

Exploring Unspoken Strength: The Power of Silence in August Strindberg's *The Stronger*

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Abstract

August Strindberg's one-act play *The Stronger* is an experimental work that explores the complex power dynamics between two women within an unconventional dramatic form, featuring only a single speaker. This research investigates the role of silence as a form of power in this play, and analyzes the psychological mechanisms through which silence undermines spoken authority. This article based on the qualitative research examines the paradoxical strength of silence. The study sheds light on Strindberg's innovative dramatic techniques, his nuanced portrayal of gender dynamics, and his deep psychological insight into human relationships. The play's title itself poses a provocative and enduring question that fuels the dramatic tension: Who is truly "the stronger"—the woman who speaks or the woman who remains silent? Through a close analysis of the play's structure, characterization, and psychological depth, this study argues that Strindberg's use of silence serves not as a sign of weakness or subordination, but rather as a powerful and deliberate expression of strength, his study reveals the thematic and structural power of silence in Strindberg's *The Stronger*, showing how it functions as a tool of psychological dominance and challenges the notion that speech equates to power. It also redefines silence in literary and gender contexts, emphasizing its role as a symbol of strength, autonomy, and dramatic innovation.

Keywords: stronger, power dynamics, psychological domination, silence, masculinity-femininity

1. Introduction

August Strindberg (1849–1912), a Swedish playwright and novelist, is best known as a pioneer of both expressionism and naturalism. His works consistently delve into the

psychological complexities of human relationships. One of his most notable theatrical innovations is *The Stronger*, a short play that demonstrates his ability to create profound dramatic tension using minimal elements (Azis, 2010)

The Stronger unfolds in a single scene set in a café, where two women—Mrs. X and Miss Y—encounter each other. Uniquely structured, the play features both characters on stage throughout, but only Mrs. X speaks. Miss Y remains entirely silent, communicating only through gestures and facial expressions. This unconventional staging transform what appears to be a monologue into a compelling dialogue, as Miss Y's silent reactions subtly shape the direction and intensity of Mrs. X's speech (Sutandio & Apriliani, 2017).

The plot centers on the interaction between the two women: Mrs. X, who is married, and Miss Y, who is single. As Mrs. X speaks, she gradually reveals the complex dynamics involving her husband and Miss Y, insinuating an affair between them. What begins as a seemingly polite conversation in a café gradually unfolds into a psychological confrontation, where Mrs. X's verbal dominance ironically leaves her emotionally exposed, while Miss Y's silence emerges as a powerful form of resistance (Strindberg & Meyer, 1975). The title *The Stronger* raises an implicit question about which woman holds greater strength in their relationship (Březinová, 2022). Strindberg cleverly subverts expectations by portraying Miss Y's silence not as passivity, but as a formidable psychological strategy that ultimately grants her control. Thus, the play illustrates how silence, in its restraint and ambiguity, can become a potent tool of power and influence (Bernard, 1981).

The objective of the study is to explore how silence functions as a powerful dramatic and psychological device within the play, challenging traditional notions of communication and power. The study aims to analyze how Strindberg employs silence not as a passive absence of speech, but as an active force that reveals character depth, shapes narrative tension, and subverts verbal dominance, ultimately redefining the concept of strength in theatrical performance.

This study is significant as it explores silence as a potent dramatic and psychological device. By analyzing how the silent character exerts influence and challenges conventional power dynamics, the study highlights Strindberg's innovative use of minimalism and subtext in theatre. This contributes to broader literary and performance discourse by revealing how silence can embody agency, resistance, and emotional depth, thus enriching our understanding of communication beyond spoken words (Yi, 2013).

This qualitative study uses textual analysis to examine the thematic and structural role of silence in August Strindberg's *The Stronger*. Through close reading of the play, with attention to character interaction and stage direction, and supported by secondary sources and theories of expressionism, naturalism, and nonverbal communication, the study explores how silence functions as a powerful narrative and psychological device.

1.1 Literature Review

August Strindberg's compact yet potent one-act play, "The Stronger" (1889), has long captivated critics and audiences primarily for its radical departure from conventional dramatic form and its profound psychological excavation (Brooke, 2012).

Its reception consistently highlights the play's spare, avant-garde construction – featuring only two characters, Mrs. X and Miss Y, engaged in a charged encounter within a

single setting (a café). The most audacious formal innovation is that only one character, Mrs. X, speaks throughout the entire play. Miss Y remains resolutely silent. This deliberate asymmetry is not merely a theatrical gimmick; it is recognized as a cornerstone of Strindberg's evolving psychological realism, stripping drama down to its essential elements to focus intensely on the unspoken currents beneath social interaction. This structure places the play in a unique taxonomic space within theatre history, variously categorized by scholars as a dramatic monologue (emphasizing Mrs. X's extended speech), a monodrama (focusing on the psychological journey primarily of one character, often Mrs. X, though Miss Y's presence complicates this), or a duologue with one mute actor – acknowledging the vital, active presence of the silent partner.

1.1.1 Silence as a Multivalent Dramatic Tool: Beyond Absence

While the strategic use of silence exists across dramatic traditions, Strindberg's application in "The Stronger" represents a significant and specific innovation, particularly concerning the portrayal of power dynamics. Dramatic theory acknowledges silence as far more than mere absence of sound; it is a multivalent tool, densely packed with potential meaning (Cardullo, 2015).

Silence can signify deep contemplation, stubborn opposition, unresolved trauma, or imposing power. It can be a void or a weapon. Strindberg masterfully exploits this multivalence, pushing silence beyond traditional uses to become the central mechanism for exploring relational dominance and psychological warfare (Casper, 2015)

1.1.2 Body Language: The Silent Character's Eloquent Voice

Critically, Miss Y's silence is not passivity or emptiness. As Jeff Bernard's research underscores (1981), nonverbal communication often carries greater weight and perceived authenticity than verbal language. Strindberg intuitively understood this decade earlier. He provides Miss Y with a rich vocabulary of nonverbal cues – meticulously detailed stage directions that become her dialogue. As Noaimi (2005) defines it, body language encompasses "conscious and unconscious movements and postures accompanied by gestures, facial expressions, eye contact and touch," forming "a separate language of the body." Strindberg leverages this language brilliantly:

(Looks up, nods, and resumes her reading): A simple gesture conveying attention, perhaps feigned indifference, or a subtle acknowledgment that cuts through Mrs. X's monologue.

(Miss Y looks scornful): A potent facial expression broadcasting contempt, judgment, and superiority without uttering a syllable.

(Miss Y looks up ironically and curiously): A complex look blending mockery with genuine interest, destabilizing Mrs. X's narrative.

(Shrieks with laughter): A visceral, uncontrolled sound (not speech) that acts as a devastating critique, puncturing Mrs. X's pretensions or revealing a shared, bitter history.

Through these meticulously crafted instructions, Strindberg ensures Miss Y is an active, reactive, and constantly *present* force. Her body language provides a continuous, potent

counter-narrative to Mrs. X's verbal torrent. The audience has "no point of view" from Miss Y herself; we are forced to read her solely through her gestures and reactions, making us active participants in interpreting her inner world and motivations. This interpretive demand heightens the play's psychological complexity.

1.1.3 Silence as Power: Subverting Gender and Authority

It is in the realm of power dynamics that Strindberg's innovation with silence becomes most striking. Traditionally, particularly in Western theatre and societal norms predating (and often persisting beyond) Strindberg, speech was equated with agency, authority, and dominance. Conversely, silence, especially for female characters, was often coded as submission, powerlessness, or victimhood (Clow, 2011)

"The Stronger" explosively subverts this expectation. Miss Y's silence is not a marker of subordination. Instead, it becomes her primary source of power and control within the encounter. By refusing to engage verbally.

Mrs. X's monologue is a performance seeking confirmation, apology, or emotional capitulation from Miss Y. Silence denies her this satisfaction, leaving her narrative hanging and increasingly desperate.

Miss Y protects her inner thoughts and feelings. Her silence becomes an impenetrable shield, forcing Mrs. X (and the audience) to project meanings onto her, which she can confirm or dismantle with a mere look or gesture. She controls the information flow.

Her silent scrutiny, punctuated by scornful or ironic expressions, acts as relentless psychological pressure on Mrs. X. It exposes the fragility and performative nature of Mrs. X's assertions, pushing her towards self-revelation and doubt.

Her silence allows her to occupy a position of seeming objectivity or superior judgment, observing Mrs. X's emotional outbursts with cool detachment or mocking amusement (the laugh, the scornful look).

Therefore, Strindberg's "The Stronger" transcends its formal experimentation (Doğan, 2022). Its enduring significance lies in how it redefines silence as a dynamic, powerful dramatic force, particularly through the character of Miss Y. By equipping her with a rich lexicon of nonverbal communication (body language) that actively challenges and undermines the speaking character's narrative, Strindberg demonstrates that silence can be an assertion of self, a weapon of psychological warfare, and a profound challenge to traditional gender expectations linking speech directly to authority. Miss Y's silence isn't weakness; it is her strategy, her defense, and ultimately, the core of her unsettling power, forcing audiences and critics to continually grapple with the question: Who, indeed, is "The Stronger"? The answer lies not in the words spoken, but in the potent, eloquent silence that endures. (Estelle, 2022).

2. Methodology

This qualitative study employed a critical analysis as its primary method to examine August Strindberg's *The Stronger*, focusing on the thematic and structural role of silence. The play was analyzed through close reading, emphasizing character interaction, stage direction, and dramatic tension. Secondary materials, including scholarly articles, books on drama theory, and critical essays on Strindberg's work, were reviewed to support the interpretation. The study

draws on theories of expressionism, naturalism, and nonverbal communication to contextualize the significance of silence as a narrative and psychological device. Through this approach, the research seeks to uncover the deeper meanings and implications of silence in the play's dramatic construction.

3. Critical Analysis

3.1 The Paradox of Silence and Speech

Strindberg's *The Stronger*, however, presents silence not just as revelation, but as an active, aggressive, and supremely effective weapon within an interpersonal duel (Foucault, 2006). The play masterfully constructs an intricate paradox that dismantles the conventional presumption that speech equates to dominance. On the surface, Mrs. X, the voluble wife, appears to hold all the cards: she speaks incessantly, asserts her social superiority as a married woman, and directly confronts her rival, the seemingly passive and silent actress Miss Y. Conventional wisdom would suggest Mrs. X is commanding the situation, imposing her narrative and perspective upon the mute Miss Y.

Strindberg brilliantly subverts this expectation. Miss Y's silence is not weakness; it is a meticulously deployed strategy. By refusing to engage verbally, she transforms her quietude into a "provocative absence." This void becomes unbearable for Mrs. X, whose compulsion to fill the silence with words rapidly escalates from polite chatter to uncontrolled verbal hemorrhage. Unable to endure the tension of Miss Y's non-response, Mrs. X is psychologically compelled to fill the conversational vacuum. Her initial veneer of confidence and control cracks under the pressure of this silence, forcing her into increasingly personal, defensive, and ultimately self-damning revelations. She inadvertently confesses her deep-seated insecurities about her marriage, her jealousy, and her suspicion (or near-certainty) of Miss Y's past affair with her husband. Mrs. X's verbal dominance, initially seeming like strength, becomes the instrument of her own exposure and vulnerability. Her words are not commands; they are involuntary confessions extracted by the relentless pressure of Miss Y's silence.

Silence is inherently ambiguous. Without words to clarify Miss Y's thoughts or feelings, Mrs. X is forced to interpret her subtle expressions, posture, and minimal actions. This places an immense psychological burden on Mrs. X. She isn't just responding to Miss Y; she is desperately projecting her own fears, insecurities, and assumptions *onto* Miss Y. Every slight smile, glance away, or sip of beer becomes a potential signifier that Mrs. X must decipher, invariably through the lens of her own anxieties. This interpretive act becomes a form of self-torture orchestrated by Miss Y's stillness.

While Mrs. X ties herself irrevocably to specific accusations, emotions, and confessions through her torrent of words, Miss Y remains completely uncommitted. Her silence grants her the ultimate power of plausible deniability and reinterpretation. She never affirms or denies Mrs. X's accusations. She never clarifies her feelings. This allows her, both within the moment of the encounter and afterwards, to potentially deny any meaning Mrs. X has assigned to her, redefine the entire interaction, or simply walk away without being pinned down. Her power lies in her refusal to be defined by Mrs. X's narrative.

The core mechanism of Miss Y's power is her ability to force Mrs. X to speak *against her own best interests*. Miss Y controls the interaction not by speaking, but by

strategically *not* speaking, thereby compelling Mrs. X to relinquish control over her own words and emotions. Mrs. X becomes a prisoner of her own compulsion to fill the void, revealing far more than she ever intended.

The play's title, "The Stronger," becomes the ultimate expression of this inverted power dynamic (Halldin & Wrethed, 2022). Initially, Mrs. X embodies the conventional attributes of strength: voice, social position, and apparent confidence in her attack. However, as the encounter unfolds under the relentless pressure of silence, the true locus of power shifts. Miss Y, through her disciplined, enigmatic silence, demonstrates a far greater psychological strength and control. She withstands the barrage of words without flinching, manipulates the situation without uttering a syllable, and ultimately exposes the fragility beneath Mrs. X's facade. Mrs. X exhausts herself in a verbal frenzy, while Miss Y conserves her energy and maintains an impenetrable position. "The Strangers" and "The Stronger" utilize silence to devastating effect, but for distinct purposes. While the former employs it as a mirror to internal desolation and societal alienation, Strindberg's play weaponizes silence, revealing it as a profound source of power that can dismantle speech, expose hidden vulnerabilities, and completely reverse expected hierarchies (Jamali, 2024). Miss Y's triumph lies not in what she says, but in what she refuses to say, proving that in the intricate dance of human conflict, the strongest voice can sometimes be the one that remains utterly silent.

3.2 Silence as Psychological Weapon

In August Strindberg's taut psychological duel, *The Stronger*, Miss Y's silence transcends mere absence. It functions as a meticulously crafted, multi-faceted psychological weapon, an active strategy that systematically dismantles Mrs. X's composure and entrenches Miss Y's dominance. Far from passive withdrawal, this silence operates through several interlocking mechanisms, each amplifying the psychological pressure and decisively shifting the balance of power (Johannesson, 2021). Miss Y's initial silence is a profound act of social defiance. In a cafe setting, the unspoken rules of polite society demand reciprocal engagement – acknowledgments, responses, even minimal verbal tokens. By pointedly refusing these expected reactions, Miss Y creates a jarring social aberration. This "aggressive passivity" – outwardly non-confrontational yet deeply disruptive – throws Mrs. X off balance. The violation of the social compact compels Mrs. X into frantic attempts to *normalize* the abnormal situation. She bombards Miss Y with increasingly desperate overtures: observations about the weather, comments on Miss Y's drink, reminiscences, and veiled accusations. Each unanswered remark heightens the social awkwardness, forcing Mrs. X deeper into a vortex of her own making as she struggles, futilely, to impose the conventional rules of dialogue upon her implacably silent adversary. Her escalating verbosity is a direct symptom of the psychological distress induced by this refusal to comply (Kimmel, 2004.)

Miss Y's silence creates a vast, ambiguous void. This void functions as a potent projective space, a blank screen onto which Mrs. X *must* project her own anxieties, suspicions, and insecurities. Unable to receive feedback, confirmation, or denial, Mrs. X fills the silence with her internal narrative. Her monologue becomes a case study in projective identification. She projects her fears about her husband's infidelity, her own perceived inadequacies, and her jealousy directly onto the silent Miss Y ("I suppose you think I trapped him?"). She then reacts *as if* these projections were Miss Y's own provocations or admissions. The silence,

therefore, acts as a ruthless psychological mirror, reflecting back to Mrs. X the full intensity of her inner conflict and paranoia. What Mrs. X perceives as Miss Y's implied thoughts or judgments are, in reality, the stark echoes of her own troubled mind, amplified by the resonant chamber of silence. Communication theory underscores the powerful anxiety generated by prolonged silence in social interactions. Strindberg masterfully exploits this principle. Miss Y's unwavering silence isn't just quiet; it's an active, building pressure. Each unanswered question, each unacknowledged barb, increases the tension exponentially. This unbearable psychological pressure creates an almost physical compulsion within Mrs. X to fill the void. As one interpretation astutely notes, "This silence becomes increasingly threatening to Mrs. X and her assumed dominance." The threat lies precisely in the tension it generates. Unable to endure the excruciating gaps, Mrs. X capitulates to the pressure, releasing increasingly intimate and damaging disclosures – her marital doubts, her awareness of the potential affair, her deepest insecurities – in a futile attempt to break the silence and relieve her own agony. Miss Y's persistent stillness is the engine driving this self-destructive verbal cascade.

While Mrs. X is involuntarily stripped bare by her own words, Miss Y's silence constructs an impenetrable fortress around her inner world. This creates a profound informational asymmetry. Mrs. X pours out her thoughts, feelings, and vulnerabilities, granting Miss Y intimate psychological knowledge and leverage. Conversely, Miss Y reveals nothing. Her motives, her feelings about Mrs. X, her past relationship with the husband, her current thoughts – all remain shrouded in deliberate ambiguity. This strategic withholding places Miss Y in an unassailable position of advantage. She gains critical intelligence without sacrificing any of her own psychological territory, maintaining complete control over her narrative and emotional exposure (Strindberg, 2024).

The lack of verbal feedback from Miss Y transforms her silence into a potent form of implied judgment. Without affirmation or contradiction, Mrs. X begins to interpret the silence itself as condemnation (Knapp & Hall, 2013). Is Miss Y silent out of contempt? Pity? Smug superiority? Cold indifference? The ambiguity is torturous. This perceived silent censure becomes far more devastating than any spoken insult could be. It fuels Mrs. X's paranoia and self-doubt, eroding her composure and manifesting in her increasingly hysterical and self-incriminating outbursts. The silence amplifies her insecurity precisely because it refuses to define itself, allowing Mrs. X's own fears to conjure the worst possible interpretations.

Miss Y's silence in *The Stronger* is not an absence; it is a meticulously constructed architecture of psychological control. Through aggressive passivity, she shatters social norms and forces Mrs. X into destabilizing verbosity. By providing a projective canvas, she compels Mrs. X to externalize and confront her own darkest fears. Through the relentless application of silent pressure, she induces anxiety that triggers catastrophic self-disclosure. By maintaining informational asymmetry, she protects her own psyche while laying bare her opponent's. And through the ambiguity of implied judgment, she amplifies Mrs. X's insecurity to breaking point. Each mechanism interlocks, creating a devastating psychological trap. Strindberg's genius lies in demonstrating that true power in this encounter stems not from the force of speech, but from the disciplined, strategic, and *actively powerful* deployment of silence (Krasner, 2012). Miss Y reigns precisely because she says nothing, proving that the most potent psychological weapon can be a perfectly maintained void.

3.3 Theatrical Innovation

August Strindberg's *The Stronger* stands as a landmark of theatrical innovation, fundamentally challenging conventions of dramatic structure and communication. By crafting a play where one of the two central characters remains entirely silent yet is perpetually, crucially present, Strindberg not only subverted expectations about dialogue and conflict but also pioneered new pathways for generating dramatic tension and psychological depth (Lawton, 2024). The play's core formal innovation is radical: a sustained dramatic encounter where only one character speaks (Löongren, 2015). This structure has been aptly described as a "dramatic monologue," a "monodrama" focused through Mrs. X's perspective, or a situational plot where the silent character's very existence drives the action. This choice overturns the bedrock assumption that theatrical dialogue requires reciprocal verbal exchange. As one insightful analysis notes, "It is a testament to Strindberg's intelligence that even though Miss Y says nothing throughout the play, the conversation between her and Mrs X is in every sense of the word a dialogue." This seeming paradox is resolved through Strindberg's masterful deployment of two elements:

Strindberg meticulously scripts Miss Y's non-verbal reactions – her glances, smiles, sips of beer, shifts in posture, moments of seeming absorption in a newspaper. These are not mere background details; they are active, interpretable responses integrated into the dramatic text.

Mrs. X's torrent of words is not delivered into a void; it is explicitly framed as *reactions* to Miss Y's non-verbal cues. Her accusations, questions, reminiscences, and emotional shifts are constantly triggered by, and directed at, the subtle movements and expressions she perceives in her silent counterpart (Newton, 2008). This technique transforms what could be a static monologue into a dynamic, tension-filled dialogue. As the search results affirm, "Strindberg employs a mixture of stage directions and Mrs. X's reactions in order to ensure that Miss Y is active in a greater sense than that of a passive listener, and that her responses (or at least, Mrs. X's perception of her responses) command and control the action of the scene." Miss Y's silence becomes an active force shaping every word Mrs. X utters.

3.4 Expanding Theatrical Language: Beyond Logocentrism

The Stronger constitutes a profound technological advancement in theatrical communication. It demonstrates conclusively that meaning and dramatic power are not solely, or even primarily, dependent on spoken words (Novak, 2022).

Strindberg dismantles the logocentric bias of traditional theater, showcasing how: Miss Y's refusal to speak is loaded with meaning – defiance, indifference, control, judgment – interpreted differently based on context and perception.

Gestures, facial expressions, posture, and even simple actions like lighting a cigar or sipping a drink become the primary language of one character and the crucial stimuli for the other. The play argues that these elements are often *more* revealing and potent than explicit verbal declarations.

The entire dramatic engine is fueled by the tension between what is said (by Mrs. X) and what is withheld but communicated non-verbally (by Miss Y). The real conflict resides in the gap between word and gesture, assertion and implication.

3.5 Pioneering Psychological Realism and Influencing Future Movements

Strindberg's attention to the minutiae of non-verbal behavior represented a major leap forward in psychological realism for the stage. Instead of characters explicitly stating their feelings through soliloquy or direct address, internal states are revealed indirectly (Paul, 2022). The unconventional structure places unique and demanding challenges on the actors, elevating performance beyond mere recitation:

The actress must convey a complex, evolving inner life and actively participate in the scene *solely* through physicality, expression, and reactive presence. Every gesture, glance, and shift in energy must be intentional and legible, capable of provoking Mrs. X's next outburst. It requires immense discipline, subtlety, and charisma to remain compelling without uttering a line (Sjølyst-Jackson, 2025).

The actress must perform a lengthy monologue, but crucially, it is a monologue entirely reactive to an external, silent stimulus (Singh, 2014). Her performance hinges on believably receiving and interpreting the non-verbal cues from Miss Y in real-time, allowing those perceived reactions to trigger her emotional shifts, accusations, and revelations. She must make the audience *see* what she sees in Miss Y's silence and gestures. The success of the play depends entirely on the palpable, often electric, connection between the two performers (Räthel, 2023). Their ability to communicate through gesture and reaction, to build tension through the interplay of sound and silence, reflects Strindberg's profound understanding of acting as an embodied art form. This focus on the actor's physical instrument and reactive truth was deeply compatible with the emerging principles of naturalistic performance at the fin de siècle. *The Stronger* is far more than a clever theatrical experiment (Sandberg, 2024). It is a radical reimagining of dramatic structure, a powerful argument for the primacy of non-verbal communication in conveying psychological truth, and a blueprint for future theatrical innovation (Sandelands, 2001). By placing a silent character at the heart of the conflict, Strindberg proved that the most potent dramatic forces often reside not in the words spoken, but in the spaces between them, in the eloquence of a gesture, and in the devastating power of silence itself (Sasani & Ghasemi, 2014). The play remains a masterclass in minimalism, psychological tension, and the boundless expressive potential of the stage.

4. Conclusion

August Strindberg's seminal one-act play, *The Stronger*, masterfully inverts conventional assumptions about power and communication by elevating silence to the status of a potent, active force. The play's unique structure – featuring only two characters, Mrs. X who speaks incessantly and Miss Y who remains entirely silent – serves as a brilliant theatrical experiment demonstrating that dominance is not solely the province of the vocal. Strindberg fundamentally challenges the notion that speech equates to control, arguing instead that strategic silence can signify profound presence, psychological resilience, and even aggression. Through Miss Y's unwavering silence, Strindberg reveals its compelling power: it actively provokes Mrs. X into an increasingly desperate, revealing monologue. This dynamic creates a crucial paradox: Mrs. X's torrent of words, rather than demonstrating authority, exposes her mounting insecurity, jealousy, and vulnerability. Miss Y's silence functions not as emptiness or weakness, but as a deliberate, impenetrable shield and a potent psychological weapon. Her

physical presence – her gestures, expressions, posture, even her choice to embroider – becomes her language, conveying judgment, indifference, or unspoken knowledge that destabilizes her voluble counterpart. This portrayal offers profound insights into the active, often dominant, role of nonverbal communication in human conflict and manipulation. *The Stronger* stands as a landmark theatrical innovation precisely because it expands the dramatic vocabulary beyond the spoken word. Strindberg forces the audience, and the theatre itself, to interpret the rich language of silence, gesture, and physicality, thereby achieving a heightened level of psychological realism on stage. By depicting silence as a deliberate, potent, and ultimately prevailing force, Strindberg redefines communicative power dynamics. The play's enduring relevance lies in this radical reimagining, cementing its status as both a timeless psychological study of human interaction and a pivotal work in the evolution of modern drama.

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