act III, page 122).

<sup>25</sup>Ibid (page 105).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid.

<sup>27</sup>PLAYS: The Father; Countess Julie; The Outlaw; The Stronger by August Strindberg, translated by Edith and Warner Olan.

<sup>28</sup> Ibid.

### Chapter Three: The Interpretation of Dreams

Sigmund Freud, as the father of psychoanalysis, believed that studying dreams provided the best way to understand the unconscious processes of the mind, he stated that the dream is a wish fulfilment which is generally connected with what happened the day before or in the dreamer's past<sup>1</sup>.

In the play *Miss Julie*, Julie's dream is a representation of her social status, a daughter of a nobleman and a common yet feminist mother, who wants to climb down from her high social position, she dreams that she is climbing a pillar and wants to fall down. However, she cannot do it, because she does not have enough courage to go down,

I find myself seated at the top of a high pillar and I see no possible way to get down. I grow dizzy when I look down, but down I must. But I'm not brave enough to throw myself; I cannot hold fast and I long to fall—but I don't fall. And yet I can find no rest or peace until I shall come down to earth; and if I came down to earth I would wish myself down in the ground<sup>2</sup>.

On the one hand, the dream reflects Miss Julie's ambiguous attitude towards her social class. It isolates her and puts her up on a pillar, far from the ground though it gives her visibility and power, indeed, when Julie's feeling 'dizzy' at the 'top of a high pillar' is due to her secluded position in society. On the other hand, the dream also hints at a possibility that Miss Julie is confused about her sexual attitude and sexual desires and feels an intense feeling of shame for having a relationship with her servant Jean, enough to go down in the ground enduring a big death wish. Furthermore, one can understand from the dream that Julie is bored with a rich life and she wants to get out of the Count's house, but as she says, she is afraid of falling down which means to become an ordinary peasant woman. Her dream supports her alienated position and demonstrates her manifest quest for a completely different lifestyle

Throughout the play, Miss Julie views her escape in terms of climbing and falling. She expresses a desire to elevate herself above her current state, but the risk of falling is ever present in her mind. Julie's dream is meant to be a foreshadowing of her situation at the end of the play. The column in her dream she does not have the means to get down without jumping, a decision that associates with suicide, Miss Julie doesn't have an easy way to escape the disastrous consequences of sleeping with a servant and is forced to make the jump to her death.

According to Christine Boyko-Head in "*A Lacanian Analysis of Miss Julie by August Strindberg and the Balcony by Jean Genet (1990)*", Miss Julie's dream represents the failure of the Oedipus complex. She does not want to be the object of desire because she hopes for a relationship with her mother, but her homosexual feelings are confused by her desire to develop a feminine identity."She desires a penis as a crucial sign of difference, to serve as a defence against the undertow of merger with the mother ... she has known as all-powerful"<sup>3</sup>. She apprehends the loss of her mother at the same time she fears a loss of self if she remains connected to her mother. As a result, she periodically desires men when her identification with the mother is physically unavoidable<sup>4</sup>.

Now let's move to *A Doll's House*, in this play, a literary method is used where critics see the text as if it was a dream. This means that the text suppresses the true and real (or latent) content behind the apparent (manifest content). The method of changing from latent to manifest material is known as dreamwork which includes focus and displacement operations<sup>5</sup>. The critic analyses the language and symbolism of the text to reverse the mechanism of dreamwork and to arrive at the underlying unconscious thoughts.

It is presented in Nora's lifestyle, Nora lives in a dream world where everything is perfect, and everything makes sense as in a child's imagination. She

thinks that the world would never judge a woman who tries to save her husband's life or protect a dying father. When she confronted Krogstad, who tells her that forging someone else's signature is against the law, she responds:

“I don't believe that. Do you mean to tell me that a daughter has no right to spare her dying father anxiety?-that a wife has no right to save her husband's life" I don't know much about the law, but I'm sure that, somewhere or another, you will find that that is allowed”<sup>6</sup>.

Throughout the play, Christine, a woman who had always faced problems and difficulties in her life, tries to clarify to Nora that there are more important things in life to care about than money. She believes that Nora, instead of living in the actual world where everything is not always so perfect, she lives in a dream one in which nothing can go wrong. Christine understands that Nora has managed a safe life because she was always taken care of, first by her father and then by her husband. ‘Nora Helmer spends most of her whole life in a dream world as a doll and as a vapid, passive woman with little personality of her own where her identity has mostly been portrayed as a construct of societal norms and the expectations of others as if she is destined to be the plaything in the hands of other characters’<sup>7</sup>. She has childlike manners and seems to enjoy when her husband treats her as a doll and calls her by pet names; Nora does everything she can just to satisfy her husband.

Probably, Nora does not understand the way the world functions, and the final realization that she is in great trouble of ruining her and her husband's reputation makes her get out of the childish dream she had been living. She wakes up and realises the lie on which she has based her life; she is married to a man who has always treated her like a child, a doll and a possession. She thought she was happy, but discovers that this kind of happiness was based on a much more comprehensive masquerade than the one she herself had invented<sup>8</sup>.

When Krogstad, the one Nora borrowed money from, revealed her secret of forgery to her husband, Torvald became insensitive towards her and he only cared about his reputation; Nora then realizes that her husband is a very different person than she once believed. She thought that he would give up everything for her, but he has no intention of taking the blame for Nora's crime. When this becomes clear, Nora accepts the fact that their marriage has been an illusion, all her life with Torvald has, to some extent, been a lie and that Torvald didn't really love her the way she thought.

For this reason, Nora decided to retire from her dream world, the world in which she had lived as a doll without having any understanding of the real world, to discover her true identity and elevate herself on her own, she renounces her current self and leaves behind her family including her children,

Nora: "No-you are perfectly right. That problem is beyond me. There's another to be solved first. I must try to educate myself. You are not the man to help me in that. I must set about it alone. And that is why I am now leaving you!"<sup>9</sup>

Thus, Nora decides to take her first step into the real world knowing that it would be different, hard and lonely but she believes that it would help her to discover herself, be independent and have her individual freedom. Nora's last words are optimistic; she leaves Torvald explaining that there is a chance they could become man and wife once again, but only if a miracle occurred. This gives Torvald a brief ray of hope. However, his wife exits and slams the door, symbolizing the end of their relationship as well as her dream world.

End notes:

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<sup>1</sup>[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychoanalytic\\_dream\\_interpretation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychoanalytic_dream_interpretation)

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Boyko-Head, B.A. *A Lacanian Analysis of Miss Julie by August Strindberg and The Balcony by Jean Genet Christine*. (Brock University, 1990).

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

<sup>5</sup><https://www.verywellmind.com/what-is-latent-content-2795330>.

<sup>6</sup>Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (Act I, page 41).

<sup>7</sup>Israt Jahan Shuchi. *Nora's Metamorphosis from A Doll Child into A Reasonable Human Being: Reading Henrik Ibsen's A Doll's House*. (King Khalid University, 2020).

<sup>8</sup>James McFarlane. *The Cambridge Companion to Ibsen*. (Cambridge University Press, 2006).

<sup>9</sup>Henrik Ibsen, *A Doll's House* (Act III, page 115).

## V. Conclusion:

Literature is regarded as a creative art. The creation of any literary work does not come from nothing. This means that, to achieve a successful literary work, there must be a sufficient material provided by social, economic and political factors, in addition to one's own private experience. Thus, the works between our hands, August Strindberg's play, *Miss Julie* and Henrik Ibsen's, *A Doll's House* come as creation of the authors' surrounding conditions.

Both of them share a sense of outrage at centuries old institutions of prestige and control. It is obvious that a playwright's environment has a significant influence on his writing. It is very evident with both Ibsen's and Strindberg's works and the way they present their female characters that they had unhappy childhood memories which had involved their parents. However, this research primarily aimed to explore the two literary works, *Miss Julie* and *A Doll's House* by using the psychoanalysis theory. In doing this, we appealed to the Freudian theoretical concepts, Id, Ego and Superego, The Interpretation of Dreams and the Oedipus complex which helped us to understand and analyze these two plays.

After discussing the two works in the light of the theoretical framework that we have selected, it has allowed us to explore the Oedipus complex in both Miss Julie and Nora Helmer and how they broke free from it, both of them had repressive feelings towards their parents which they expressed differently; in the case of Nora in *A Doll's House*, she managed her Electra complex by having a father and daughter relationship with her husband, she has been treated like a doll by her father and then by her husband and seemed to enjoy it; she also had a childish role and never grows as an adult because she saw in Torvald a father figure. In

contrast, in *Miss Julie*, Julie is described as a “man hating half-woman”; she was taught to be a man by her mother and did tasks that boys were supposed to do because her mother reproached her for lacking a penis thus she should act like a man. In addition to that, Miss Julie developed some attracting feelings towards her father which resulted in having a father and daughter relationship with Jean. Thereby, one can presume that Miss Julie is a degenerate woman who suffers from feminine and masculine feelings.

We have also shown through the notion of Id, Ego and Superego, their desires, wants, how they behave and how they reached their ideal selves at the end of the plays. In *A Doll's House*, Nora is presented as a woman who likes to spend her money and does everything to satisfy her husband since she allows him to treat her as weak and denounces her control because, for her, this was her reality until she frees herself and decided to move into her ideal self. In *Miss Julie*, the protagonist seemed to be a person who likes pleasure and danger and forget about her social status since she treated the servants as equals before she realized that, indeed, what she was doing and her relationship with Jean did not correspond to her social status, which, in fact, caused her suicide at the end of the play for not having enough courage to leave her family as Nora did at the end of *A Doll's House*.

As a last chapter in this study, Freud's Interpretation of Dreams allowed us to more analyse the two protagonists and more understand the way they have been living and to know what was the life they wanted to have. Miss Julie's dream reflected her current situation and was meant to foreshadow her final action which was suicide; whereas Nora Helmer lived in dream world where everything was perfect because probably she has always been a spoiled woman; however, at the end she decided to escape her dream world and face reality as an adult person.

In the course of our work, we come to a conclusion that both plays' protagonists Miss Julie and Nora Helmer seem to experience certain anxiety and neurosis that led them to revolt

but not in the same manner. We've highlighted their lives as well as their experience and their manner to attain their ideal selves. Besides, in both plays, the two protagonists have a feeling of guilt that drives them to seek for solutions to flee the past and forget about it.

The concept of our memoir does not allow us to deal with all the concerns discussed by both Ibsen's *A Doll's House* and Strindberg's *Miss Julie*. Thus, we encourage other students to discuss these two works from different perspectives. In fact, some may study these two literary texts by relying on the study of their historical background, as they were both published in the Victorian period. We also propose that others may treat these plays as a realistic and naturalistic works. In fact, both the Norwegian and the Swedish authors used realistic and naturalistic devices to write their literary works.

We also suggest to study them according to the backgrounds of the playwrights because it could be seen as significant in regards to these two plays. Ibsen was Norwegian and at that time Norway was a Swedish province. Nora can be seen as a symbol of Norway who realizes that she is oppressed by her colonial master Torvald and breaks free to become independent. Strindberg on the other hand, was Swedish and the tragedy of *Miss Julie* could be a symbol of what might happen if the traditional rulers, men or Sweden, are threatened. Certainly these plays were written at a time of heightened romantic nationalism and this may have been a thought in the back of the writer's minds.

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