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Identity Crisis in Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*: A Psychoanalytical Study

Rana Al-Husseini
Prof. Lutfi Hmadi
Beirut Arab University (BAU), Lebanon

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Abstract

August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* have always been recurrently analyzed within disputable studies concerning the characters' psychoanalytic makeup, the characters' breakdown at the break of a new social class, and a naturalistic, existential approach. Such a foundational approach for analysis is overpoweringly highlighted in the two plays within an unshakable regularity to the assumption that female identities in the two plays have undergone intense turmoil, toppled heavily in the middle of socioeconomic changes with the decline of aristocracy. However, this paper aims to juxtapose and compare the concept of identity crisis in association with the traumatic experiences of the two characters Miss Julie and Mrs. Ranyevskaia through a comparative psychoanalytic approach. It is inexplicable how the two addressed characters grapple with their different circumstances with fractured identities, where they fail to stand up for their social and gender roles and elevate their sense of individuation and selfhood in the middle of the surrounding deteriorations. Through a comparative analysis, this study lays the groundwork needed for exploring, interpreting, and investigating more nuanced reciprocal relationships associated with identity crisis.

Keywords: Identity crisis, psychoanalysis, alienation, guilt, traumatic experience

Introduction

To be united with oneself is a challenge, especially in the modern world. No one is one! Humans are a set of fragmented pieces accumulated through various experiences. In the world of literature, several works have illustrated the societal pressures that might lead to internal conflicts with identity, the act of grappling with introspective and existential questions about one's identity, and the profound impact of upbringing and socioeconomic conditions on identity formation. Mirroring the real psychoanalytic readings, the concept of identity formation and identity crisis has always been intertwined with the attempts to explore the complexities of human behavior and the intricacies of individuality. Being rooted in several seminal works, such as Freud's and Jung's, identity crisis unravels the failing attempts to reconcile with the internal strife of the self. August Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and Anton Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard* represent iconic drama productions in literature, providing an in-depth exploration of the human psyche. These two works, profoundly, serve as compelling literary works that illuminate the nuance of identity formation and identity crisis. Through the tumultuous worlds of the aristocratic characters, Miss Julie and Mrs. Ranyevskaia, the life narratives become a harrowing probe for identity where the enigmatic coexistence of other characters and factors force them to navigate in a world troubled with vagueness, indecision, insecurity, and uncertainty.

Utilizing the psychoanalytic theory as a theoretical framework, this study aims to provide a comparative analysis by delving deep into the concept of identity crisis in the two addressed works *Miss Julie* and *the Cherry Orchard*. Through a meticulous examination of the psychological anguish of Miss Julie and Mrs. Ranyevskaia, this study seeks to expand the existing body of literature by filling the gap and exploring the human experience while struggling with identity crises against internal clashes and societal pressures. Notably, research to date has not yet comparatively analyzed Strindberg's and Chekhov's plays concerning the issue of identity crisis and the character's attempts to confront past traumatic experiences and societal constrictions. In a recent study published under the title *The Subversion of Gender, the Immensity of Desire: A Psychoanalytic Reading Interpretation of Strindberg's Miss Julie*, Xu (2019) argues that the play serves as a representative of the playwright's preoccupation about the ongoing conflict between men and women. As argued by Xu (2019), Miss Julie represents a "half woman, suffering from neurosis and hysteria, locked in a desperate struggle with her repressed id – her sexual nature, the victim of her mother's crime and her frail ego constitution" (p. 482). From a psychoanalytic lens, Miss Julie vacillates between contrasting perspectives, rendering her an embodiment of ambivalent emotions and a representative of

a dualistic character who is torn between class conflicts and sex conflicts. From a different perspective, Chen (2019) argued in *Time and Memory in the Chery Orchard* that most characters grapple with a nostalgic feeling and a yearning for adaptation in the present. Mrs. Ranyevskaia, also known as Lyubov, portrays a gendered character whose existence is "mirrored by the identification of the others" (p. 1073). As such, Mrs. Ranyevskaia is unable to sustain her aristocracy yet wallows in fruitless sentimental affection that makes her more vulnerable, mainly with the traumatic experience of her son's death and the memory of her dead mother.

Hence, this study endeavors to uncover the convolutions that surround the two characters' identity crises, providing insight into the complicated nature of selfhood. It effectively fulfills the gap in the existing body of literature by analyzing the concept of identity crisis in association with trauma. Readers are invited, through reading, to explore the fine line between reality and illusion with a sharp focus on the psychic profound truth of every character. This study also contributes to enhancing readers' understanding of their inner selves and the role of their traumatic experiences on shaping their identities.

Methodology of Research

Examining the concept of 'identity crisis' in Strindberg's *Miss Julie* and Chekhov's *The Cherry Orchard*, a straightforward psychoanalytic approach is painstakingly discussed. Primarily, and drawing on Freudian, Jungian, and Lacanian concepts of the self, Erikson (1946) depended on relevant ideas provided in psychoanalysis about the self and the ego to integrate into his later work on psychosocial development and the basic concepts of individual identity. Some of these ideas include the fact that tensions between the id and the superego alongside the partial distortedness of self-realization could cause conflicts as individuals strive to synthesize a unified self and personality. Accordingly, Erikson (1946) developed the concept of ego identity or psychosocial development through a multilayered and developmental approach that functions at the level of intrapsychic and interpersonal spheres of the individual. Being interested in the perception of having an identity is anchored in "two simultaneous observations: the perception of the self-sameness and continuity of one's existence in time and space and the perception of the fact that others recognize one's sameness and continuity" (Erikson, 1968, p. 50). Extending Federn's and Freud's notions, Erikson (1946) describes the subjective experience of one's identity in terms of having a sense of confidence in one's self, known as agency, and being recognized by one's significant others and society, termed as self-esteem. In Strindberg's *Miss Julie*, the aristocratic lady loses agency in the presence of John, the servant, mainly in the sense that she is dispossessed, thus lacking

control, which posits her in resemblance with Mrs. Ranyevskaia, Chekhov's pre-aristocratic lady.

Erikson (1950) perceives the task of forming an identity as continuous and unceasing. Developing a lifespan theory, Erikson (1950) theorizes eight developmental stages that are fundamental to achieving balance throughout life. From an Eirksonian perspective, all aspects of development are incomplete. The five stages include trust versus mistrust, autonomy versus shame and doubt, initiative versus guilt, industry versus inferiority, identity versus role confusion, intimacy versus isolation, generativity versus stagnation, and integrity versus despair. How much dissonance occurs between these stages or how comfortable they integrate is regarded as a contribution to adjustment and stable identity (Willoughby, 2017). In this sense, Mrs. Ranyevskaia fails to adapt to the emerging society where her privilege as an aristocrat is lost with the loss of the Cherry Orchard. Additionally, Erikson (1946) conceptualized identity in terms of three aspects of ego identity, including "individuality versus collective belonging, synchronic consistency versus situational flexibility, and diachronic self-continuity of being an identical person across personality developments and changes" (p. 56).

According to Erikson (1968), the development of identity starts when the usefulness and meaningfulness of identification reach an end. Through adulthood, two major questions emerge, "Who am I? What is my place in this world." Being able to evaluate personal characteristics and match them with outlets for expressions provide a chance for identity formation. Miss Julie struggles with a stagnating ability to rise to her role as an aristocrat without unleashing her internal desires. However, Erikson (1963) asserts that role confusion, which is the fifth developmental stage, occurs when individuals fail to manage this developmental task. At this stage, self-sameness and personal coherence are jeopardized, mainly by the influence of social change and modified role requirements (Eirkson, 1968, as cited in Hoare, 2002). Mrs. Ranyevskaia appears in dichotomy, behaving as an aristocrat through her spendthrift actions and failing to accept the fact that she has lost the orchard. Upon experiencing role confusion, which paves the way for a crisis in retrospect, individuals engage in earnest inquiries associated with doubts about their identity, leading to a sense of loss and confusion.

Kernberg (2006) further expands these notions by introducing the term 'identity diffusion,' referring to the pathological integration and stability of the self as well as the object representations in personalities. This transitory incompetence to develop an ego identity refers to the act of failing to properly integrate the self into a whole being contributes to an identity crisis that, if not properly resolved, triggers feelings of loneliness, isolation,

shame, and guilt (Erikson, 1958). Miss Julie experiences intense guilt and shame feelings, mainly after her intercourse with John, as she perceives their relationship as a violation of the norms and values she has to live up to. Therefore, individuals are impeded from achieving satisfaction from any activity and thus lose their sense of agency. Another outcome of identity crisis, as developed by Erikson (1959), is fleeting into a negative identity, which resembles that of an antisocial or aberrant. At such a stage, individuals identify with what is regarded as deviant on the social level.

Parallel to Erikson's theorization of identity, revisions to Freud's individualistic psychology on repression and inhibition provided important contributions to the definition of identity crisis in association with traumatic experiences. According to Wilson (2006), individual identities comprise an inextricably associated set of entities, including personal experiences memories, values, and relationships. These components, altogether, facilitate the formation of an identity, which serves a few purposes in life, especially in terms of providing a sense of belonging. In Mrs. Ranyevskaia's and Julie's cases, their past experiences and memories shape their present reactions, as the former is tortured by her son's death which she tries to incessantly escape, and the latter is perpetuated by her distorted parental upbringing. However, the onset of an identity crisis occurs when individuals are diagnosed with low self-esteem, intense aimlessness, increased insecurity, and difficult emotional regulation.

Wilson (2006) builds on these notions to elaborate on the effects of traumatic experiences, on the ego, the self, and identity crisis. In his view, trauma presents a disruption to the proper functionality of ego processes, resulting in fluctuations in ego states and identity configurations. Similar to Erikson's notions of ego identity and identity diffusion, Wilson (2004) asserts that traumas can be detrimental to ego identity through the dissolution of the ego structure, the disturbance to identity, the fragmentation of ego identity, the rise of feelings such as shame, guilt, and self-recrimination, the lack of ego mastery, the prevalence of helplessness and hopelessness, the ideation of suicidality, the pervasiveness of feelings of vulnerability and uncertainty, the development of a sense of futility, the emergence of hostility toward authority, and the loss of the will to thrive or adapt (Soesilo, 2014). Once Julie exposes her past and discusses how torn she is between her father's and mother's values and actions, she becomes helpless in front of John who paradoxically treats her with wild superiority, to which she succumbs.

In modern psychoanalytic studies, Mayavan (2021) states that an identity crisis adopts an existential, conflicting approach. An individual with an existential identity crisis explores questions about whether or not their conditions or life situations have meaning or are associated with an intrinsic

significance. Paul (2009) asserts that this kind of identity crisis is hard to solve, especially with the prevalence of feelings such as loneliness, neurosis, and anxiety. Under high modernity, anxiety and stress increase, triggering the breakdown of identity to produce a dissociative identity disorder (Kluft & Foote, 1999). In this regard, the emergence of a sense of uncertainty toward the outer world is thwarted inwards to cause an unstable self. As emphasized by Rose (1999), "Identity can be claimed … only to the extent that it can be represented as denied, repressed, injured, and excluded by others" (p. 268). Mrs. Ranyevskaia and Julie fail to exercise their power against the lower class, whom they have controlled penetratingly. They are unable to recognize and accept their descent, and this constitutes the source of anxiety and their attempt to alleviate their suffering through escape, spiritually and physically.

Analysis and Discussion

La bête humaine refers to the developed sense of helplessness based on hereditary, social, economic, and instinctual merits that lock an individual in a vicious cycle between life and death, being and not being, and surrendering yet grasping. In this sense, modern characters, who live in a transitory phase, seem to appear more hectic and hysteric than others in preceding periods, reflecting a sense of disintegration between the past and the present and a disoriented conglomeration of the human psyche. As two modern plays, *Miss Julie* and *The Cherry Orchard* have emerged to provide a vivid representation of the predicament of surviving internal clashes against external odds, depicting an identity that is dissolved, troubled, and fragmented.

Strindberg's *Miss Julie* presents a woman experiencing a sense of contradiction between her gender role and her social class. As quoted by Alan Rickman, an English actor and director, analyzing Strindberg's plays and unraveling the intricacies of the characters' conflictual unconscious represents a journey aimed at "seeing the skin, flesh, and bones of life separated from each other; challenging and timeless" (Rickman, 2011, as cited in Jain, 2015, p. 161). In this light, the state of Miss Julie, with her androgynous nature, is roughly described in *The Dilemma of Naturalistic Tragedy: Strindberg's Miss Julie* when Stockenström (2004) argues that Miss Julie is a disposed heroine, "a relic of old warrior nobility … a victim of the disharmony which a mother's crime has produced in a family, a victim of today's delusions, of circumstances, and of her own defective constitution" (p. 49). Throughout the play, Miss Julie and John, the servant, share a slave-master relationship, thereby exposing Julie's flaws and hybrid identity. In this relationship, the struggle to achieve dominance and superiority is inextricably linked with the act of bestowing sexual fervor. The

reversal of the role between the servant and the master results in Julie's subjugation as a slave. Right from the beginning, John introduces Miss Julie as mad and wild saying, "Miss Julie is mad again tonight—absolutely mad" (Strindberg, 1958, p. 4). In this portrayal, Miss Julie is depicted as a woman whose ultimate purpose is subjugating men and dominating them through a sadistic will. While having the inner urge to crack "the whip" (p. 5) yet failing to train her fiancé, Miss Julie starts her breakdown by feeling ashamed, refraining from appearing in public and seeking confinement in the kitchen, exhibiting a lack of self-confidence as argued by Erikson (1946). Alternatively, the whip can be perceived as a symbol of Julie's identity as a master, yet with a touch of intense vulnerability, as contended by Jain (2015). To a certain extent, Julie represents Strindberg's relativism in the sense that both are grappling with self-expression and psychotic delusions (Brustein, 1991)

Throughout her encounters with Christine, another servant, Miss Julie's unconscious is troubled, mainly through the former's babbles about the Count's boots, the image of the Father, power, class, and sexuality. At such moments, and through Strindberg's stage directions, she is described as "extremely hysteric" and trembling with anxiety" (Strindberg, 1958, p. 5). Similarly, John describes Julie as crazy twice throughout the play, reflecting a lack of direction, agency, and self-assertion, which altogether serve as the cornerstone for the crisis in identity, and this aligns with Kernberg's (2006) claims. Whenever the two characters succeed in masking their roles within the patriarchal order, they engage in a dialogue like two Chekhovian typescripts, speaking past one another and avoiding the truth they both are aware of. In this sense, Julie "shields herself in the romantic myth of love in her recurring plea – 'tell me that you love me' (Stockenström. 2004, p. 47). She even reaches extremes in her romantic fantasy when she orders John to call her Julie, "Miss? Say "Dear." There are no longer any barriers between us—say Dear." (Strindberg, 1958, p. 17). The characterization of Julie's behavior reveals her incessant and aimless need to find love in others. Such a peripety, in Aristotelian terms, uncovers Julie's inner desire to be free and dissociate from a world she is harshly stuck in. Thus, it is claimed that "neither her class arrogance nor her sex hatred is total" (Brustein, 1991, p. 71), which serves as a representative of the character's role confusion, lack of control, and incompleteness and which is aggravated by the unconscious desires that lead her "to roll herself in dirt" (p. 71).

Progressively, Miss Julie informs John about her complicated upbringing, and this exposes her to intense weakness and indeterminacy and facilitates John's attempts to take advantage of her confusion. Xu (2019) claims that Julie is the pitiful victim of her parents, being raised and dressed as a boy while having a female body. Her continuous instances of fear stem

from her childhood trauma, which is expounded by her present inability to emotionally regulate herself and her instincts. This fear, manifesting itself as trauma, breaks the boundaries of her inner self and makes her out of control when overwhelmed with the past. Drawing on Wilson's (2004) argument, modifications in ego states are witnessed due to the alterations introduced by trauma. All her childhood experiences oppose her identity, either in gender or in class. Strindberg describes Julie in the preface as "half-hating, half-woman" (Strindberg, 1958, p. 5). Moreover, what she reveals to John is not only her family's heritage and secret but also her "traumatic memory and her loath attitude" (Xu, 2019, p. 485). In this case, Julie is highly attached to her memory, which she is unable to withdraw from, mainly in terms of failing to escape the legacy of her mother's femininity. Growing up with hatred against men and with authoritarian domination of masculine figures, Julie's behavior demonstrates a dispossession of autonomy, interfering with her current actions and leading to the portrayal of a deviant character, neither possessing self-esteem nor agency.

Furthermore, Julie's trauma ostensibly provoked the onset of her identity crisis, mainly with her past parental rule showcasing a malevolent misrule. Singh (2014) claims that Julie's character depicts a kind of trauma unmanaged through sexual maturity. Miss Julie's androgyny is "a source of her trauma as it is not only a source of revenge but also a mode of consolation" (p. 19). Accordingly, taking her view of herself at face value is unyielding, as this does not merely represent her gender effeminacy, but rather her *half-ness* in the sense of having a dualistic identity, inheriting both her mother's hatred and her father's perspectives. Consequently, she suffers from confusion concerning her sexual identity. Being made to wear boy's clothes and ride horses, Julie fails to differentiate between her stable and unstable sexuality while dealing with men due to the chaos her body is burdened with. In Singh's (2014) perspective, she is overwhelmed with "enormous cultural responsibility for which she is not ready" (p. 19). As such, Julie is unable to control different needs, including her desire for constant arousal, her demand for persistent change, and her search for new sexual endeavors. These needs are distorted and desecrated, as Julie demonstrates no concern for class norms or gender roles through her interaction with John, letting her trauma serve as the crux of the crisis in her identity.

Julie's infantile perversion is prevalent with intense feelings of guilt and shame. In psychoanalysis, guilt is the result of a threatened internal world due to intolerable anxieties (Jain, 2015). Such persecutory anxieties are intensified when Julie experiences external frustrations, and this is evident when John refuses to express genuine love to her, help her, or rise to her demands. By having bad and good objects throughout the process of

maturation, Julie fails to internalize her anxieties, and this renders her fragmented inwardly, turning into the forerunner of the superego. With the progress of events and following her sexual intercourse with John, Julie's synthesized self is heightened with an unbearable reality testing, control, and distinction in her psyche. As such, she projects her pervasive feelings inward as an attempt to expel intensely detrimental emotions associated with her traumatic upbringing and aristocratic decline. Becoming aware of her disparaging feelings and exhibiting a high level of fear regarding losing John's love, Julie tries incessantly to inhibit them. Nonetheless, the subsequent attempts to curtail her anxieties and frustrations fail to lead her "to an increasing tolerance for ambivalence" (p. 173).

Miss Julie's deterioration as an independent consciousness prevents her from developing a complete self-identity, surrendering to all the forces besieging her. According to Mahal (2012), Julie represents a decentered character, whose life course is void of the completeness of the Imaginary Order. This makes all her relationships turn into complete failures and herself an *enigma* in identity. The perplexing nature of her dreams showcases her alienated position and reveals her manifest search for a completely different identity, and this represents the epitome of her struggle to achieve a unified personality. Her desire to develop an authentic self therefore stems from her intense need to feel loved and desired. Without finding either self-love or object love, Julie is imprisoned in a stage where she is unable to move toward a complete identity. Toward the end of the play, Julie's suicidal attempt demonstrates the sense of nothingness in her life. Throughout the play, she has been acting conventionally in an attempt to fill the emptiness that overrides her whole being. By killing herself, she goes beyond the void of speech to identify the existentialist aspect of her identity. Hence, her death represents the sustenance of her partial existence and her only solution against the lost opportunity to choose for herself. As a modern fragmented character, she is torn by conflicts and guilt, repeating as a matter of self-approval, "That's true—I am beneath the very last, I am the last myself" (Strindberg, 1958, p. 35). Roughly in this line, Miss Julie appears completely paralyzed and unable to take action, surrendering in utter loneliness.

Exploring identity crisis through a psychoanalytic lens in *The Cherry Orchard* reveals significant contributions to the understanding of Mrs. Ranyevskaia's fragmented self. Psychoanalytically reading Chekhov's play facilitates the adoption of the belief that the prevalent inconsistencies in the character's behavior are an indication of her dysfunctional self, whether in terms of love or agency over events surrounding her. Coining the term 'dysfunctional' implies experiencing an inability to function properly in a social context, especially with the prevalence of emotional dissatisfaction and detachment. Mrs. Ranyevskaia's relationships are dysfunctional in the

sense that they address other ends, which include a persistent urge to maintain the state of psychological stability that allows an individual to properly function in life, leading the latter with as little pain and suffering as possible.

From the beginning toward the end of the play, Mrs. Ranyevskaia is presented as a woman who is reluctant and hesitant, either concerning selling the orchard or returning to her lover in Paris. Whenever an instance of communication is launched, it is aborted directly with the interference of other thoughts or characters in the play. Mrs. Ranyevskaia lives in denial, and she does not admit that she herself has grown old, too. For example, upon recalling her son's death experience, she says,

> "My little boy was lost … drowned … What for? What for, my friend? Ania's sleep there, and here I am, shouting and making a scene. Well, Pyetia? How is it you have lost your good looks? Why have you aged so?" (Chekhov, 1904, p. 50).

Unlike Miss Julie, Mrs. Ranyevskaia portrays a high sense of hesitation and confusion when talking about her traumatic past. She does not disclose everything. On the contrary, Miss Julie reveals to John all particulates, including her upbringing, her financial inheritance, the history of the family, and her mother's crime without hiding minute details or being reluctant to disclose all matters. According to Ogunc (2017), Mrs. Ranyevskaia does not show any willingness to become a hero or change something about her current condition. She is a character with multiple personalities, including a mother, a lover, a friend, an ex-wife, a sister, and a member of the aristocratic class. Similar to Miss Julie, Mrs. Ranyevskaia's identity is unstable, and this resembles her social roles as well. Chekhov intended to depict the character's "inertia, irresponsibility, and waste" (Brustein, 1991, p. 91), leaving readers with the salient realization that Mrs. Ranyevskaia is characterized by a helpless inability to resist her fate or bring about change in her life, and this aligns with the typical modern identity which Kluft and Foote (1999) underscore.

To better understand Mrs. Ranyevskaia's character, it is essential to uncover her repressed experiences and memories. Mrs. Ranyevskaia suffers from different core issues that have developed due to the negative memories that have been repressed ever since her son's death. Through repression, she removed some important events from her consciousness: her son's death, her lover's alcoholism, and her loss of the state. Within these unresolved conflicts in her internal psyche, Mrs. Ranyevskaia becomes the victim of her unconscious storehouse which threatens her ego formation, and this is portrayed in terms of dysfunctional behaviors and low self-esteem that is exacerbated by intense feelings of guilt. Through her relationship with her

lover in Paris, Mrs. Ranyevskaia finds refuge by hiding her fragile concepts of the self. Adding to that, Latham (2010) contends that the character's behavior is rooted in a basic core issue which is loss of self-esteem, resulting in a disruption in the subjective experience of identity formation as Eirkcon (1968) highlights. Accordingly, Mrs. Ranyevskaia's character demonstrates a high sense of inferiority, which is also shared by Miss Julie, revealing how both characters navigate a world of isolated vacancy, as Brustein (1991) asserts.

Tracing the psychological past of Mrs. Ranyevskaia, it is plausible to address her traumatic past and her perception of the orchard in literal and symbolic terms. Through the first act that describes the family's arrival at the orchard and Mrs. Ranyevskaia's commentary on the nursery room, the protagonist's harsh memories and bitter past traumas are brought to the forefront, despite her incessant attempt to cast them away from her consciousness. To clarify, Mrs. Ranyevskaia had married someone who did not belong to her social class. Ever since, she has been leading an immoral life, as her brother asserts. Indeed, Mrs. Ranyevskaia leaves Russia, heading to Paris after the death of her husband, and this underscores her attempts to escape the reality of her failing estate and the painful memories related to her marriage. Such physical and emotional detachment from Russia and the duties she was supposed to fulfill serve as a symbol of her detachment and a contributor to her alienation. Moving to Paris, thus, represents a literal and symbolic departure from her responsibilities and roots, implying that she is unable to cope with her past and reflecting on her attempts to find solace somewhere else, and this exacerbates the crisis of her identity. Developing a deep sense of guilt that is associated with her past is similar to that experienced by Miss Julie after her intercourse with John, who belongs to a lower social class, and this has caused Mrs. Ranyevskaia to engage in underestimation and underrepresentation of her self-image, evidently pinpointed in her expression, "Well, what can you do with a fool like me?" (Chekhov, 1904, p. 67). As a refuge, she had fled from her homeland to avoid the grievances associated with her past, and this reveals her lack of direction and self-recrimination, as Wilson (2004) states. The overall consequence of these bitter experiences is the unhappiness and dissatisfaction that Mrs. Ranyevskaia develops as an attitude toward her life, turning into a negative character rather than an assertive one. This same unhappiness is shared by Miss Julie who is not satisfied with her aristocratic origins nor her life at the Count's house.

Engaging in this negative attitude triggers feelings of self-blame, either toward past experiences or unstable present conditions. To her, she is responsible for everything going wrong in her life, and this is evident when she says, "We have sinned too much" (Chekhov, 1904, p. 29). With her

ongoing hopelessness and pessimism, she always imagines that the house is going to fall on the family. This negative attitude toward the future is a typical symptom of loss of her self-esteem, paving the way for identity confusion. Unlike Julie, Mrs. Ranyevskaia shows a low sense of self-esteem that is aggravated to the extent that she is paralyzed and unable to take action concerning selling the orchard. By overlooking the matter throughout her discussions with Lopakhin, Mrs. Ranyevskaia appears indecisive and disoriented concerning something that is a symbol of her childhood happiness, satisfaction, and security (Ogunc, 2017). Combining guilt with low self-esteem, Mrs. Ranyevskaia is alarmed. As such, she says, "I'm trembling all over – yet I can't go to my room for fear of being alone and quiet" (Chekhov, 1904, p. 29). Being afraid to spend time with herself reveals the extent to which her inner self is deteriorated and fragmented, leading to the assumption that this fear would dredge up repressed and bitter memories, causing psychological pain which she tries to avoid.

Furthermore, Mrs. Ranyevskaia's identity fluctuates across the fine line between the past and the present. As she longs nostalgically for the past where she was in control as an aristocrat, her present is said to have been split between what she desires and what is no longer present. According to Styan (1975), Mrs. Ranyevskaia's entrance to the nursery confirms this division when she says, "I feel a child again" (Chekhov, 1904, p. 18). Beholding the orchard, she adds another comment later in the play by saying, "Oh my lovely innocent childhood! Sleeping here in the nursery, looking out into the orchard… every morning waking up to happiness" (p. 29). What is evident through these expressions is that Mrs. Ranyevskaia lives in a past moment that is idealized, and these recollected memories serve as a parody of her past, contrary to Miss Julie who loathes her past. Moreover, Mrs. Ranyevskaia still perceives the orchard as pristine, though it is no longer fertile. The juxtaposition that Chekhov also presents in the third act when the family hosts a ball reveals to the readers Mrs. Ranyevskaia's impractical nature and her illusory living in the past. This juxtaposition between the past and the present resembles the lady's character; an identity that is divided into two halves, one accepting and one denying. As the present moves forward, Mrs. Ranyevskaia experiences a paralysis of the will, depicted in her inability to understand and confront the new changes or make a sensible decision. It can therefore be elicited that the playwright brings back the past to the present to destabilize the characters and expose them to the vulnerabilities of their time. By living in "negligence" (Brustein, 1991, p. 101), the lady fails to take any decision, responds passively, and falls into severe despair. She, therefore, leads the family and herself to full destruction, which also symbolizes the destruction of aristocrats who are on their way down. Through the utilitarian axe, not only is Mrs. Ranyevskaia's broken

into pieces but also her orchard is irrevocably lost. This ending contrasts with Miss Julie's destruction, as Miss Julie preserved her aristocratic status and died as an aristocrat but lost the sex conflict as a female. Yet, the two characters are roughly portrayed with the encumbrance of humanity's doubleness and ambiguity that are methodically typified.

Conclusion

Explicitly wrapping, Strindberg's and Chekhov's plays do depict two characters who are left struggling in a modern world with no remedy for their identity crisis. Miss Julie and Mrs. Ranyevskaia are dehumanized in their loss of their true selves and their inability to integrate their traumatic experiences into a unified being. They are left at the mercy of alienation which scars them more ruthlessly. Though every character adopts a different behavior, both are portrayed with inconsistency, lack of self-esteem, lack of control, and indecisiveness. In these two characters, the Western myth of an integrated identity is defied, juxtaposing the unified self with the fractured self. With their dictated fate, either by committing suicide with the rise of the sun at the end of Midsummer Eve or through the departure of the orchard and implicit self-exile, Strindberg and Chekhov purposefully embrace a transitory approach in drama, whose characters are split and vacillating, resembling a wild combination of the old and the new – the fragmented and the whole. With uncertainty of identity, goaded by trauma, Miss Julie's and Mrs. Ranyevskaia's souls break under pressure, giving rise to a dark chaos that threatens the formation of a stable ego identity. Delineated, the two characters' existing identity commitments are merely challenged with less opportunism to achieve wholeness. One question yet still remains: to what extent might psychological traumas and unconscious compulsions trigger the pursuit of existential questions? Undoubtedly, the two addressed have become obsolete, unleashing doubts about their role in the modern world and their sense of adaptation to the emerging middle-class and proletariat era. Further research is demanded to address the reciprocal relationship between identity crisis and trauma through a historical and cultural lens.

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