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## Jules

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*Virginia Commonwealth University*

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School of the Arts  
Virginia Commonwealth University

This is to certify that the thesis prepared by Emily M. Oye entitled JULES has been approved by her committee as satisfactory completion of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Fine Arts.

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July 23, 2008

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JULES

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

by

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# Abstract

Jules

By Emily M. Oye, MFA

A Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts at Virginia Commonwealth University.

Virginia Commonwealth University, 2008

Major Director: Dr. Noreen C. Barnes, Department of Theatre

The short play Jules is a response to August Strindberg's Miss Julie and Patrick Marber's After Miss Julie. Jules is the story of a wealthy young woman celebrating her Sweet 16 birthday in Orange County, California. On the night of the party, her best friend tries to dissuade her from falling for a young Mexican immigrant who is catering her "Juicy Couture"-themed celebration. Jules explores the tensions between rich and poor, the attitude of the privileged towards the working class, the consequences of relationships, and the attitude of excess that characterizes our "Girls Gone Wild" era. My thesis thus comprises two parts: the written play and the dramaturgical research.

This document was created in Microsoft Word 2000.

# **JULES**

## **Characters**

**Jules**, birthday girl, 16, Caucasian.

**Kristine**, her best friend, 16, of half-Hispanic descent.

**Juan**, 25, Mexican.

## **Scene**

Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach Resort, Huntington Beach, CA.

Site of Jules's "Juicy Couture" themed Sweet 16 birthday party.

## **Time**

Spring 2008

**SCENE 1**

AT RISE: JULES and KRISTINE in a plush hotel suite.

LIGHTS UP. KRISTINE and JULES in front of a mirror.

JULES adjusts her dress, trying to maximize her cleavage.

KRISTINE

Stop that! You look fabulous already.

JULES

We look fabulous, dahling, absolutely fabulous! (*Puts lip-gloss on.*)

KRISTINE

Aww! Can I borrow?

JULES hands KRISTINE the lip-gloss. KRISTINE applies it in a pucker.

JULES

(*Shaking her arm with charm bracelet*) Thank you for my charm, baby! I love it! A boxing glove, a piñata, and a status bag!

KRISTINE gives the lip-gloss back to JULES.

KRISTINE

Thank you. Aww, happy birthday!

JULES

I'm sixteen! Sixteen! We're sweet sixteen!

JULES holds out her arms to KRISTINE.

JULES

Dance with me!

K and J DANCE together in a formal embrace.

JULES and KRISTINE

(*Singing*) Sixteen candles...wooh-oo...sixteen candles....That's all I got!

K and J GIGGLE; fall out of embrace.



JULES

*(Casually)* Hey, did you get the stuff from your sister?

KRISTINE

*(Still dancing)* No. *(Beat)* We don't need it. Your party is already the most awesome, super-super sweet sixteen ever!

JULES

Oh my god, you really didn't! Did you even ask her?

KRISTINE

I told you she wasn't coming home this weekend.

KRISTINE reaches for JULES's arm.

KRISTINE

Come on, let's go dance!

JULES

Kristi, you promised! Nobody's going to come to the after party if they can't drink!

KRISTINE

Dude, I'll be there! *(Pause)* It won't matter – it's *your* birthday! After a party like this, everyone's going to hit the after party!

JULES

But I need it!

KRISTINE

Why? You're having fun, aren't you?

JULES

I need it, to, you know. *(Shrugs)*

KRISTINE repeats JULES's gesture intimating that she doesn't understand.

JULES

I need it to feel sexy.

KRISTINE

Seriously? In that dress? In those shoes? You're wearing Blahniks – they are sexy. *(Beat)* Just look at yourself!

JULES

*(Looking at reflection)* If you were a dude, would you have sex with me?

KRISTINE glares at JULES's reflection from over her shoulder.

JULES

Well, ok, if you had sex, like, if you weren't true-love-waiting, would you?

KRISTINE

No. Not because you're not hot but because – Jules, we're only sixteen! We're not ready.

JULES

I am. I want it to be perfect. I want it to happen tonight. I don't want to be a virgin all summer! Or, god, go to college a virgin.

KRISTINE

Thank you. I'll be sure to declare that on my rooming preferences, in case they separate floors by prudes and sluts.

JULES

I didn't say you were a prude!

KRISTINE

But you think I am. S'ok, I'm used to it. You think I don't hear what the plastics say behind my back? I bet some of them are still virgins. Or they wish they were. I know, they're your friends, and I'm your virgin-jock friend who-must be a lesbo if she's still carrying her v-card.

JULES

You are a smart, funny, beautiful girl, who will be sitting next to me in the front seat of my C-class tonight!

KRISTINE

Oh my god, you're getting the Benz? Did you see it?!

JULES

No, not yet. But I'm sure they'll give it to me tonight! I mean, it's my sixteenth birthday!

KRISTINE

Come, on, let's go see!

JULES and Kristine exit RIGHT holding hands.

## SCENE 2

AT RISE: Hotel Ballroom. JULES has just made her grand entrance and leading KRISTINE around the room by the hand. JULES hugs or waves to almost everyone. Partygoers dance to a loud, fast, club beat. JUAN stands downstage right, partially hidden. After a moment, the music slows to a dream-like speed and heartbeat sound rises. Lights on crowd dim. At the same time, JULES sees JUAN. Sensing her, he turns, comes out of darkness. At the same time, lights go out on crowd and two spots UP on JULES and JUAN. Heartbeat UP very quickly as JULES and JUAN make eye contact. Hold for five seconds then break. Music and Lights normal at once. JULES looks around, disoriented. JUAN exits stage right, unnoticed. JULES searches for him for a moment before being engulfed in crowd. Music and Lights UP to full then out.

## SCENE 3

AT RISE: JULES and KRISTINE in hotel room.

JULES sits on the bed. KRISTINE paces.

KRISTINE

You can't be serious.

JULES

Of course I am. Tonight. You have to cover for me while I'm missing.

KRISTINE

*(Raises her eyebrows at "missing.")* Oh my god – you're going to give it up in the linen closet! That's real classy.

JULES

Thanks, I thought so. No, I'm bringing him up here.

KRISTINE

I was planning on sleeping in that bed tonight!

JULES

*(Sly smile)* Me, too.

KRISTINE

Jules, you don't know him! If you sleep with him, people will find out! You'll be rated like a thoroughbred at the country club!

JULES

I'm not on auction to the highest bidder!

KRISTINE

Maybe you should consider that! You're worth a lot more than a one-night stand with a waiter!

JULES

His name is Juan. Kristi, he's doing me a favor – a hot guy who doesn't bounce when he finds out I'm a virgin?

KRISTINE

Is that your only criterion? Seriously?

JULES

No! He's cute. *(Thinking)* He's gainfully employed. He's bilingual.

KRISTINE

Are you out of your head? In two days it will be all over school, and the hotel, and your father will find out! "Jules sleeps with a server!" Your parents will die.

JULES

They won't have to know! I trust him not to tell. And the only people who will know at school are you and me. And the people I tell. So do me a solid and keep it tight, ok? Please.

KRISTINE

Jules, please think about this. What if you get a disease? What if you get knocked up?

JULES

I'm prepared. For tonight, dude, I bought *(struggling)* protection.

KRISTINE

*(Dry)* That's comforting.

JULES

I don't know where that boy's been. *(In response to KRISTINE's look)* Am I wrong?

KRISTINE

That's what I'm saying! I'm not going to change your mind, am I? Alright. If anyone asks, I will tell them you went outside for air.

JULES

Oh my god, I love you! Oh! If I'm not there when the Pussycat Dolls come out, come get me!

KRISTINE

Can you plan around that? I don't really want to have to interrupt the, uh, magical moment.

JULES

*(Laughs)* Come on! I have to cut my cake!

JULES pulls KRISTINE's hand.

JULES: *(as exit)* It's amazingly pink! They even made it in the shape of the crown! I wanted it to say "Juicy," but my mom was like, "It has to say 'Happy Birthday!'"

#### SCENE 4

AT RISE: Outside hotel ballroom. KRISTINE exits from inside. MUSIC swells and fades with door opening and closing.

KRISTINE

Jules?

JUAN enters from RIGHT.

KRISTINE advances.

KRISTINE

Jules? Oh, its – is Julie with you? I saw—she left half an hour ago. I thought she was meeting you.

JUAN

She asked me to partner her. I couldn't say no.

KRISTINE

Excuse me? I hope you mean to dance.

JUAN

*(Laughing)* You've seen her dancing – supposed to be a lady but grinding with the dogs.

KRISTINE

And the servers!

JUAN

That's different – I'm different.

KRISTINE

How so? I don't see it.

JUAN

Just different. *(Pause)* The rich should never sell themselves cheap. They try to act common so they become common. *(Pause)* You should know that, Kristine.

KRISTINE

You're disgusting.

JUAN

Oh, Kristine. Do I make you nervous? Do you like that? I never promised Jules I would be monogamous, you know. After I'm done with her...

KRISTINE tries to exit.

KRISTINE

I know my place and it's not under you.

JUAN blocks KRISTINE.

JUAN

That's not what I had in mind. I'm no better than you, Malibu Barbie. *(Mimicking)* Oh Juan, the poor immigrant, *no habla englais* – no, senorita, I came here by a plane, to run the hotel. But I get it. I see you how think: A dog can lie on the countess's sofa, a horse can have his nose patted by a lady's hand, but a servant – no, no, I wasn't born to cringe. *(Stepping back, waving KRISTINE through)* Now, if you will excuse me, a gentleman doesn't keep a lady waiting.

JUAN goes to exit.

KRISTINE

*(Calling after him)* Juan! Wait! Please – be gentle.

JUAN smiles kindly, nods and exits.

LIGHTS FADE on KRISTINE alone on stage.

### SCENE 5

AT RISE: Ballroom exterior. JUAN and JULES standing.

JULES

I'm sure I've never been in love until now. Have you ever been in love with someone as much as I am with you?

JUAN

Once. As a child.

JULES

Who was she?

JUAN

Bernice. My father worked for her family, on their farm. He used to take me with him sometimes, if someone was ill, or if they needed an extra hand.

JULES

Isn't that illegal? Child labor laws?

JUAN

*Para no exister.* *(Shrugs)* I've put food on the table since I was seven.

JULES

Oh my god, you poor thing!

JUAN

No, no. I enjoyed it.

JULES

So how did you know her?

JULES moves closer to JUAN.

JUAN

One day, when we're resting, my father tells me to go pick some oranges. For us, for lunch.

JULES

*(Squealing with delight)* Stealing!

JUAN

Taking what we were owed –

JULES

Stealing!

JUAN

Sure. *(Shrugging)* So I snuck into the orchards, to the orange trees. The sweetest trees were on the outside of the field. *(Remembering)* It was closest to the barn, next to a pond where they watered the horses. I climbed up into a tree, and I saw her, petting her pony at the pond. I couldn't move. I watched her stroking the pony, and talking to it, whispering all her secrets. And she looked sad and alone. So sad. And I fell in love with her.

JULES

I always wanted a pony! What was its name?

JUAN

*Joya* – jewel. He grew up to be a fine stud – he fathered many horses for the farm.

JULES

What happened to her?

JUAN

Bernice?

JULES nods and comes closer to JUAN. JULES begins to touch him as he speaks.

JUAN

She grew up, too.

JULES

Is she pretty? Did she grow up to be as pretty as I am?



JUAN

*Si.* She's beautiful.

JULES

What does she look like? (*Encouraging*) Tell me.

JUAN

She has eyes like coal... lips like rubies... hair as thick and as dark as a pony's mane, but it feels like silk. Her skin is like hazelnuts, soft and smooth.

JULES

And how did she kiss?

JUAN

Sometimes gentle and slow. And sometimes she would almost bite me.

JULES

What did she sound like? Did she moan? Did she say, "Juan?" (*Whispers in his ear*)

JUAN

No. She squealed like a pig.

JULES leans in to kiss JUAN.

JULES

You're a charming storyteller.

JUAN stops JULES gently.

JUAN

Julie. Please. Go back to the party.

JULES

You can't tell me what to do!

JUAN

Please! You're excited, it's your party, it went to your head. Besides – I hear them coming to look for you. And if they find us together –

SOUND of crowd singing "Happy Birthday."

JULES

I know all these people! I love them! They love me – let them see us! I don't care! Let them find us! They love me, they will love you, too!

JUAN

Don't confuse love with envy, Julie – they take your food, they give you presents – they love being at your party. They love you because it's *your* party.

JULES

Don't be silly! (*Grabs JUAN's hand*) Let's celebrate!

SOUND of crowd is louder.

JUAN

I can't stay – if they see me – (*breaks away from JULES*) I have to go.

JULES

But where? Where are you going?

JUAN begins to exit LEFT.

JULES

Wait!

JULES tosses JUAN her room key from her purse. JUAN catches it.

JULES

Go up to my room. Wait for me.

JUAN

And if they look for you?

JULES

They won't! I'll be cutting the cake, they'll eat it, they won't notice I'm gone! Go! I'll be there soon!

JUAN exits LEFT. JULES runs into ballroom. SOUND of loud singing.

## SCENE 6

AT RISE: Ballroom interior. LIGHTS UP on JUAN and JULES, alone, dancing, a slow motion, choreographed Pasa Doble. MUSIC.

**SCENE 7**

AT RISE: The same hotel suite as before. JULES lying in bed. JUAN, dressed only in pants, straightening up the room and picking up clothes.

JULES

Oh, Juan, I love you.

JUAN

Thank you.

JULES

Tell me you love me, too.

JUAN

Julie –

JULES

Julie? You sound like my mother. No – say, “I love you, Jules. I want to take you away with me, to Mexico, where we’ll lay on the beach all day and drink margaritas!” We can celebrate our anniversary on my birthday!

JUAN

What about work? Where are we going to get the money? I don’t think we can charge that life to your Daddy’s Black Card.

JULES

We can have a hotel! You can be the manager, and I can work the front desk or be the concierge! I would be so good at that! I can arrange trips and send people to see the real Mexico!

JUAN

Casa Julie?

JULES

I love it! A B and B with my name! *Charmant!*

JUAN

It will be small, maybe 10 rooms. Everything will be local. My mama can run the kitchen, my sisters take care of the rooms.

JULES

We'll design the rooms together! Crisp white sheets with blue embroidery, black and white pictures of the sea! We can have handmade pottery for dishes. It will be Mexican fabulous!

JUAN

I'm a servant today, but next year, I'll own my hotel. In ten years, I'll have enough to retire.

JULES

Then let's go! Tonight!

JUAN

*(Hint at cruelty)* Then give me your card to buy the tickets.

JULES

*(Laughing)* I only have a \$500 limit! A single ticket to Cancun is at least \$300!

JUAN

I've got family. I've got experience. I can work when we get there. I can find an apartment in the village.

JULES

Oh that sounds so quaint! *(Laughs)* Honey, I love you, but if I'm going to a third world country, it's first class and five- star!

PAUSE.

JUAN

Ah. If that's the way, then things should stay the way they are.

JULES

What do you mean?

JUAN

*(To himself)* I am such a fool! I should have known better – *(to JULES)* I may be your first, but I won't be your husband. I can't even be your boyfriend – you need Juicy, *(reading the label on her dress)* Betsy Johnson, Mercedes-Benz – *(shrugging)* all I can offer is *la vida facil*. *(In response to her questioning look)* The simple life.

JULES

Are you breaking up with me?

JUAN

How can I break up with you if we were never together?

JULES

*(Grasps at sheets for coverage)* Oh, god, I'm going to be sick! I gave it up for you – I thought it was special! I was special.

JUAN

Like in the movies? *(Sniggers)* It's only like that in the movies. *(Beat)* You didn't think it was my first time, too.

JULES

No, but -- *(struggling)* No, I knew that. I just thought I might be the first to mean something. I really like you!

JUAN

Me, the servant, the immigrant? No, you like the idea of me.

JULES

What terrible power drew me to you? The attraction of the weak to the strong? The falling to the rising? Or was it love? Was this love? Do you know what love is?

JUAN

I know what this is – the infatuation of a little girl who gave it up, cashed in her v-card, had her cherry—

JULES

*(Cutting him off)* Watch your mouth! *(Pause)* How dare you!

JUAN

Dare tell the truth?

JULES

What have I done? Oh my god!

JUAN

Fallen. Briefly. But pleurably, I think.

JULES

Do you hate me?

JUAN  
No. Why should I?

JULES  
Because you took advantage of me!

JUAN  
Vice versa, I think.

JULES  
But you wanted me!

JUAN  
You confuse love and desire, Julie.

JULES  
But I love you!

JUAN  
I'm flattered.

JULES  
How can you sit there and say that to me!

JUAN  
Stop acting the weeping debutante, Julie! We had a roll in the hay. Have a drink, forget it. You're more fun when you're loose.

JULES  
Oh my god! You're disgusting!

JUAN  
Funny, that's the second time a woman has told me that today. (*Pause*) Now, if you will excuse me, I have to get back to work.

JULES  
Oh, god, can anyone be as miserable as I am?

JUAN  
Why? Are you embarrassed after such a conquest?

JULES  
What am I going to do? I can't go back there! I can't go out to the party like this!

JUAN

*(Crawls up to JULES on his knees)* Like what? Deflowered by your Daddy's servant? You can't go out there for cake and "Happy Birthday" with blood on your dress?

JULES

How can anyone be thoroughly filthy?

JUAN

Better clean up then!

JUAN tosses JULES her underwear.

JULES

You lackey, you menial! Stand up when you speak to me!

JUAN

Menial's strumpet, lackey's whore, shut up! Who are you to lecture me on coarseness? None of my kind is ever as coarse as you were tonight! Do you think my girls give it up at their *quinceañera*? Those maids throw themselves at the men of their court? HA! I've only seen it among animals and streetwalkers.

JULES

How dare you! Remember your position!

JUAN

Which one, Julie? There were a few.

JULES

Servant! You're still a servant!

JUAN

And you're a slut! A servant's slut!

JULES

Oh my god, I'm filthy! *(Realizes double meaning and begins to laugh)* I'm filthy! You should punish me. Hit me for getting so dirty.

JUAN

I feel sorry for you.

JULES

Don't feel sorry for me. Hit me.

JUAN

No.

JULES

Now that you've seen the hawk's back.

JUAN

Not exactly its back.

JULES

And seen that it's only gray, not black. (*Looking down at her hands*) That these fingernails are chipped. That a dirty handkerchief is still dirty, even if it does smell of perfume.

JUAN

Julie, please.

JULES

(*Sobbing*) Hit me! I don't deserve any better. I'm worthless.

PAUSE.

JULES

Help me, Juan, help me! If you see any way out of this, help me, please!

JUAN

Julie, I'm sorry.

JULES

Will you help me? Will you do something for me, please?

JUAN

(*Wary*) What do you want?

JULES

Hurt me. I want you to hurt me.

JUAN

Julie –

JULES



*(Unheard)* Hurt me or I will!

JUAN

What?

JULES

Was I good? Did you enjoy it? Did you enjoy me?

JUAN

Of course I did. Couldn't you tell?

JULES

How could I? I have no experience. I haven't lived. *(Unheard)* And I won't, much longer.

JUAN

Come on, you're being –

JULES

*(Screaming)* Don't tell me what I'm being!

Pause. JULES climbs out of bed and begins to dress.

JULES

I have to go. I can't stay here; I could never live it down. When my father finds out, he'll kill me. He'd fire you on the spot and make my life miserable. *(Laughs)* Like mother, like daughter!

JUAN

What do you mean?

JULES

I haven't told you about my mother? Oh, it's rich – *la scandale extraordinaire!* She slept with a servant – the gardener! So Orange County! She loved him – she was going to leave my father. When he found out, he tried to kill himself, shoot himself. *(Laughs)* Like father, like daughter.

JUAN

But they're still together.

JULES

Of course they are! He's one of the wealthiest men in California! Oh, they fight all the time. They try to make me take sides. That's what this party is all about, I am sure. I don't know whose side I am on. I think I learnt all my emotions by the age of ten and never developed any more. Except when it comes to men, because here I am.

JUAN

Julie, it's late. Why don't you go back to the party? Forget about this.

JULES

Come with me. Come away with me and we'll live happily ever after.

JUAN

Run away with you?

JULES

Yes. And we'll die happily ever after.

JULES grabs car keys.

JULES

Let's go.

JUAN

Do you mean – die together? Suicide?

JULES

Yes. Come with me Juan – neither of us can live like this, after this.

JUAN

*(Taking her hand with keys.)* No, Julie. Suicide is for cowards.

JULES doesn't move her hand.

JULES

Chicken.

JUAN

It's a crime!

JULES

It's not against the law.

Against God's law.

JUAN

You believe in God?

JULES

I live by my faith.

JUAN

JUAN takes his hand off JULES's hand and puts his shirt on.

Good night, Julie.

JUAN

JUAN goes to exit.

You forget who I am.

JULES

What more do you want from me, Julie? I made love to you. I apologized. I will not die with you. I apologize. I will not hurt you. (*Pause*) What do you want?

JUAN

I want to go away.

JULES

JUAN reaches into his pocket and pulls out some bills. HE tosses them on the bed.

Here!

JUAN

It's not enough. You take my virginity, you humiliate me and my father – there's a higher price. You don't leave this room without me or I will cry rape and I will not shut up until you are in jail.

JULES

Julie, I'm sorry that I hurt you as much as I did, and I'm sorry that I won't hurt you more. I am sorry that you made me hurt you. But I belong downstairs, and you, (*gesturing*) here. So go. Enjoy your party. Enjoy being sixteen. (*Shrugs*) You're going to forget about this. Soon it will be just a dull ache. You'll live with it.

JUAN

JULES  
How do you live without Bernice?

JUAN  
(*Shrugs*) Go. Go enjoy yourself.

JULES  
I can't.

JUAN  
Yes, you can. Go. Go eat your cake.

JULES  
I can't.

JUAN  
Then go enjoy your new car! Take Kristine out with you. (Pause) Goodnight, Julie.

JUAN exits.

### SCENE 8

AT RISE: Exterior of hotel room. JUAN bumps into KRISTINE.

JUAN bows to KRISTINE.

KRISTINE  
Is she in there?

JUAN nods.

KRISTINE  
(*Raises her hand to slap him but changes her mind and lowers her hand.*) I'm surprised at her. If it was a gentleman, I might understand it, but you – who are you to her?

JUAN  
It wasn't all her fault. I took advantage.

KRISTINE  
Isn't that noble, defending her honor.

JUAN reacts but stays silent.

Well, go on. Aren't you leaving?

KRISTINE

She asked me to wait for her.

JUAN

KRISTINE brushes past JUAN and knocks on the door.

Jules? Jules! Open up! It's me!

KRISTINE

It's okay, Kristine. I'll be down in a minute.

JULES

*(From within)*

I'm not going anywhere without you.

KRISTINE

Kristine, I'm okay. I'll be downstairs in a minute.

JULES

*(From within)*

JUAN pretends not to listen.  
After a moment, KRISTINE exits.  
JULES exits hotel room.

Let's go.

JUAN

JULES walks past JUAN, then stops and faces him.

JULES

Go? Go with you? You think I'm weak enough to go with you? Because I wanted you inside me? It's just biology – chemicals – but you think I want to run away with you and have your illegal babies? You think I want to take your name? What is your name, anyway? Iglesias? Lopez? What would that sound like – Jules Lopez! *(Laughing)*

Rodriguez.

JUAN

JULES

Well Mr. Rodriguez, goodbye and goodnight. (*Flashing keys*) May we never meet again.

JUAN

Julie, don't hurt yourself.

JULES

I want to.

JUAN reaches for her keys. JULES pulls her arm back.

JUAN

No, you don't.

JULES

I do. Only I won't fail like my father. The coward.

JUAN

He's not a coward. He realized what he had to live for.

JULES

You don't know him. You only work for him. You don't know what it's like to be Daddy's special girl. Of course I love him, I love him as much as I hate him. And my mother. So let them fight over me one last time – who caused it? Who made her do it?

JUAN takes her wrist. JULES pulls HIM close and rubs against HIM.

JULES

Have you ever killed anything, Juan?

JUAN

A pig, some chickens. (*shrugging*) Dinner. (*pause*) Why?

JULES

I have. Once. By accident. Well, I was responsible. I had a bird when I was little, a little finch. Mom and Dad gave her to me after a particularly nasty fight. I kept her in a cage, in my room, hanging from a stand, just like in an old movie. One day I let her out. I wanted to see what she would do, I guess, or maybe I wanted the company. She flew right into a window. (*laughs softly*) Silly bird. First thing she does out of her cage is kill herself.

JULES steps back and faces JUAN.

JULES

Give me the order, servant.

JUAN

I won't.

JULES

Go on. It'll be fun. You know to obey, now give the order.

After a PAUSE, JUAN hands JULES the car keys.

JUAN

Here, *pequeño pájaro*.

JULES

(*Curiously*) What?

JUAN

*Pequeño pájaro*. "Little bird."

JULES

Yes. Thank you.

JULES takes the keys from JUAN's hand.

JUAN takes JULES's head in his hands and looks into her eyes.

JULES nods.

JUAN kisses JULES, tenderly.

JULES breaks away.

JULES

Pray for me.

JULES exits, clutching her keys to her chest.

JUAN makes the sign of the cross and bows his head.

JUAN prays for about ten seconds.

JUAN makes the sign of the cross and exits RIGHT.

LIGHTS UP FULL.

BLACKOUT.

## Dramaturgical Research

“The play is not a translation of the original. Rather, it is a ‘version’ – with all the ambiguity that word might suggest. I was unfaithful to the original. But conscious that infidelity might be an act of love” (Marber xv).

### *Miss Julie*

August Strindberg considered Emile Zola’s 1873 premiere of *Thérèse Raquin* “the first milestone of naturalist drama.” (Essays 76) For Strindberg, naturalism was:

...a grandiose art...which seeks out those points where the great battles take place, which loves to see what one does not see every day, which delights in the struggle between natural forces, which not concerned wither something is beautiful or ugly as long as it is great. (Essays 78)

His definition certainly informs *Miss Julie* which he described as “the first Naturalistic Tragedy in Swedish Drama” (Letters 280). Structurally, this struggle of social class drives the dramatic conflict. The battle of love and hate creates the tension between Jean and Julie. Jean is alternately slave to and rebel against his social instincts; he knows he cannot be with Miss Julie, but he recognizes an opportunity to show her that he does not belong in the servant class. Julie, too, acknowledges the taboo of sleeping with a servant and willing, almost gleefully, defies social norms in order to



have her way. However, the ramifications are too ugly for her to accept and she ultimately caves to her social instincts and kills herself to avoid the shame and possibility of re-invention of self.

Strindberg coupled his fascination with naturalism with autobiographical circumstances to invent *Miss Julie*. In 1887, Strindberg left Sweden for Copenhagen, Denmark, where he met Victoria Benedictsson, a writer whose attempted suicide partly inspired *Miss Julie* (Letters 251). In the summer of 1888, “a period of feverish creativity, his singular encounter with a local girl, Martha Hansen, preceded a painful period of celibacy” (Letters 251). In an October letter to his confidante and contemporary Verner von Heidenstam he complains:

I’m now heading for epilepsy as a result of celibacy and unsatisfied sexual desire. ... I could surely have a few servants, but where sex is concerned, I’m an aristocrat, and demand soap and a toothbrush. Besides, I don’t want to sow my seed in bad soil. ... my Arian sense of honor forbids I steal other men’s wives. ... Can you understand my misogyny? Which is only the reverse of a terrible desire for the other sex. (Letters 288)

However, these experiences undoubtedly contributed to the creation of *Miss Julie*.

During this same period, Greog Brandes introduced Strindberg to the philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. In a letter to Edvard Brandes, he proclaims that “the uterus of my mental world has received a tremendous ejaculation of sperm from Friedrich

Nietzsche, so that I feel like a bitch with a full belly! He's the man for me!" (283) This injection of misogyny and class conflict certainly colors Strindberg's idea of Julie:

On one hand Strindberg the naturalist, the Darwinist, tries to persuade himself that it makes him happy to see the weak, decadent Julie destroyed and the 'fit' Jean survive. But on the other hand, Strindberg . . . has learned to appreciate the aristocratic pride of the *Übermensch*. From this point of view, it makes a painful impression to see the aristocratic Julie, with her sense of pride, being defeated by the plebian Jean who is not burdened by any such handicap. (Madsen 84)

Jean understands his place but he sees the status he could have. He will reinvent himself because "he has the potentiality of master in him as much as that of slave" (Goldman 29). Kristine sees that potential and spurs Jean to try and escape the degradation of servitude. She desires a comfortable life as Jean's wife, supported by a pension. It may not be glamorous, but it is, as Goldman asserts, a function of being the "damned servant," which she pushes Jean to reject (29).

Strindberg does not grant Kristine much import:

Kristine, finally is a female slave. Years standing over the stove have made her conventional and lethargic; instinctively hypocritical, she uses morality and religion as cloaks and scapegoats. . . . Furthermore, she is a minor character, and I purposely sketched her in . . ." (923)

Given his propensity towards misogyny, this dim view of Kristine is not surprising; however, it is not satisfactory. "Her conventional piety, her lack of imagination, and her

consciousness of class distinctions are carefully and objectively observed by Strindberg,” as Madsen argues. Furthermore, she functions as the heartbeat of morality in the play. She is the one who straightens out the class discrepancies when Julie and Jean try to flip them. When Jean returns from dancing with Julie he asks Kristine if she is mad; she says no, but digs, “Besides, I know my place...” (929).

Julie does not have the same perspective and cannot afford to have the same optimism as Jean and Kristine. Julie is the sole heir to her father’s estate, the end of a family line and she herself does not reproduce. This is not because she is asexual; rather, she is the aristocrat who does have a servant, a manifestation of the desperation and chaotic sexual misfortune that Strindberg lamented in his letter to von Heidenstam. Julie has to kill herself to avoid the future, to avoid the possibility of re-inventing herself as Jean’s mistress after a sexual encounter, his “mistress of the house: the jewel in [the] crown” at the inn and a former member of the aristocracy (Longman 933). According to Børge Madsen, “the reasons for Julie’s yielding to Jean are essentially these ‘immediate’ factors, and the reason she commits suicide is her aristocratic sense of pride, which is not dependent on her being ‘half a woman and half a man’” (83).

Julie does not immediately reveal this “aristocratic sense of pride” (Madsen 83). Upon returning from dancing with Julie, Jean tells Kristine, “We wouldn’t behave like that, but that’s what happens when aristocrats pretend they’re common people – they get *common!* ---- But she is quite a woman! Magnificent!” (928) Later, Julie tries to be kind to Jean: “(*gently*) Don’t take it as an order! On a night like this we’re all just

ordinary people having fun, so we'll forget about rank" (929). Julie illustrates Jean's point – she does not recognize the impossibility of what she has just said. Jean concedes, but leaves her after a dance. She follows him to the kitchen and asks him to come outside again. Jean refuses, intimating that the other servants will misconstrue it:

Julie: What? That I've fallen in love with a servant?

Jean: I'm not a conceited man, but such things happen – and for these people, nothing is sacred.

Julie: I do believe you're an aristocrat!

Jean: Yes, I am.

Julie: And I'm stepping down...

Jean: Don't step down, Miss Julie, take my advice. No one'll believe you stepped down voluntarily. People will always say you fell. (930)

Strindberg originally wrote her as earnestly oblivious: because of her upbringing, she simply does not know that the people will talk about her. He believed that she fell, that she was destined to fall. However, given his later reading of Nietzsche and his letter to Nathalie Larsen, he would argue that she just plays dumb in the hopes of manipulating Jean to her own sexual wills. That turning point is in the previous exchange: "And I'm stepping down." She will toy with Jean, pretend innocence, but here we can see that she knows what she is doing.

Jean is not as malleable as she hopes. At one early point, Julie commands him to kiss her hand and then slaps him when he tries to embrace her. (Longman 931) The scene teems with sexual tension; Jean is clearly aroused. However, when Julie refuses

him, his anger boils and he snaps at her with an acidic sexual reference: “I never agreed to be your playmate, and never will. It’s beneath me.” (934) Later, he elaborates:

Jean (*with exaggerated suffering*): There was no hope of winning you, of course. --- You were a symbol of the helplessness of ever rising out of the class in which I was born. (932)

With this, Jean finds the point on which to latch: his own ambitions and Julie’s vulnerability in her social standing. It is obvious here that to seduce her he will have to appeal to her discomfort in her aristocratic standing. He picked up on it in her dream in which she describes falling from a pillar and from her continued efforts to be one of the working class.

Again, though, this strategy backfires on Jean, at least temporarily. Julie cannot endure the reality of the situation:

Do you think I’m going to stay in this house as your lover? With all the servants pointing their fingers at me? Do you imagine I can face my father after this? No! Take me away from here, away from shame and dishonor --- Oh, what have I done! My God, my God! ... (*on her knees, hands clasped*) Oh God in heaven, end my wretched life! Take me away from the filth I’m sinking into! Save me! Save me! (934)

Until this point, she has ignored the fact that “servants have their passions and feelings that cannot long be trifled with, with impunity” (Goldman 30). Jean’s retaliation, decimates Julie:

Julie: How can anyone be so thoroughly filthy?

Jean: Better clean up then!

Julie: (*crushed*) you're right. Hit me, trample on me. I don't deserve any better. I'm worthless. (935)

To see a woman reduced to such baseness as asking to be struck is heartbreaking, even though Julie is representative of the unsympathetic upper crust. As Martin Lamm notes, "Miss Julie wavers under the influence of many different impressions and is torn between the most contradictory feelings. We are, nevertheless, touched by her sympathy for her" (216). It is emotionally exhausting, then, when Jean triumphs, convinces her that her life is worthless, and prods her to suicide:

Julie (*dully*): Can you think of any way to end this? Any end to it?

Jean: (*taking the razor and putting it in her hand*) . . . Here's the broom! Go now while it's bright – out to the barn – and . . . (*Whispers in her ear.*)

Julie: Thank you! I'm going now to rest! (940-1)

Lamm accurately describes Jean as "more despicable [here] in his mood of triumph," while Julie's "inherited pride, which found expression in a rigid and insecure haughtiness, takes on a tragic dimension when she goes to her doom with the razor in her hand" (216-7). Jean ultimately triumphs over Julie and thus clears the way for the possibility of reinventing himself as the innkeeper or even Count that he longs to be.

In this sense, Strindberg re-invents his view of his own character. In a letter dated 13 March 1891, he writes Natalie Larsen: "But play Miss Julie as it should be played – not as a sentimental vicarage miss but an emancipated (= prostituted) modern

woman of the world. Show your passions, if you have any, otherwise affect them! If you've read Ola Hansson's analysis of the character, this man-hating mixture of lechery and reserve, it would give you a good lead" (347). "Modern woman of the world" implies a choice on Julie's part to emancipate herself rather than be reduced to the victim as which she is characterized in the play's preface: "The type is tragic... a victim of her own flawed constitution, a victim of the discord caused in a family by a mother's 'crime,' a victim of her own flawed constitution, a victim of the delusions and conditions of her age" (922).

Because Jean is a man, these new ideas do not change Strindberg's idea of Jean; in fact, they serve to reinforce Jean as the *Übermensch*.

*After Miss Julie*

Patrick Marber is known as a playwright who “crafts intricately layered, well-observed, heartfelt plays in a realistic vein about contemporary relationships” (Kramer 71). He originally wrote *After Miss Julie* as a teleplay for the British Broadcasting Corporation in 1995 and adapted it for the stage in 2003. Marber’s play is faithful to the original while exploring new territory, without derision or outpouring of adulation. Marber has managed to rejuvenate a play that is often considered in a single context of Naturalist drama and in doing so, raised awareness and relevance of its themes throughout history. When Marber’s *After Miss Julie* is juxtaposed against August Strindberg’s *Miss Julie*, it also becomes clear that Marber’s is a re-invention of a story that Strindberg himself re-imagined.

Marber’s play is also set in a specific time and place, England, 26 July 1945. World War I was in the past, and the Allies had just declared victory in World War II. The social and cultural repercussions of these wars were beginning to bring sweeping, lasting changes to the social and cultural norms in England and abroad. Because of America’s involvement in World War II, America begins to supplant England as the world’s super-power.

Marber’s decision to pin his play to a specific time and place was met with mixed reviews. For Richard Eyre, the specific setting richly colors the social importance of the play: “Relocating the play to the July night of the Labour landslide provided a brilliantly illuminating parallel which injected a sense of social and sexual liberation in



a truthful and accessible contest: Britain on the cusp of revolution.” Furthermore, “there’s the enjoyably familiar paradox of the owner of the house – a Labour peer – being an aristocrat whose class is threatened” (xiv). Michael Billington also praised Marber’s choice in his review for the *Guardian*: “What Marber captures precisely is the way the heroine’s hysteria is heightened by the night’s tumultuous events. Boyishly reared by an emancipated mother and a suicidal father, she is the victim of heredity, environment and her own anachronistic position as an outsider in the new socialist England.” It is a seminal point in history which has immediate reverberations in the play. On the night of Churchill’s defeat, Miss Julie stays at home rather than accompany her father to London to celebrate the Labour Victory Party. This is a daring choice, illuminating her desire to socialize with the working class. John recognizes the significance, but Christine brushes him off:

John: “D’you reckon it’s odd, her staying at home with the servants? I thought she’d go to London with her father.”

Christine: “‘Spect she doesn’t want to bump into anyone she knows. It’s embarrassing for a lady to be jilted like that.” (Marber 128)

After a kidney and a glass of wine he continues:

John: “Her mother was a madwoman too. D’you remember her sitting in here? What did she call it – ‘fraternising with the troops.’

(*shaking his head*) No wonder they’re a dying breed. Miss Julie’s supposed to be lady of the house but you should’ve seen her in the barn gallivanting with the gardeners, even the stable lads got their turn.

Christine: “And the chauffeur.”

John: “That’s different, I’m – “

Christine: “What?”

John: “Just different. The rich should never sell themselves cheap. They try to act common they become common. She dances well though, I’ll give her that.”

Christine: “That’s not all you’ll give her.” (130-1)

Christine stabs John for his dangerous relationship with Julie. In return, however, he chastises Christine for a lack of respect while he calls Julie a horse. This hypocritical retort reveals his unease with the relationship. However, he complies and allows himself to be seduced by Julie. This seduction is a major difference between Strindberg and Marber’s stories. In *Miss Julie*, Jean entices Julie, peaking when he invites her to take refuge in his room. However, in *After Miss Julie*, she is the instigator, the “emancipated young woman” that Strindberg wanted her to be, and thus not so much a tragic figure as Julie. Marber then, has clearly re-invented Strindberg’s play in the true intent and spirit of the original.

This idea is also evident in Julie’s final appearance on stage. In its starkness, Julie’s demise in *After Miss Julie* is even more distressing than the original:

Julie: What have I done?

John: Fallen. . . briefly . . . but pleasurably, I trust.

Julie: You hate me. . . ?

John: No.

Julie: You took advantage of me?

John: Vice versa, I think.

....  
Julie: STAND UP WHEN YOU SPEAK TO ME! STAND UP!  
REMEMBER YOUR POSITION!

*He stands.*

John: Which one, Madame? There were so many.

Julie: You're still a servant, you scared little squaddie, you're still a servant.

John: And you're a servant's slut. Don't come on all superior with me, Miss Julie. No woman of my class would accost me the way you did last night, no woman of my class would want what you wanted last night; sweating and braying, your face in the pillow, biting your hand to stop yourself screaming the house down. You'd shame a two-bit tart in Piccadilly.

Julie: Do I deserve this?

John: What's a man to think if you beg him to hit you?

*She breaks down. (155)*

Here, the abuse is more clearly linked to sexuality; Marber juxtaposes violence in sexuality in a way that could not be written in 1889.

*Miss Julie to After Miss Julie to Jules*

*Jules* is my own version of *Miss Julie* – not quite a contemporary adaptation, not a re-working, not a critical response to the original play, but, I hope, my own story that responds to both Strindberg’s *Miss Julie* and Marber’s *After Miss Julie* in my words. In this analysis, I will compare three key elements of the process of writing *Jules* from *Miss Julie* and *After Miss Julie*: the setting, the characters, and key scenes.

The success of *Miss Julie* and *After Miss Julie* comes from the juxtaposition of revelry and tragedy which I strived to exaggerate in *Jules*. Certainly the stakes are high at the Mid-Summer Night’s party of *Miss Julie* and the Labour victory party of *After Miss Julie*, but in *Jules*, I tried to add intensity by incorporating the high drama and inflated ego of teenagers, especially privileged ones. Both Strindberg and Marber affixed the action to a specific setting that informs the action of the play and gives the tragic action a firm base from which to explode: I chose Orange County, California, for its connotations of wealth and beauty.

Setting:

In a critique of *After Miss Julie* for *Variety*, Matt Wolf derided Marber’s choice of setting, describing it as “oddly limiting to Strindberg’s own explosive vision of human behavior to affix it so completely to one particular point in history.” I disagree; rather, in Marber’s play, the landslide election that signals the rise of the Labour party underscores the upheaval that is taking place on Julie’s estate and in her relationship with her servants, just as Strindberg’s choice of a festival that celebrates fertility gains

intensity from its setting on an eroding estate. Similarly, I recognized the need for a concrete setting that would inform the play as a whole. With the popularity of television shows such as “The OC,” “Laguna Beach,” “The Hills,” and “The Real Housewives of Orange County,” Southern California seemed to be a viable choice: it is upheld as the new status location, the new home for wealth and glamour, home to celebrities and families living off the new money from the dot-com economic boom. According to the 2000 Orange County Census, the median income for the Orange County area is \$58, 820 (with some areas as high as \$116, 203). However, someone has to serve in the restaurants, tend the gardens and the pools, teach the students, and therefore, Orange County has an uncomfortable economic divide. Compounding the economic divide is a cultural divide: Southern California’s proximity to Mexico makes it a likely place for Mexican immigrants to relocate; Hispanic people make up thirty-one percent of the population (2000 Census). By setting *Jules* in present-day California, I hoped to capitalize on the volatile relationship between Americans and immigrants, the wealthy and the poor who labor for them. Tensions between Caucasians and the Hispanic population who will soon outpace white Americans as the majority will only escalate; I deliberately chose a time on the cusp, before this upheaval of the status quo was fully recognized.

While palatial homes are the norm in the Orange County area, the estate that serves as the backdrop for both *Miss Julie* and *After Miss Julie* no longer exists in the same sense in present day America. Therefore, I chose a luxury resort, the Hyatt Regency Huntington Beach, as the setting; rather than a family estate, Jules’ father

owns a hotel. I set Jules' birthday party at this hotel, her father's property, with the idea that it functions as a home away home and therefore retains the import of patriarchal property. It is also typical of the extravagance of today's children's birthday parties, where teen's parents may rent several ballrooms and blocks of hotel rooms for their children's celebrations.

The Mid-Summer night theme of both Strindberg's original and Marber's version are not relevant in American culture, so I chose an American custom that has been recently re-vitalized and celebrated: the Sweet 16 Birthday party. Like the Hispanic *quinceañera* or the debutante ball, the Sweet 16 party is recognized as a rite of passage, the moment when a girl becomes a woman. (Vendela Vida explains the *quinceañera* as "the coming-of-age-ritual for Latin American girls that transforms them from *niñas* to *señoritas* when they are fifteen years old" (41)).

Identifying the Sweet 16 party as a transformation rite is problematic, because it falsely recognizes an adolescent girl as a woman. A sixteen year old woman in America can marry but not vote, may or may not be eligible for a driver's license, is not expected to graduate high school and matriculate in college for another two years; in other words, she is celebrated as reaching sexual maturity but not intellectual maturity or fully-realized citizenship. In her book girls, Catherine Driscoll explains this problem as being tied to the idea of majority: "If coming of legal age automatically qualifies the subject for majority then it does not in fact infer or require maturity. None of the rights and responsibilities invested in such a majority draw on any experience or process of the subject and they are not in any case chosen or endorsed by the subject attaining

majority” (48). Vida recognizes the falsity of the quince transformation that I wanted to address with a Sweet 16 party: “What being an adult in quince terms means is that as of the day of the ritual, the young woman is allowed to start wearing makeup, high heels, more revealing clothing; and dating men. But much of this simplicity and tradition is a thing of the past;” just as a Sweet 16 party today does not carry the past implications of a transformation from girl to woman (42).

In fact, in today’s culture of excess and status, the Sweet 16 seems to be recognized as less of a milestone in a person’s life and merely as an excuse for a party. The popular MTV program, *My Super Sweet 16*, highlights a new party each month; since its inception in 2004 it has expanded to include eighteenth birthday parties and coming-out parties. Teens on the show express their desire to have the “biggest party ever,” “the best band,” “the perfect dress,” ostensibly not only for themselves, but to show the world how much money they have, how much influence they have over their parents (who pay for the parties), how popular they are (a recurrent theme of the show is shots of the uninvited and clips of students describing the lengths they would go to receive an invitation to the party and at least one party has featured crashers, students who were not invited but show up at the party.) The heroine of *Jules* would surely be familiar with such parties, having attended a few of her friends, and eager to upstage them.

Jules’s party has a Juicy Couture theme, after the upscale-casual clothing line of the same name. Founded by two California women, Juicy Couture has a relaxed-luxury style, and is most famous for its velour tracksuits in which celebrities such as Jennifer

Lopez, herself a clothing designer, Cameron Diaz, and Madonna have been photographed. Juicy Couture has a tongue-in-cheek aesthetic, with logos like “Live Juicy,” and a motto of Old English letters pasted together in a ransom style. The theme color is pink; the chief motif a crown. For Jules’s party, then, the palette is pink, punk and preppy, and adorned with crowns: “JULES: (*as exit*) It’s amazingly pink! They even made it in the shape of the crown! I wanted it to say “Juicy,” but my mom was like, “It has to say ‘Happy Birthday!’” (Oye 7) The birthday girl even receives Juicy Couture presents: Jules thanks Kristine for a boxing glove charm for her bracelet, exclaiming, “A boxing glove, a piñata, and a status bag!” (Oye 2)

The success of *Miss Julie* and *After Miss Julie* comes from the juxtaposition of revelry and tragedy which I strived to exaggerate in *Jules*. Certainly the stakes are high at the Mid-Summer Nights party and the night of Labour victory, but in *Jules*, I tried to incorporate the high drama and inflated ego of teenagers, especially privileged ones. I was also striving to express the emptiness of the transformation ritual that Jules so desperately wants to undergo; Jules is insecure in herself and wants a concrete way to define herself. She mistakenly chooses to define herself as transitioning from girl to woman, virgin to non-virgin on the night of her sixteenth birthday. However, Jules does not realize that such transformation rituals are outdated or not as important to our culture, or, as Vida says, “But for the most part in America today, time and feminism have liberalized sexual mores; therefore, the need to assert a young woman’s virginity and childbearing status via ritual has become less important” (xiii). Jules is a product of



the collision of women's liberation and coming of age "at a time when our culture's expectations for women have probably been permanently fragmented" (Vida xiii). Finally, I hope that as Marber recognized the potential for the impact of setting his version in "one particular point in history," I, too, have benefited from a specific setting in contributing to *Miss Julie*'s resonance in our contemporary theatrical cannon.

### Characters

Julie/Jules: From the beginning, I thought of the Julie character as a teenager because "teenager" has immediate connotations of conflict and insecurity. Driscoll affirms that "'Teenager,' unlike 'pubescent' or 'adolescent' equally if not especially implies girls and has even been represented as a feminized because [it is a] contained and disempowered role" (52). In keeping with her disempowerment, I changed the name Julie to Jules, a further diminution of Juliet. Jules, at sixteen, is certainly not a Miss, not a Ms., not a lady of the manor or a member of an aristocratic Labour family. "Jules" is also a pun on "jewels," both as a term of affection for a woman and a demonstration of material wealth to be possessed.

Jules still manipulates Jean, but because she is only sixteen and sexually inexperienced, her own sexual wills are not fully articulated even to herself, she is acting only as she thinks she should act, as dictated by magazines like *Cosmopolitan* and *Seventeen* and the media such as Victoria's Secret ads commanding consumers to "Be Sexy/Give Sexy" (Liebau 146). I designed Jules with Lamm's analysis of the original Julie in mind: "capricious, unrestrained, tactless, sometimes cruel and

heartless” (6). Journalist Alex Kuczynski’s summarization of the targeted “Juicy Shopper” – “...a muddle of paradoxes. She wants to please like a child and titillate like a woman. ... She wants to show off her woman’s body, yet eat candy hearts and bonbons like a child” – is particularly applicable to Jules’s sexual attitude. She is a contemporary American teenager, suspect to messages of abstinence and promiscuity that are often confused. (One example is the recent Candie’s apparel campaign that featured Ashlee Simpson in a t-shirt reading “‘BE SEXY: IT DOESN’T MEAN YOU HAVE TO HAVE SEX’...Of course, the point is somewhat muted by the fact that ‘SEXY’ is printed in big print across the bust, and the tagline appears in tiny letters below;” another example is the advice column in *Seventeen* magazine that counsels girls to wait until they are ready to have sex in the same space that it recommends birth control methods) (Liebau 142, 73). In Jules’s world, she has the morals with which she was raised, the chastity and rationality expected of her at home, and her best friend, Kristine, who has chosen the “True Love Waits” doctrine. (According to its founders, Lifeway Christian Resources, True Love Waits “utilizes positive peer pressure by encouraging those who make a commitment to refrain from pre-marital sex to challenge their peers to do the same”). These influences are in conflict with the pressure (both real and self-inflated) from the popular girls at school, the young celebrity mothers (like Ashlee Simpson and Jessica Alba) and movies like *American Pie* that portray losing virginity as an important rite of passage and imply that it must be completed before college to avoid being cast as a loser at university. Jules has decided that, ready or not, the night of her sixteenth party is the night she will make the transition from virgin to

non-virgin, from girl to woman. Thus, in *Jules*, her shame is not only in sleeping with someone whom society has deemed inappropriate, but in sleeping with someone when she was not ready to accept the emotional consequences and with someone who did not impart as much meaning on the occasion as she did.

Kristine/Christine: In *Jules*, Kristine is aligned with Julie/Jules rather than with Jean/John. I wanted to maintain her function as the moral compass, but use her differently. As Jules's best friend, she has influence over Jules's decisions but ultimately cannot determine Jules's actions. Like Kristine/Christine, it is painful for her to watch someone she loves act impulsively on a poor decision, and try as she might to interfere, ultimately, she can only react.

I saw snobbery in Kristine/Christine, a sense of pride in herself and in her knowledge of her position that is akin to the sense of entitlement of the upper-class, indeed, the same assurance of who she is that one can see in the ultra-rich, so I gave her a higher position. She maintains the traditional sense of impropriety regarding Juan and Jules's liaison, except she looks down on Juan as being inferior to Jules; and from her new position she is free to speak her mind about the relationship to both Juan and Jules. In a sense, though, she is still a servant, trying to please Jules.

Jean/John/Juan: The most obvious alteration I made to Jean's character was to make him a Mexican immigrant. He is still a servant and a member of a lower socio-economic status, further marked as an outsider/as not belonging by his status as a foreigner. Just

as in *Miss Julie* and *After Miss Julie*, this status simultaneously makes him more attractive and more dangerous for Jules. In preface to *Miss Julie*, Strindberg asserts “Sexually, he [Jean] is an aristocrat because of his masculine strength, his more keenly developed senses, and his capacity for taking the initiative. His sense of inferiority is mostly due to the social circumstances in which he happens to be living, and he can probably shed it along with his valet jacket” (923). In Jules, he is already one step ahead, having emigrated to the United States; thus, the higher confidence he has in himself to climb further up the social ladder to carve out a higher position for himself in America, the land of opportunity.

### Key Scenes

Both Strindberg and Marber intertwine Julie’s decision to commit suicide with violence and sexual shame. In Strindberg’s *Miss Julie*, Jean responds to Julie’s despair with unnerving cruelty:

Julie: How can anyone be so thoroughly filthy?

Jean: Better clean up then!

Julie: You lackey, you menial, stand up when I speak to you!

Jean: Menial’s strumpet, lackey’s whore, shut up and get out of here!

Who are you to lecture me on coarseness! None of my kind is ever as coarse as you were tonight! Do you think one of your maids would throw herself at a man the way you did? Have you ever seen any girl of my

class offer herself like that? I've only seen it among animals and streetwalkers.

Julie: (*crushed*) You're right. Hit me, trample on me. I don't deserve any better. I'm worthless. (935)

To see a woman reduced to such baseness as asking to be hit is heartbreaking, a moment when Julie transcends her position as representative of the unsympathetic upper crust.

Marber rewrote the scene in a manner that juxtaposes violence with sexuality in a way that simply could not be imagined in 1889:

Julie: STAND UP WHEN YOU SPEAK TO ME! STAND UP!

REMEMBER YOUR POSITION!

*He stands.*

John: Which one, Madame? There were so many.

Julie: You're still a servant, you scared little squaddie, you're still a servant.

John: And you're a servant's slut. Don't come on all superior with me, Miss Julie. No woman of my class would accost me the way you did last night, no woman of my class would want what you wanted last night; sweating and braying, your face in the pillow, biting your hand to stop yourself screaming the house down. You'd shame a two-bit tart in Piccadilly.

Julie: Do I deserve this?

John: What's a man to think if you beg him to hit you?

*She breaks down. (155)*

Both and Julie and John's language is more plain and vulgar, and the simmering anger of Strindberg's language comes to a boil in Marber's words.

I sought to incorporate both Strindberg and Marber's sentiments, the violence and sexuality:

Jules: How can anyone be thoroughly filthy?

Juan: Better clean up then!

*Juan tosses Jules her underwear.*

Jules: You lackey, you menial! Stand up when you speak to me!

Juan: Menial's strumpet, lackey's whore, shut up! Who are you to lecture me on coarseness? None of my kind is ever as coarse as you were tonight! Do you think my girls give it up at their *quinceañera*? Those maids throw themselves at the men of their court? HA! I've only seen it among animals and streetwalkers.

Jules: How dare you! Remember your position!

Juan: Which one, Julie? There were a few.

Jules: Servant! You're still a servant!

Juan: And you're a slut! A servant's slut!

Jules: Oh my god, I'm filthy! (*Realizes double meaning and begins to laugh*) I'm filthy! You should punish me. Hit me for getting so dirty.

(18)

In this scene, I retained the layered meaning of "filthy" as applying to the stain of sexual activity on Jules' body and soul.

The climax of *Miss Julie* is the final scene in which Jean convinces Julie to kill herself. When Julie exits, the audience understands that she will commit suicide:

Jean (*thinking*): No!

Julie: What would you do in my place?

Jean: In your place? Let's see – as a person of position, as a woman who had – fallen. I don't know – wait, now I know.

Julie (*taking the razor and making a gesture*): You mean like this?

Jean: Yes! But – understand -- I wouldn't do it! That's the difference between us! (172)

In *After Miss Julie*, the razor (which Christine brings in) once again functions as a tangible catalyst for Julie's suicide:

*She approaches him with the razor, suddenly holds it to his throat. He remains still.*

Julie: I am Salome and you can have your revenge, John. Give the order. You know I can take orders. What does killing feel like, tell me how it feels.

*She strokes his cheek with the razor.*

Give the order, Officer. (173)

But John is not content to carry out Julie's orders, a final rejection of the confines of class structure. Marber injects a surprising new physical intimacy in this key scene:

*He eases the razor into her hands.*

John: Here's your broom . . .

Julie: Where do I go?

John: To the barn.

*He whispers in her ear.*

*She turns to him, holding the razor, she nods.*

*They kiss briefly, tenderly.*

*Miss Julie walks to the door, the razor in hand, she doesn't look back.*

(175)

The same scene of *Jules* is as follows:

*Juan takes her wrist. Jules pulls him close and rubs against him.*

Jules: Give me the order, servant.

Juan: I won't.

Jules: Go on. It'll be fun. You know to obey, now give the order.

*After a pause, Juan hands Jules the car keys.*

Juan: Here, *pequeño pájaro*.

Jules: (*Curiously*) What?

Juan: *Pequeño pájaro*. "Little bird."

Jules: Yes. Thank you.

*Jules takes the keys from Juan's hand.*



*Juan takes Jules's head in his hands and looks into her eyes.*

*Jules nods.*

*Juan kisses Jules, tenderly.*

*Jules breaks away.*

Jules: Pray for me.

*Jules exits, clutching her keys to her chest.*

*Juan makes the sign of the cross and bows his head.*

*Juan prays for about ten seconds.*

*Juan makes the sign of the cross and exits right. (26)*

Here, in contrast to *Miss Julie* and *After Miss Julie*, Juan does not put the means for suicide directly in Jules's hand, but acquiesces to her will to end her life. He even tries to stop her, and failing that, may pray that Jules decides to drive home from the party rather than into a tree. Juan recognizes that committing suicide may be just another whim for Jules, one which she does not fully understand. Jules intention to commit suicide spectacularly – at high speed in an expensive present – is an indication of that truth and of her immaturity.

\* \* \*

In a comparison of Strindberg's *Miss Julie* to Patrick Marber's *After Miss Julie*, we see a convergence of microcosm and macrocosm; the triumph of the working class over the extinct aristocracy (Julie's family's coat of arms will be smashed against her

father's casket); the rise of the servant (Jean/John) mirrors the rise of America as the world superpower after World War II; Tories lose to Labour. In Strindberg's time, the themes of the microcosm of the play were echoed in the macrocosm in the rise of Naturalism. In his essay "On Modern Drama and Modern Theatre," Strindberg explains:

In our age of thoughtless democracy there has been a desire to eliminate all distinctions or rank between works of art, thus enabling the many petty talents to feel on a level with their superiors; in other fields than the theatre a majority decision has declared all works of equal value, just so long as they are equally well made...in short, people have sought to raise the insignificant to the same level as the significant. (Essays 76)

For Marber, the specific parallels are in the setting, not the time of writing. However, he somehow frees the play from the original's static position in time and place in Sweden, 1888, and his from England, 1945. Because Marber had the courage to re-invent the classic tragedy, I was able to imagine *Miss Julie* further moved – to America in 2008, to a decadent and tragic birthday celebration for a sixteen year old girl. In this vein, Strindberg's story of class conflict, love, lust, and power has the same startling relevance today, when set in the 1940's and in the 1880's.

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**APPENDIX A**



Juicy Couture Piñata Charm

**APPENDIX B**



Juicy Couture Surf Rider Beach Bag Charm

**APPENDIX C**



Juicy Couture Boxing Glove Charm



## VITA

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