

Candidate 5 evidence

Drama Advanced Higher Resource Sheet		
Candidate Name		Scottish Candidate Number
Question Selected	One	
<p>1. Evening Standard 'moment of release or revelation' 'not shying away from the fact it's ugly' fundamental - aspect snort take, anger - 'raw + real', deterioration. 'sense of relief when Cracknell says it's messy; female protagonists often judged harshly for being so.' SYMPATHY</p> <p>2. 'political with a small p' Dolls House Interview replaced class with finance + race - modern day. in BMM interview: 'the politics of the world we inhabit.' status - levels (party/lecturer, stand/sit) dress down after sex. Maryam Philpott - 'more watered down class divide' DIVISIONS LOST - APPARENT NOT EFFECTIVE</p> <p>3. Getting Creative Podcast: 'its so wide and how do you make a room that feels like an actual conversation can happen in a ^{TABLE} try and sort of create an intimacy that she was sort of operating against, but also find ways of them connecting' positioning - close at table. use small section - unit move away. Michael Billington Guardian → 'characters have to confront each other across a space like the Grand Canyon' 'awkward.' PARTLY - INTIMACY HIGHLIGHTED IN SMALLER THEATRE</p> <p>4. 'feminist gagsies' Strinberg 'weak + degenerate mind' GCP 'relatively sexist play + quite complex in its misogyny' 'find ways of repriming + releasing this sort of seeing' * can nuts Theatre Now 'found Joyce's character least likeable' 'nicely spoiled brat' * Act overly sexual - instigator Eye jacket + tear sleeves Difficult to achieve - MALE GAZE FLAWED - SELFISH - doesn't take no</p> <p>5. 'the different context weakens her arguments and actions' they're persistent rather than powerful'</p>		
Word count:	232 232	

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QUESTION ONE →

I would say that Carrie Cracknell, director of the newest adaptation of Strindberg's original play 'Miss Julie' is the principal author of the play 'Julie'. Her adaptation takes place in a modern day setting yet she tries to keep many of the original play's themes intact. Her theatrical aims are made apparent in many instances throughout the play. She speaks in interviews and podcasts about her theatrical aims including: to portray Julie as a 'messy' female protagonist, to show the politics of privilege through the divide between Jean and Julie, to create intimacy between Jean + Julie in such a large theatre and to switch the narrative of Strindberg's original.

One theatrical aim of Cracknell's was to portray Julie as a 'messy' female character. This was because she spoke of men being praised for being flawed whereas women are criticised. She stated in an interview for the Evening Standard that she is 'not shying away from the fact it's ugly' and that it's important to her not to give female characters 'a moment of release or revelation' as we understand this is not always the case. Within the play, we see Cracknell's theatrical aim portrayed through her direction of Vanessa Kirby (Julie). She made the decision to have Julie drink throughout the whole play as well as snorting cocaine from the table and worktops. This wares the audience in. We can't understand what Julie is trying to hide from or block from her mind and yet we feel a sense of sympathy for her. Cracknell kept a key aspect of

Julie's character from Strinberg's original; a fundamental lack of self. Furthermore, she instructs Kirby to portray ~~her~~ Julie's anger as 'raw and real' towards Jean which effectively shows the complicated mix of feelings Julie feels towards Jean - she can't stand when he insults her because technically, she is above him and yet she craves his validation so his insults do actually hurt. In addition, we see Julie's looks deteriorate throughout the play: ~~the~~ her hair gets messier, her mascara smudges under her eyes and she gets the birds blood purposefully on her hands, wiping them on her face. Through her choice to do this, Cracknell shows the messiness of Julie's character in a very literal manner. As her metaphorical 'messiness' is revealed, her looks deteriorate to show the audience that Jean sees her for who she really is. Jessie Thompson in the Evening Standard article stated that she feels a 'sense of relief when Cracknell says it's messy'; female protagonists are often judged harshly for being so... Meaning that Thompson was relieved in Cracknell's portrayal of Julie in this way - it allows room for other flawed characters to be introduced. I would argue that Cracknell did indeed achieve her theatrical aim - she portrayed Julie in a way that made the audience feel bad for her as well as recognizing her flaws and that she was selfish. We feel a sense of sympathy for Julie although, at times, it is hard to understand her - she can't seem to take no for an answer and her pursuit of Jean seems to only come from this. So, in this sense, we see a selfish side to her, one we do not like.

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Carrie Cracknell in a Dolls House interview stated that she would describe her directing style as 'political with a small p'. Her second theatrical aim was to highlight the divisions between Jean & Julie in this modern day adaptation. She replaces the class difference from Strindberg's original with a financial division as well as both Jean & Kristina being played by POC actors, adding the element of racial division in today's society into the mix. In a BAM interview she revealed that she is interested in the 'politics of the world we inhabit' which makes sense - the divisions between Jean and Julie now would not be the same as they were in Strindberg's original. In today's society there would not be much scandal if the daughter of a wealthy, upper class rich man slept with his ~~valet~~ valet so we understand why Cracknell felt she had to switch this. We see this in ~~the~~ Cracknell's use of levels - often Julie stands on the counters and tables above Jean & Kristina, showing, in a literal sense, her status and how she is 'above' them. Moreover, ~~the~~ Julie's party takes place on a higher level - a raised platform above the kitchen. This shows the low level of Jean and Kristina on a financial sense - they are not wealthy enough to actually be friends with Julie and are not invited to the party. On top of this, Julie has to walk down stairs just to talk to them - showing that she has to bring her self down to their level simply by speaking with them. There is also an element of sexual politics within the play; Cracknell makes the decision to have Julie ~~at~~ put on a casual hoodle over her fancy outfit

After having sex with Jean. This shows how she is 'lowered' herself just simply by being with him. A review from Maryam Philpott stated that the switch to modern day setting resulted in in 'a more watered down cast divide'. I would have to agree. The modern day setting caused the majority of the divide between Jean + Julie to be lost. The different context weakens their arguments and the element of race is not addressed much in the play for it to have an immediate impact on the audience. However, it is apparent that perhaps Cracknell was making a comment on the stereotypes of both staff members to a rich, white man being people of colour however it is not addressed enough to be sure. So while we can see what Cracknell intended and tried to do with the divisions between Jean and Julie the modern ~~room~~ setting weakened her attempt and ~~may have~~ her the actual aim was not as effective as it could have been and she only achieved it to an extent.

A third theatrical aim of Cracknell's was to create intimacy between Jean + Julie in a large theatre. Cracknell's adaptation of Julie is performed in the Lyttelton theatre, a large theatre that would prove a challenge to create intimacy in. She spoke about the theatre in the Getting Creative Podcast saying: 'it's so wide and how do you make a room that feels like an actual conversation can happen in and reveals that they used a grand table to 'try and sort of create an enormity but she was sort of operating against, but also kind ways of them connecting.' And we feel that Cracknell struggled

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with the switch to such a large theatre yet we see that she used it to her advantage. We see her theatrical aim with her positioning of Jean and Julie. Julie sits on the table while Jean sits on the bench, as the play goes on they get closer together and when Jean picks her off the counter, she falls into him. This shows Currie's aim to create intimacy as we see the way the two characters are drawn together, even despite their different statuses. As well as this, they often only take up a small section of the stage, close together, demonstrating how they can't move away from each other. Some would argue that this creates an intimate atmosphere between the two characters, but reviewer Michael Billington would disagree. He wrote in a ~~gaurdian~~ article that the large space meant that 'the characters have to confront each other across a space like the Grand Canyon.' and that Strinberg's original play demanded a small theatre which created a transition in Cracknell's adaptation that was 'awkward.' I would argue that Cracknell partly achieved her theatrical aim here. She did, at some points, create a sense of intimacy that was effectively highlighted to the audience. However, it cannot be denied that the large theatre slightly diluted the intimate atmosphere which would be highlighted in a smaller theatre.

A final theatrical aim of Cracknell's was to switch the narrative of the original play and give Julie more control. She stated in the New York

times that she looks at all of her plays through 'feminist goggles' and we see that in her portrayal of Julie. In Strinberg's original he used the play to highlight Julie's 'weak and degenerate mind' but we can see Cracknell try to change this when she says that ~~the~~ Strinberg's original is a 'relatively sexist play and quite complex in its misogyny' and that she had to 'find ways of repriming and releasing this sort of seeing which she stated in the Getting Credit podcast. We see this theatrical aim in her direction of Kirby to act, as Julie, overly sexual; she pulls up her skirt and lets the strap of her top and sleeves of her jacket fall alluringly in an attempt to seduce Jean. This gives Julie control and allows Julie to claim her sexual nature as opposed to being shamed for it as in Strinberg's original. Furthermore, the symbolism of the eye ^{and} tears on her jacket show her need to appeal to the male gaze as well as the fact she is wearing her emotions on her sleeve. By choosing to do this, Cracknell shows Julie's emotions as being a strength as opposed to making her weak and hysterical as they do in Strinberg's original. Con Nats on the theatre Now page stated that she did not think Cracknell's aim came across. She said that she 'found Julie's character the least likeable' and that she was a 'richly spoiled brat.' I would argue that completely changing the perception of Strinberg's original character without straying too far from his original story was an extremely difficult thing to do. Cracknell did indeed divert Julie

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from being a character, fully created by the male gaze but she still at times comes across as selfish and spoiled. So while, in the end, she created a flawed character, she seemed selfish, especially in her pursuit of Jean - as if she couldn't take no for an answer. So I would say that Cracknell only partly achieved her theatrical aim.

In conclusion, Corrie Cracknell, [↑] the principal author of 'Julie' the 2018 adaptation of Strindberg's original play 'Miss Julie', only partly achieved her theatrical aims in the play. She certainly created a female protagonist that was messy and there was an element of intimacy between Jean & Julie. However, the divisions between Jean & Julie were lost and it was hard to see where Julie reclaimed control of the narrative. Overall, I would say that the modern context within which the play is set stopped Cracknell from achieving all of her theatrical aims. If her adaptation was set in the same time as Strindberg's original, it would be easy to further highlight the divisions between Jean and Julie - race would have played a larger role back then as well as the controversy surrounding women - owning her sexual nature would be much more impactful back then. Overall, Cracknell only partly achieved her theatrical aims and it can't be denied that her aims would be much more apparent in the context of Strindberg's original.