

## THREE PLAYS FOR MEDIA TOOL BOX

### 1- "Miss Julie". August Strindberg (1888)

#### Plot

Midsummer, the most insane and magical party of the Swedish calendar ... Julie, the daughter of a count, in the absence of her father, seduces her servant John. They decide to escape together, stealing the count, but with opposed interests: to Julie It's love but for John It's just ambition. Julie's contradictions and the discovery of the true thoughts of John would make the dream a nightmare and "acts" of the evening will take Julie to the most tragic outcome.

#### Ethical Issues

The play also presents **the dreams and aspirations that we all have in life**, in the personal, laboral and social areas and what we are willing to do to get them and if there are limits that we must not pass and what should be our ethical behavior.

**Generational conflict.** We can maintain relationships with people of other generations in a respectful manner.

The play shows **the relationship between master and servant**. The latter without any right and subject to the whims of their masters. This can be transferred to the relations between managers and employees and see if, in the present life, there are parallels with respect to the rights, relationships, abuse of power, obedience and initiative, freedom of conscience ...

**What should be the attitude with which we join to work**, how we interact with the upper and lower levels of the organisation and with colleagues, whether we work competing or cooperating. What is the job mobbing?, how is it produced?, how is produced psychological violence at work?

**Is there equal treatment between men and women at work?**, Are they valued equally?, are their salaries equal?, are there sexist attitudes?

**Self-esteem**, organization and responsibility in work.

**The dehumanization of the person at work**, mechanization, the crisis, the constraints of the market ...

## **Development**

Students should know the historical context (educational, cultural, economic and social) in which the work is developed to better understand the characters, their conflict and its evolution. They could also be aware of the misogynist personality of the writer himself and the rise of feminist movements in this part of Europe in this time.

It would be interesting that the students could ask their parents, but especially to their grandparents if they have lived in their childhood any of the ethical issues exposed.

## 2- “A woman of no importance”. Oscar Wilde (1888)

### Plot

The young Gerald Arbuthnot is visiting Lady Caroline Pontefract. There he meets Lord Illingworth, who offers him to be his private secretary. He also meets a young American lady, Miss Worsley, and falls in love with her. But he can only ask her in marriage if he has a good job. However Gerald's mother, Mrs. Arbuthnot, refuses that Gerald accepts working or being a friend of Lord Illingworth. The secret reason is that in the past Lord Illingworth left her when she became pregnant, so she must raise Gerard as a single mother. But Gerald admires Lord Illingworth and expects to access to a bright future next to him. When Lord Illingworth tries to abuse the young Miss Worsley and Gerald is about to attack Lord Illingworth, her mother informs him that Lord Illingworth is his father.

### Ethical issues

Gerard is about to take a crucial step in his career and became the private secretary to Lord Illingworth, who is also his father. The group discussions can be conducted to the following issues: **the first job opportunities, family labor, business practices ...**

**The different social classes** as the basis of the politic and social system in England at that time.

**Being a single mother:** the strict morality of the time, difficulties in raising a child alone, the individual conscience against the traditional moral, the mixed feelings that feels Gerald when he has to choose between his father and his mother, love or work.

## Development

Youngsters should learn some aspects of Victorian England as its change from an agrarian and rural society to an industrial country, connected by a growing railway network. There were also social and cultural changes that marked the transition to modern society.

Victorian society was governed by values such as patriotism, Puritanism, double moral, family and social class differences.

Women at that time had no independence at all, they were really miserable if they couldn't get married and, once they did, their properties became her husband's, the law allowed men to hit their wives...

Once they know these historical aspects, we can introduce concepts as freedom or equality and analyze the roots of feminism and the evolution of egalitarian thinking.

### 3- “A Doll’s house”. Henrik Ibsen. 1879

#### **Plot**

Nora is married with a bank manager and has a traditional life with social success. However, the protagonist has a secret: she has forged the signature of his father for a loan. With that money she paid a trip to Italy with her husband to cure him of a disease. Her husband, Helmer, finds out this and decides to remove her the education of their children, but doesn’t get divorced not to damage his public image.

Nora had been raised to be first the doll of his father and afterwards the doll of her husband. But, aided by another female character of the play, for the first time in her life, she achieves her own personality and tells her husband that she leaves home.

#### **Ethical Issues**

**Lying for love.**

**The need to mature**, to build an adult personality when we face the challenges of life.

**Gender stereotypes** and gender roles in society and their involvement in the discrimination and exploitation of one sex over another.

**Psychological abuse situations**, something that particularly affects women.

**The process of liberation of women.**

## **Development**

Students should become aware of the submissive role of women in the traditional and bourgeois society of the late nineteenth century.

In the case of Nora, she moves from confusion to awareness of the damage caused by her education, it enables her to identify the cause of the damage and begin the road to her liberation ("I have to educate myself").

Helmer, Nora's husband, is also trapped in the social conventions of the time. His personality is based on moral and economic superiority. Nora is placed in a position of inferiority and treated as an object of his property.