

Stereotypical image  
of women in henrik  
ibsen's dolls house  
and in august  
strindbe...



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Society had great expectation from the women folk as in men were considered more superior than women, on the contrary women were always locked in their households and their primary duty remained the same irrespective of class and caste. One of their responsibilities was to behave in a way that would satisfy father, brother, husband and her son. Women in that era never really had any access to education even though that the huge responsibility of grooming up her children lay in her hands. So more or less they were just a possession owned without any rights and were struck in a harsh cult of domesticity. So all in all they could be compared to a bird with clipped wings. This could be pertained through Henry Ibsen's play the doll's house and August Strindberg Miss Julie as these playwrights have brilliantly landscaped the ladies situation in the 19th century. Henrik Ibsen the author of the doll's house briefs us on women play a sacrificial role in the society and the struggle that they go through for individuality in their social and married life. In the play Ibsen portrays Nora as a perfect house wife who has dedicated her entire life to her husband and her children. In the beginning the protagonist's life seems to be just too good to be true. But Nora was unaware about her lack of freedom and loss of her individuality since Trovald Helmer created an ambiance of pamper in her life which she had mistaken for his love. Whereas Torvald thinks of her more like a property and less like a wife which at that period of time was quite a common scene in every household as the husbands would set a set of rules and the wife would blindly follow it. Moreover Trovald treated Nora like a doll and tries to control her she was restricted from eating macaroons (which symbolizes her temptations) and was not allowed to pursue her simple desire. As quoted from the novel "A Doll's House" by Henrik Ibsen "Helmer- when did the <https://assignbuster.com/stereotypical-image-of-women-in-henrik-ibsen-s-dolls-house-and-in-august-strindbergs-miss-julie/>

squirrel get home?" "Nora-Just this minute. (She slips the bag of macaroons in her pocket and wipes her mouth)." Pg- 148 of Henrik Ibsen "A Doll's House and Other Plays". The biggest irony in Nora's life was that she never realized her husband's true feeling about her until the moment she received an outburst from him when Krostad informed him of the money issue. Nora had pictured her husband as an understanding person and she would have thought that he would forgive her but he turned out opposite of what she had pictured him to be it was as if she never knew him as he had played with her all along she was devastated of her by his reaction. This event was an eye opener as now she could identify the true materialistic chauvinist husband in Helmer even though the realization reached her very late she set out of her house and from Trovald's life and broke the conventionality of a stereotypical wife. Whereas 'Miss Julie' sets another scenario altogether although even this play pictures the hardship faced by the women in the 19th century she was portrayed to a weaker lady compared to Nora and her creator August Strindberg had made her look careless with low self esteem because he was a staunch misogynist and through this the mentality of that era is quite clear as he didn't favor ladies at all. This play also shows us how the dominated sex has the right over the others and in this play Miss Julie wanted to be the authority and wanted to show that she is superior than her fiancé. She was a sadist and that later turned her into a masochist as she liked hurting herself but she removed her frustration by letting Jean her servant to abuse her. All this was happening because. She was suffering from identity crisis and she was confused between what she was and was stuck in two different world first in her mother's believes and the other in her father's mindset she was unable to make out how to act like a man or a

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woman. She was least bothered about the class distinction and went down to the level of sexual intercourse with the servant this grave mistake lead her to her degradation. As quoted from the textbook of August Strindberg's Miss Julie the Dover Thrift Edition." Jean- Miss Julie, listen to me. Christine has gone toBed now—won't you listen to me? Julie - kiss my hand first. Jean- listen to me! Julie - kiss my hand first. Jean - all right, but blame nobody but yourself! Julie - for what? Jean - for what? Are you still a mere child at twenty five? Don't you know that it's dangerous to play with fire? Julie - not for me I am insured." August stringer has pictured Miss Julie's masochistic nature trough her pet dog Diana who got pregnant from a mongrel. Strindberg wanted to convey the message that women herself are the victim and the culprit of the society. After going through the plays it is quite clear that the central idea of this play is the desire for power between both the sexes and what makes it more interesting is that our protagonist is already at a powerful position as she is the counts daughter and throughout the play the shift in control of can be seen from Miss Julie to Jean and for Jean in order to fulfill his dream of becoming a count he used miss Julie and sexually exploited her in order to control her. In conclusion if we compare both the authors they have pictured the climax differently as Henrik Ibsen's lead character Nora took revenge and left her husband in behalf of the entire women folk who are suffering from identity crisis and have lost their individuality in this pseudonym of housewife's and the resolution that Henrik Ibsen upholds trough this play is the dignity of the female community. Whereas August Strindberg's play Miss Julie resolve around the death of a helpless degraded woman. But the one thing that is common in both the plays is that the stereotypical expectation of the society about a woman was <https://assignbuster.com/stereotypical-image-of-women-in-henrik-ibsen-s-dolls-house-and-in-august-strindbergs-miss-julie/>

broken. The society's expectation about women is predefined and it becomes a taboo majority of the women fits into this mould. Certain times adverse circumstances realization, crave for identity loss of individuality and frustration lead women to break away the conventions of the predetermined society. At this juncture the image of woman moves away from being stereotyped.