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The marriage of theatre and cinema has seldom proved successful. Alf Sjöberg's screen version of Strindberg's *Miss Julie* is the only Swedish film to have won the Golden Palm at Cannes. The traits of sadism and masochism inherent in Scandinavian art are accentuated by Sjöberg's interpretation of a play that was wrung from its author's disastrous encounter with Siri von Essen—a countess while Strindberg was

a servant girl's son. The brief love of Julie, the lady of the manor, and Jean, her father's footman, constitutes a fierce attack on a class system now supplanted by modern Swedish society. Sjöberg preserves the unbroken narrative flow of the play and also gives it an extra dimension by describing Julie's childhood (although this tends to release the emotions that on the stage are restricted to the sprawling kitchen set).

The contrast between the count and his harridan of a wife helps to account for the uneasy blend of haughtiness and regret that fills the mature Julie. At certain moments, characters from different generations are seen in the same shot, so that contact with contemporary reality is never lost. Miss Julie sits musing in the lofty salon while the image she recalls—her mother carrying her in her arms—appears directly behind her. Humiliation and ambition, self-pity and self-loathing, pervade the film in equal measures. There is a furtive eroticism about the affair to which Sjöberg gives plastic form in such incidents as the quarrel between Julie and her fiancé, or the barn dance, where the contagious rhythm of the music matches the whirl of movement in the picture. Because he so transcends the stage, Sjöberg reaches the peak of his career with this angry, compulsive study of sexual frustration.

--Peter Cowie. Script and Direction by Alf Sjöberg. Adapted from the play by August Strindberg. Photographed by Goran Strindberg. With Anita Björk, Ulf Palme, Marta Dorff. (1951, 90 mins, 35mm, English titles, Print from PFA Collection)