

Dora and her Sisters:
Control and Rebellion in Hermann and Schnitzler

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ABSTRACT

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(Under the direction of Dr Alice Kuzniar)

This dissertation examines the rebellions of marginalized female characters in six works by Georg Hermann and Arthur Schnitzler. In doing so, it brings works to the fore that have been underestimated by literary criticism; the two Schnitzler plays were overshadowed by his later work, and Hermann's body of work was never seriously reappropriated by scholarship after the Second World War. This dissertation also contributes to scholarship on the period, because it examines these works as cultural products. Taking as my premise George Mosse's assertion that artistic production is indicative of its age, I read these works as evidence of social discourses on gender and power around 1900, thereby adding to the evidence examined in socio-historical texts. In the introduction, I discuss the social framework in which the literature is to be read, giving an overview of the authors' lives and backgrounds. I then explain the relevance of Sigmund Freud's psychoanalytic work, indicating why his case study of Dora can be read alongside fiction. In each of my three chapters, one work by Schnitzler is compared with one by Hermann. First, the social setting in which the female characters find themselves is established. Socio-historical scholarship is then drawn upon, in order to delve more deeply into the role that these characters play. In the first chapter, the physical categories of the prostitute, the femme fatale and the corpse are

discussed through the works of Françoise Barret-Ducrocq, Carola Hilmes, and Elisabeth Bronfen. In the second, the intellectual categories of the actress and the New Woman are informed by studies by Deborah Gorham, Tracy Davis, and Ann Heilmann. In the third, Gayle Rubin's discussion of the traffic in women is linked to the discourse on hysteria, as found in the works of Freud, Bronfen, and others. Having thus set the stage, each chapter then investigates the female characters' rebellion from these categories, into which they are expected to fit, be it through suicide, withdrawal from society, or hysteria. In conclusion, I argue that while Schnitzler's works have been amply studied, much more is yet to be written on Hermann's wealth of literature.

DEDICATION

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Introduction

This dissertation examines the rebellions of marginalized, ignored, or silenced female characters in six works by Georg Hermann and Arthur Schnitzler. This subject matter immediately raises many questions, however. If these characters are not heroines, or are at best secondary figures in the works, how are their tales to be drawn out? If these problematic female characters signify a blind spot in society, as well as in the works, how can they be discerned? If theirs is not the dominant voice in the narrative, how can their supposed rebellion be heard? What social commentary can be gleaned from works which themselves represent faithfully society's constellations of power? And in works that do not break free from society's categories and frameworks, how can a reading avoid falling into the same categorization of the female characters? As this dissertation shows, a full understanding of the frameworks that are apparent in all of these works allows a reading that can pick through the minefield of assumptions and stereotypes that informed them.

Dora was Sigmund Freud's famously hysterical patient, and the center of one of his best-known case studies. Her sisters and contemporaries in the works I discuss here are either heroines or marginal characters in the works of male authors: Arthur Schnitzler's Toni, Fanny and Else, and Georg Hermann's Lies, Antonie and Jettchen. These figures stand in a relationship with middle class society that is created by middle class men. Theirs are paradigmatic examples of the tension between desirable and undesirable, mainstream and deviant, "us" and "them," and thus represent a microcosm of the normalizing power exerted

by middle class society over subversive elements, as it faced its own decline in the unstable and changing world of fin-de-siècle Europe. All but one of these characters – Schnitzler’s famous *Fräulein Else* – have been dismissed as sacrificial lambs, purged from society in order to disarm the threat they pose as unconventional women. As this dissertation illustrates, such characters must be recovered from obscurity. If, as George Mosse argues, authors such as Schnitzler and Hermann can be “a sensitive barometer of ideas which are, so to speak, ‘in the air,’ formulating an explicit ideology of scattered fragments embedded in [their] cultural environment,”¹ then the rebellions undertaken by their female characters can also be read as relevant and informative social products of their age.

Before beginning to address the works themselves, the authors must first be introduced. As is shown below, the comparable backgrounds of the authors lend weight and credibility to the subsequent comparison of the works and characters they created.

Georg Hermann –the pen name for Georg Borchardt – was born in 1871 into a large, middle class, Jewish family. Hermann was a prolific author of fiction, non-fiction and criticism, but also of autobiographical essays, and his first novel *Spielkinder* (written and published in serial form in 1894/5, and published as a whole in 1897) is largely based on his own life, and events that were still in the recent past at that point. Hermann’s formative years were heavily influenced by the Borchardt family’s geographical and social position in Gründerzeit Berlin, moving from Berlin-Mitte to the less affluent Tiergarten area. Hermann’s father was unsuccessful in business, and died after a prolonged illness in 1890. It was Hermann’s mother who kept the middle class mentality in the family alive after their fortunes

¹ George L. Mosse, *The culture of western Europe: the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: an introduction* (Chicago: Rand McNally and Company, 1961) 4.

had failed. Chapter one of this dissertation shows the direct links that can be made between the narrator Georg's and Hermann's lives, with both of them figuring as marginal characters, on the very fringes of middle class society. As Godela Weiss-Sussex writes of *Spielkinder*: "The material is clearly shaped to suit the intention of a literary expression."²

The work enjoyed a respectable success after its publication, capturing as it does a moment in Berlin's history when the middle class was on the decline, and the younger generation was left somewhat adrift, trying to establish itself in a changing world, and a changing city. Despite Hermann's inexperience as a writer, this first novel struck a chord in his contemporary society, with the journalist Paul Wiegler writing in 1901: "Nie ist das Weh der Großstadtsjugend, die zum Lichte will und doch ziellos zu Grunde geht, so aufrüttelnd dargestellt worden wie in Hermanns Anfangsroman mit seinen entmutigenden helldunkeln Hintergründen."³ Further autobiographical pieces combined to create a series called *Die Kette*: *Der kleine Gast* in 1925, *November Achtzehn* in 1930, and *Ruths schwere Stunde* and *Eine Zeit stirbt* in 1934.

By 1906 Hermann had established himself as a critic of the arts, after publishing articles for ten years in journals such as *Jugend* and *Simplicissimus*. He published numerous collections of literary sketches and essays from 1897 to 1928. Hermann studied History of Art, German literature and Philosophy in Berlin. He married twice, and had four daughters. Hermann wrote a damning indictment of anti-semitism, *Der doppelte Spiegel*, in 1926. In 1933 Hermann moved to the Netherlands, where he had always enjoyed great popularity and

² Godela Weiss-Sussex *Metropolitan Chronicles: Georg Hermann's Berlin Novels 1897-1912*. Stuttgart: Hans-Dieter Heinz, 2001. 43.

³ Paul Wiegler "Georg Hermann" in *Die Gesellschaft* 17, 1 (1901) 289-295. 291.

continued to publish. On the 16th of November, 1943, Hermann was deported from Amsterdam to Auschwitz, where he soon succumbed to illness.⁴

His great literary breakthrough came in the form of two novels, *Jettchen Gebert* (1906) and the sequel *Henriette Jacoby* (1908). While *Spielkinder* had captured some of the influences on his own generation, *Jettchen Geberts Geschichte*, as the two novels came to be known, also tapped into contemporary interests. By the turn of the last century, society in Germany was already looking back to the previous century with a sense of nostalgia for the apparently stable and comforting Biedermeier age.⁵ Perhaps influenced by his mother's clinging to her family's middle class past, Hermann himself collected antiques and relics, works of art and biographies from the last century, creating an impressive collection over his lifetime. This interest in the past is shown in the historical setting of *Jettchen's* story, and the enormous and lasting popularity of these two novels can perhaps be attributed to the timely nature of their publication. It was these works that established Hermann as one of the best-selling authors of the day, spawning reprints of his earlier work, and ensuring interest in his future projects. Indeed, collections of his works were already being published during his lifetime. Hermann capitalized further on the interest in recent Biedermeier history with a collection of non-fiction, written by other authors, entitled *Das Biedermeier im Spiegel seiner Zeit* (1913).

Hermann's third novel *Kubinke* (1910) is also set in Berlin, but in the present day. It also stands apart from *Jettchen Geberts Geschichte* because it turns away from the middle classes, returning to the milieu of *Spielkinder*. The title figure moves to Berlin seeking work as a barber, and has affairs with three servant girls in quick succession. The first two become

⁴ These biographical details are taken from Weiss-Sussex, *Chronicles* 336-341.

⁵ See *ibid.* 107.

pregnant, and blame Kubinke, although he is clearly not the father in either case. Their complaints against him are taken to court, but Kubinke fails to prove his innocence, through a general lack of motivation. When the depth of the consequences of this failure strikes him, he commits suicide.

Hermann wrote another pair of novels that dealt with the same characters, as he did with Jettchen Gebert: *Die Nacht des Doktor Herzfeld* (1912) and *Schnee* (1921). The former takes place in the course of one night, where the middle class Doktor Herzfeld wanders the streets of Berlin with his friend Doktor Gutzeit. Herzfeld has long suffered from syphilis, and encounters the prostitute who infected him during this walk. The tone of the work is extremely depressing, with Herzfeld spiraling in a psychological crisis of sorts, but the work ends with Herzfeld awaking from a collapse into unconsciousness feeling refreshed and able to return to his wife. Written after Great War, *Schnee* features a second nocturnal walk undertaken by Herzfeld. In the course of this novel, Hermann's criticism is leveled at the war and at his contemporaries who supported it. In these two novels, Hermann returned to a close personal link with his title character, as with Georg in *Spielkinder*.

The scholarship on Hermann's rich legacy has focused in part on the geographical specificity of his major novels. Other studies focus on the historical specificity, or his status as a Jew or as an artist in exile.⁶ What makes Hermann so very interesting, and his works so productive as a site of inquiry, is his apparent openness to the social trends of his day. This is not only true of his subject matter, with his attention to the Biedermeier period, to social strata in Berlin, to the problems faced by his generation, or his reaction to the First World War. Hermann was also extremely fluid in his literary style. Within his body of work are examples of all the major trends in the written arts of his day. In *Spielkinder*, attention to the

⁶ *ibid.* 14.

lower class, and to the realistic depiction of their speech, indicates a Naturalist tone. In *Jettchen Gebert*, as I argue in chapter three, the contemporary interest in psychology and the mental landscape permeates the narrative. *Kubinke* displays a Naturalist, lower class subject, but is also influenced by Impressionism and what Weiss-Sussex calls “suggestions of Expressionism.”⁷ The unusual structure of the Doktor Herzfeld novels is indicative of Hermann’s forays into both Realism and Modernism, as well as the influence of authors such as Fontane. As C.G. van Liere puts it, Hermann’s later works resemble Fontane’s “Neigung für das Handlungslose und Unheroische.”⁸

The case can thus easily be made that Hermann’s works deserve far more attention than they have received since their fall from the public eye, along with the works of so many other Jewish writers, during the 1930s. Hermann appears to have taken on characteristics of the greatest influences in European literature in the early twentieth century both in historical terms and in terms of the other authors who formed a part of his literary background. This chameleon-like effect means that his works defy categorization, acting instead as a kind of “barometer,” to use Mosse’s word, of literary trends.

Arthur Schnitzler’s biography and works are far more widely known. He was born into a middle class family, as the son of a doctor, in Vienna in 1862. Schnitzler followed his father’s wishes and studied medicine, volunteering in a military hospital for one year, before completing his own military service in 1883. In 1887 he became the editor of the *Internationalen Klinischen Rundschau*, and by this time he had been publishing essays, fiction and poetry for seven years. In 1886 he began to concentrate on psychiatric medicine,

⁷ *ibid.* 174.

⁸ C.G. van Liere *Georg Hermann* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1974) 210.

and his experiences with issues of mental health and hypnosis would appear in his later works, not least *Anatol*, *Leutnant Gustl* and *Fräulein Else*. By 1890 Schnitzler's literary work had made him part of the Jung Wien intellectual movement, where he joined Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Hermann Bahr, and other notable figures from the arts. Schnitzler corresponded with many of the most influential intellectuals of the era, including Sigmund Freud. After the death of his father in 1893, Schnitzler opened a private medical practice, although he was to abandon medicine as a career as soon as he could support his family as an author and playwright. Schnitzler famously had numerous affairs, with women from differing social classes and situations, which undoubtedly influenced his work throughout his life.

His early works included plays of one or more acts, essays and prose pieces, including works that he would return to in later years to turn into more lengthy projects. A number of his works in the 1890s addressed the morality of sexual relationships, most notably between middle class men and lower class or unmarried middle class women: the *Anatol* cycle includes scenes written over the course of ten years; *Das Märchen* was published in 1891, and premiered in 1893; and *Liebelei* was performed in 1895. The same themes are evident in *Das Vermächtnis*, which was written in 1898. His most scandalous work, *Reigen*, could at first only be published for friends, but not for sale, in 1900. The work, which centers around the promiscuity and sexual dalliances of the middle, upper and lower classes, was correctly deemed far too volatile and damning to offer for public consumption. Schnitzler also caused controversy with his short piece *Leutnant Gustl* (1900), which cost him his rank in the military due to its unforgiving psychological portrayal of an officer. Schnitzler continued to write prolifically, in 1908 receiving the Grillparzer Prize for *Zwischenspiel* (1905), a comedy focusing on the troubled marriage of two musicians. The

publishing company S. Fischer marked Schnitzler's fiftieth birthday with a complete edition of his works in 1912. Although Schnitzler's plays made it onto the stage in Austria and Germany with increasingly less difficulty, as his fame increased, it still took over twenty years for *Reigen* to be performed in Vienna, in 1921. The uproar that followed caused the printing of the play to be banned for a year. 1922 saw Schnitzler's first meeting with Sigmund Freud, and the two have been widely discussed together, and in conjunction with Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else* (1924), which relies most obviously on his experience with and interest in the mental landscape of his characters. As technology progressed in the 1920s, Schnitzler's plays and short stories were made into silent films, including *Liebelei* in 1927 and *Fräulein Else* in 1929. In 1931 *Spiel im Morgengrauen*, a novella written in 1926, was translated into film in the United States.

Schnitzler died in the same year, but his plays and prose continue to be adapted for the stage and screen. Schnitzler is counted as one of the major figures in German literature, and enjoyed widespread renown and critical attention during his life, even though it was not always entirely positive criticism. Recent scholarship on his works spans an entire spectrum of social and historical studies, Jewish studies, and gender and sexuality studies, with Schnitzler being hailed as providing biting and honest insight into turn of the century Vienna. While the interest that has been paid to the heroines of *Das Märchen* and *Das Vermächtnis* is at best limited, *Fräulein Else* stands with a number of other female characters, such as the title figures of *Frau Beate und ihr Sohn* (1913) or *Frau Berta Garlan* (1901), that have been extracted from some of Schnitzler's more famous works for scrutiny. Much has, of course, been made of the links between Schnitzler and Freud, and the psychological elements of *Fräulein Else* and *Leutnant Gustl* have been amply studied. Silvia Kronberger, Hillary Hope

Herzog and Marianne Knoblen-Wauben are just a few of the scholars who have examined Schnitzler's medical background, and his familiarity with mental illnesses and with the work of Sigmund Freud, and the ways in which this knowledge of scientific discourses played out in his works.

Other scholars have examined literary and social aspects of Schnitzler's female characters, which are shown to have been greatly influenced by Schnitzler's own promiscuity. His diaries are permeated with information about affairs Schnitzler embarked upon throughout his life, with an array of "types" of women, which span generations and classes. Examining Schnitzler's own experiences, Renate Wagner has written on *Frauen um Arthur Schnitzler* (1980), detailing the women with whom Schnitzler was involved as he wrote many of his best-known works. Ruth Klüger examines the "types" of women that Schnitzler drew upon in his works marvelously in her study, *Schnitzlers Damen, Weiber, Mädchen, Frauen* (2001). Others such as Ulrike Weinhold have taken this experience with and portrayal of women and applied it to social commentary. Weinhold examines the contemporary idea of woman and Schnitzler's engagement with this concept in her study *Arthur Schnitzler und der weibliche Diskurs: zur Problematik des Frauenbilds der Jahrhundertwende* (1987), where she examines the links between "Denken, Sprechen und Realität"⁹ in works such as *Fräulein Else*. Barbara Gutt turns her attention to issues of gender and power in her work, *Emanzipation bei Arthur Schnitzler* (1978). Beginning with an examination of the types in Schnitzler's works, Gutt goes on to discuss the relationships between male and female characters, before drawing conclusions about emancipation,

⁹ Ulrike Weinhold "Arthur Schnitzler und der weibliche Diskurs" in *Jahrbuch für internationale Germanistik*. 1987; 19 (1); 110-115.111.

placing Schnitzler's works in the contemporary discourses on gender and the burgeoning European women's movement.

This dissertation builds on such criticism, not least by bringing two of Schnitzler's neglected heroines to the fore. Despite Schnitzler's lasting presence in the German literary canon, the characters Toni and Fanny have been eclipsed by other works or figures in his body of work. Hermann's characters Lies, Antonie and Jettchen have also been all but ignored by what little has been written on his works. Of the scholarship on Hermann, Godela Weiss-Sussex's studies focus on the genre of the works, or on their affinity with other fin-de-siècle arts. Other scholars such as Hans Otto Horch or Laureen Nussbaum have written on Hermann's life and his time spent in exile, in an attempt to rekindle academic interest in the author. Such interest was marked in a 2004 collection of essays, including contributions by Martin Swales and Ritchie Robertson, but again, the emphasis in each piece was on Hermann's life, his status as a German Jew, or aesthetic aspects of his works. In none of these studies have the female characters been brought to light and studied in terms of their place in the greater discourse on femininity or the increasingly problematic attempt by society to divert the women's movement. Even discussions of *Jettchen Gebert* have failed to examine Jettchen herself as an interesting female figure of the age, apparently falling into the trap of dismissing the characters, just as the middle class characters around them do. Scholarship has neglected to step beyond the constellations of power that are reflected in these literary works. This dissertation addresses the lack of attention that has been paid to these figures, giving voice to the unheard rebellion that they carry out.

The social constellations of power within which these characters must negotiate their way can be related to two other frameworks that were of utmost importance in fin-de-siècle society. The first can be described as the macrocosm in which Hermann and Schnitzler found themselves, as members of middle class society. The second is the microcosmal relationship between Freud and his patient Dora, who lends her name to the title of this dissertation. The first informs the environment in which the works were written; the second illustrates further the way that the greater social order of normalization and control could be played out around one female figure. The literature discussed in the following chapters combines these two frameworks, setting society against one female, and thus occupying a space somewhere between Freud's case study and the social order of the day.

The first of these two frameworks was one that affected every aspect of Hermann and Schnitzler's lives as members of European society. Despite their status as German and Austrian Jews, which would later work against them as nationalism swept central Europe, Hermann and Schnitzler both had a strong affiliation with the middle classes, and their audiences were by no means insubstantial. The works under discussion here were for the most part written before the first World War, and thus in a time that Hermann himself argues, in *Der doppelte Spiegel*, did not differentiate between Jewish or German or Austrian authors: "Niemand hat [...] daran gedacht, im Buch und Stück eines Schnitzlers das Werk eines Juden und Semiten, in dem eines Hauptmann das eines Christen und Germanen zu sehen."¹⁰ Hermann goes on to argue that the role of being in a minority, and thus apparently at a remove from mainstream society, lent a greater insight to Jewish artists: "Typisch ist ja, daß gerade [Juden] oft die besten Kenner und die feinsten Schilderer und Deuter ihrer Heimat

¹⁰ Hermann, *Spiegel* 9. See also 7, 20, 37, 38, 50.

sind. Wenigstens ist sowohl Arthur Schnitzler für Wien, wie Georg Hermann für Berlin das oft nachgesagt worden. ”¹¹

It was only due to societal pressures and concerns that the two later became more actively engaged in the discourse on Jewish assimilation. For Hermann, this happened after the first World War. *Schnee*, written after the war, was his first openly critical indictment of social mentalities, and *Der doppelte Spiegel* was his first work to deal explicitly with Judaism. As Gert Mattenklott puts it, Hermann’s earlier works are almost devoid of anything beyond a fleeting reference to religion: “Hermanns Kultur- und Gesellschaftsverständnis ist durchweg säkular.”¹² Even in *Jettchen Gebert*, where the prospect of a Gentile suitor causes minor concern, and where Eastern Jewish characters appear, the novel is in C.G. van Liere’s words “mehr vom liberalen Geist der Epoche als vom Judentum geprägt.”¹³ As Hermann wrote after the war:

Ich hatte es [das Judentum] in einer latenten Form besessen [...] ich hatte es immer als eine Weste getragen die man unter dem zugeknöpften Rock hat, die warm gibt, und die selbstverständlich ist... hervorgekehrt hatte ich es nie, und es wäre mir nie eingefallen, wie das heute internationale Mode ist, die Weste über den Rock zu tragen. Trotzdem habe ich mein Judentum weder vergessen, noch je verleugnet und verachtet wie die andern es taten.¹⁴

When anti-semitism blossomed in the aftermath of the war, the *Judenproblem* was forced into Hermann’s mentality, and he began to publish on the subject in journals and in his fiction and autobiographical works, both in Germany and when in exile in the Netherlands.¹⁵

¹¹ *ibid.* 42.

¹² Gert Mattenklott “Der doppelte Spiegel” in *Georg Hermann Deutsch-jüdischer Schriftsteller und Journalist, 1871-1943* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004) 103-114. 111.

¹³ van Liere, *Hermann* 179.

¹⁴ *ibid.* 180

¹⁵ *ibid.* 184: “In seinen früheren autobiographischen Werken kommt das Judenproblem nicht vor, aus dem

Schnitzler can be placed in the same kind of social milieu, as the lives of Jews in Germany and Austria were marked by the same discourses on the Jewish problem. As Elizabeth Loentz describes, Schnitzler's parents were as little concerned with overt religious affiliation as were Hermann's:

The Schnitzler family maintained only the barest vestige of Jewish religious practice [...] His family observed the high holy days merely out of respect for his maternal grandmother, whom he describes as the only truly pious member of the family [...] According to Schnitzler, his parents' generation, despite their stubborn insistence on their Jewish ethnic solidarity (Stammeszugehörigkeit), were indifferent to the precepts of Jewish religion and opposed or even derided its formalities.¹⁶

While *Professor Bernhardt* (1912) also elaborates themes of the Jewish problem, Schnitzler was at pains to distance himself from those authors who wrote propaganda pieces at the time.¹⁷

Writing in 1931, Schnitzler's acquaintance Sol Liptzin wrote an appraisal of his life and works, in which he expounds upon Schnitzler's attitudes to many aspects of culture and society. In discussing Schnitzler's religious affiliation and his attitude toward anti-semitism, Liptzin argues: "[Schnitzler] does not mask [the Jewish problem's] ugliness. He makes no predictions as to its future trend. He merely lays bare a moral and social condition that brings suffering and bewilderment to millions of people."¹⁸ Liptzin suggests that although

einfachen Grunde, weil es ein solches vor dem ersten Weltkrieg, wenigstens im Bewußtsein des Verfassers, nicht gab."

¹⁶ Elizabeth Loentz "The Problem and Challenge of Jewishness in the City of Schnitzler and Anna O." in Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, ed. *A Companion to the Works of Arthur Schnitzler* (Rochester, NY: Camden house, 2003) 79-102.83.

¹⁷ *ibid.* 87.

¹⁸ Sol Liptzin *Arthur Schnitzler* (Riverside, CA: Ariadne Press, 1995) 131.

Schnitzler rejected the claim of Zionism to Palestine, his works, especially *Der Weg ins Freie* (1908), express a sympathy for the Jewish plight. Here, the hero travels to Palestine, but “returns in a chastened mood ready to continue the struggle against his foes in Vienna itself, the city which is, after all, his home.”¹⁹ Liptzin thus describes his friend’s faith as that of a skeptic: “Yet, just because Schnitzler is an extreme skeptic, he even doubts his own doubts [...] he asks us to probe within the depths of our being and to follow the dictates of our own nature.”²⁰ As Loentz argues, this wider approach to the problem of race led to a more nuanced development of characters and themes in Schnitzler’s works: “Schnitzler’s professed intent was to create and portray individuals and their relationships in the full spectrum in which they appear in the world (or more precisely, in his world – Jewish Vienna). It was not to portray, much less to solve, any political or societal ‘question.’”²¹

While neither Schnitzler nor Hermann were actively engaged in an overt discussion of exclusively Jewish topics, their belonging to a minority, whatever their attitude toward that minority, did perhaps lend them greater insight into European, middle class society, as Hermann posited. Despite the vast common ground between Jewish and Gentile world views at the time, there were still religious and social distinctions that marked the boundaries between the two. As Martin Swales contends, it was the Jewish, and not the Gentile, community that had to be more consciously and deliberately created. In Swales’ argument, Hermann’s works are indicative of the nature of the Jewish community, which, as a sub-class

¹⁹ *ibid.* 135.

²⁰ *ibid.* 141.

²¹ Loentz, *Problem* 88.

in Europe, exhibited the social negotiations that make up any group, be it a majority or a minority:

Hermann has a complex feel for the notion of community, and it derives arguably from (for obvious reasons) urgently felt Jewish awareness that community, its languages and sights and sounds, cannot simply be taken for granted. The boundaries and borderlines, and with them the territoriality of communality are constantly in negotiation. Allegiances are made, un-made, re-made in the complex cultural, linguistic, economic flow between Jew and Gentile.²²

As Swales goes on to argue, this creation of a group is especially clear in Hermann's *Jettchen Gebert*, the only work discussed in my study in which religious differences are addressed.²³

Ritchie Robertson extends this idea, however, in his examination of power negotiations in middle class society as a whole at the time:

Jettchen Gebert [...] shares with *Buddenbrooks* an obsession with boundaries and borders, insiders and outsiders, which makes both novels characteristic of their period [...] the borders and boundaries in *Jettchen Gebert* are paradigmatic for the social boundaries that recur constantly in the fiction of Hermann's time, whether these are barriers between Eastern and Western Jews, between Jews and Gentiles, between Germans and Poles, or between men and women or heterosexuals and homosexuals.²⁴

Hermann and Schnitzler were thus doubly involved in discourses of control and normalization: they were both members of two societies. It may be the case that their first hand experience of this dichotomous existence lent the two an insight into the analogous situation that middle class women found themselves in, as both middle class and female, and that this in turn informed their presentation of female characters. Each of the two societies to which these authors belonged, however - the Jewish and the European middle classes - had a

²² Martin Swales, "Introductory remarks" in *Georg Hermann Deutsch-jüdischer Schriftsteller und Journalist, 1871-1943* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004) 1-4. 1.

²³ *ibid.* 1

²⁴ Ritchie Robertson, "Cultural Stereotypes and Social Anxiety in Georg Hermann's 'Jettchen Gebert'" in *Georg Hermann Deutsch-jüdischer Schriftsteller und Journalist, 1871-1943* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 2004) 5-22. 18

vested interest in maintaining the status quo. The Jewish middle class in Germany and Austria mirrored the conservative, traditional leanings of the middle class as a whole. It was the resistance to change, and the strict categorization and controlling of subversive elements, that characterized the macrocosm in which Hermann and Schnitzler wrote.

The second framework, which serves as a microcosm of the first, can be found in Sigmund Freud's case study of Dora. Freud was also a Jew, and also did not identify himself overtly as such. The same social framework that affected Hermann and Schnitzler also held Freud in its grip. While traces of this framework can be found in Hermann's and Schnitzler's literary production, it also left its mark on Freud's scientific dealings. Indeed, Freud's entire career, of defining, labeling and controlling deviations from the mental norm, could be read as a medical attempt at normalization. The studies of individual patients that Freud and others undertook were thus clearly part of the normalizing force exerted by society's authority figures, be they politicians, intellectuals, or doctors. The case of Dora is perhaps the most illustrative and best known of the studies that Freud published, in which the doctor takes on the role of assimilator or controller, and Dora takes on the role of the Other. As is shown in chapter three of this dissertation, Dora finally broke off her treatment by Freud, allowing her to be placed alongside the literary heroines who similarly escaped from the power negotiations that surrounded them. Dora's case is also of particular interest for this study because of the nature of the reality to which Dora was to be persuaded to conform. Rather than seeking to set an unruly adolescent back on a moral path, Dora's parents sought to bring her into line with an arrangement that would exploit her body and her sexuality, in order to allow an adulterous relationship between her father and his lover Frau K. to continue unimpeded. This is thus a case of extreme assimilation, in which any claim to moral

superiority or justification has been left behind by the blind drive to bend any rebellious element to the will of those in authority.

The case also serves as a useful comparison with Hermann and Schnitzler's works because of the role that Freud plays, which is analogous to the way in which the authors portray middle class society. The link between doctor and society was an almost universally accepted truth in fin-de-siècle Europe. As Ute Frevert has argued:

[the] privileged alliance between doctors and housewives proved to be an essential component in the lives of middle-class women in France, Great Britain, and the United States. In Germany too, from the late eighteenth century onward, the family doctor now took the part of counselor, controller, and confidant in the bourgeois household formerly played by the priest.²⁵

Just as priests had held the authority to censure or condemn, so too did the doctor. Doctors could thus gauge the metaphorical pulse of society, and, if they saw fit, censor undesirable elements in the social corpus, just as they might check the development of a disease. The public increasingly turned to the sciences to explain, and thereby control, the natural world. As Ardis puts it: "naming is not an objective activity. We name things in order to reassure ourselves that we know what things are – and that our knowledge gives us some sort of control over them."²⁶ In the scientific climate of the day, the doctor who could place a calming label on a frightening condition was king.

Freud himself mirrored this appeal to a higher authority in his turning to one of his first role models, Jean Martin Charcot. When Freud traveled to Paris to learn from the master's work with hysterics, Charcot won an admiration in the intellectually snobbish young man that not many could have equaled. In his discussion of this early mentor, Freud wrote:

²⁵ Ute Frevert "The Civilizing Tendency of Hygiene" in Fout, John C. *German Women in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Holmes and Meier, 1984) 320-344. 321.

²⁶ Ann L. Ardis, *New Women, New Novels* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990) 13.

“Als Lehrer war Charcot geradezu fesselnd, jeder seiner Vorträge ein kleines Kunstwerk an Aufbau und Gliederung, formvollendet und in einer Weise eindringlich, daß man den ganzen Tag über das gehörte Wort nicht aus seinem Ohr und das demonstrierte Objekt nicht aus dem Sinne bringen konnte.”²⁷ Freud’s praise reaches a crescendo when elevating Charcot to a biblical status: “Der Schüler [...] mußte an den Mythos von Adam denken, der jenen von Charcot gepriesenen intellektuellen Genuß im höchsten Ausmaß erlebt haben mochte, als ihm Gott die Lebewesen des Paradieses zur Sonderung und Benennung vorführte.”²⁸

This capacity for naming the unknown was critical in creating Charcot as a demigod of the scientific community. As Freud witnessed, Charcot’s lectures and photographic studies of hysteria were astounding: “die vollständigen und extremen Fälle, die ‘Typen,’ ließen sich mit Hilfe einer gewissen Art von Schematisierung hervorheben, und von den Typen aus blickte das Auge auf die lange Reihe der abgeschwächten Fälle, der formes frustes, die von dem oder jenem charakteristischen Merkmal des Typus hier ins Unbestimmte ausliefen.”²⁹ Chaos was subdued before his very eyes; from the maelstrom in the hospital ward, literally embodied in his patients, the majority of whom were women, emerged criterion and category, order and law. Charcot became master of all he surveyed.

Freud’s treatment of hysteria deviated radically from Charcot’s concentration on physical factors, rather than psychological causes, but Charcot’s technique and use of hypnosis was to influence Freud’s clinical approach throughout the early years of his career. Freud was extremely impressed by Charcot’s ability to call up hysterical symptoms under

²⁷ Sigmund Freud, “Charcot” in *Gesammelte Werke* (London: Imago, 1942) Band I 21-35. 28. See also *ibid.* 26.

²⁸ *ibid.* 23.

²⁹ *ibid.* 22.

hypnosis, thereby controlling completely that which the patient could not at all.³⁰ As Freud said, the prospect of wielding such power was very appealing to him: “there was something positively seductive in working with hypnotism. For the first time there was a sense of having overcome one’s helplessness; and it was highly flattering to enjoy the reputation of being a miracle-worker.”³¹ Although he would later abandon the practice, citing his own limitations in it, Freud appears to have enjoyed the power that hypnotism promised to afford the doctor. In the case of Frau Emmi von N., he goes to what might appear unnecessary lengths to persuade his patient of the validity and success of hypnotism. When Emmi expressed concern that she was not susceptible to the method, Freud instructed her, while she was under hypnosis, that she would ask for wine that evening, and then address a comment to him that he wrote on a piece of paper:

Sie schien wirklich mit sich zu kämpfen, als sie von mir den Wein verlangte, - sie trank nämlich niemals Wein, - und nachdem sie mit offenkundiger Erleichterung das Getränk abbestellt hatte, griff sie in die Tasche, zog den Zettel hervor, auf dem ihre letztgesprochenen Worte zu lesen waren, schüttelte den Kopf und sah mich erstaunt an.³²

With such treatment methods at their disposal, the scientific community grew accustomed to wielding absolute control over their (female) subjects. By the time he treated Dora, however, Freud had abandoned the practice of hypnosis, because he felt restricted in his abilities with it. His treatment of Dora was, as a result, far more contentious and frustrating than some of the earlier cases that were committed to paper seem. Dora’s condition did not improve, and she tried twice to abandon the process. What Dora’s second and final desertion meant for Freud was that he not only failed to control the ailment from

³⁰ Sigmund Freud, *Autobiography* James Strachey, trans. (New York: Norton, 1935) 19.

³¹ *ibid.* 28.

³² Sigmund Freud, “Frau Emmi von N...” in *Gesammelte Werke* (London: Imago, 1942) Band I. 99-163. 139.

which she was suffering, but he also failed to control the patient herself. It was only in retrospect, upon writing the case study, and setting Dora and her illness down in black and white, that Freud could assert his authorial power.

Freud expressed concern that his case studies could be read as novellas or for entertainment,³³ albeit by undereducated or inappropriate readers. The studies, and that of Dora in particular, have been appropriated by literary critics nonetheless. The literary flair with which Freud wrote cannot be denied, and writing was one of the many talents that he fostered even in his youth. In his discussion of Freud's early correspondence, Gardner writes:

Freud comes across as a lively, enthusiastic, witty, sometimes sardonic, and highly ambitious but occasionally self-deprecatory young man. Equipped with a developed imagination, he is able to invent scenes, characters, institutions, and flights of poetic fancy; and vivid characterizations and dramatizations issue readily from his pen in several languages.³⁴

The ease with which Freud could write a masterfully flowing narrative was of course an advantage in his later approach to sessions with patients, where no notes were taken, allowing him to create a seemingly complete rendition of their case. When the patient or condition was of particular interest, this imaginative capacity was combined with a singularity of purpose, as was the case with Emmi: "Am 1. Mai 1889 wurde ich der Arzt einer etwa vierzigjähriger Dame, deren Leiden wie deren Persönlichkeit mir so viel Interesse einflößten, daß ich ihr einen großen Teil meiner Zeit widmete und mir ihre Herstellung zur Aufgabe machte."³⁵

³³ Freud, *Elisabeth* 227.

³⁴ Vivien Gardner and Susan Rutherford, eds. *The New Woman and her Sisters* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992) 53.

³⁵ Freud, *Emmi* 99.

As Campbell puts it, the difficulty inherent in the subject matter lends the studies on hysteria a certain appeal to the reader: “In these early writings [...] there is a gap in Freud’s knowledge about hysteria which he tolerates, and even *encourages* in the reader. It is this unknown that gives the writings their freshness and vivacity.”³⁶ Campbell argues that the treatment of hysteria, with its interior causes, must depend upon an understanding of, or at the very least a disclosure of, the patient’s personal history.³⁷ The fact that these case histories are written by Freud is extremely problematic, however. As Keller argues: “Scientific observation [...] is never innocent, but always and inevitably influenced by theoretical commitments. Observation, in a word, is theory-laden.”³⁸ Freud’s subjective and even selfish approach to his interaction with his patients has been shown. The effect that his less than scientific methods had on his case studies is to render them literary. As Otis argues, this was a trend in publishing at the time, as scientists sought to present their work to a wider audience: “Science was not perceived as being written in a ‘foreign language’ – a common complaint of twenty-first century readers. As a growing system of knowledge expressed in familiar words, science was in effect a variety of literature.”³⁹ Whatever the conjectured cause, the consensus among critics is that Freud’s studies, and especially that of Dora, could hardly be further removed from modern scientific norms. As Ramas puts it:

³⁶ Aisling Campbell, “Freud, hysteria, and psychiatry as the im[possible] profession” in Gertrudis van de Vijver and Filip Geerardyn, eds. *The pre-psychoanalytic writings of Sigmund Freud* (London: Karnac, 2002) 124-132. 127.

³⁷ *ibid.* 124.

³⁸ Evelyn Fox Keller and Helen Longino, eds. *Feminism and Science* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1996) 1.

³⁹ Laura Otis, “Introduction” in Laura Otis, ed. *Literature and Science in the Nineteenth Century* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002) xvii-xxviii. xvii.

Freud's analysis is only partly true – intriguing fiction and flawed analysis – because it is structured around a fantasy of femininity and female sexuality that remains misunderstood [...] Freud abandons his initial concern [...] in order to develop an argument that is fundamentally an ideological construct, a construct that defends patriarchal fantasies of femininity and female sexuality.⁴⁰

The links between science and literature in this case study cannot be denied. Nor can the links between Freud's study and the literary works under discussion be denied. The case study provides a microcosm of the tensions and frameworks that the literature creates. On the one hand, Freud represents in one man the will to assimilate and control, and the normalizing force, of society. On the other hand, difference and rebellion are embodied in the figure of one patient who defies his control, Dora. The link between Hermann's and Schnitzler's works and this case study is one of magnitude: all three authors wrote in the same macrocosm of social conditions, and all three typify the Other in a female guise, but while this relationship is played out between two individuals in Freud's case study, the literary pieces place Dora's sisters in a larger social network. These works are also created by a male author, who also has complete control over the portrayal of his female characters, but while this posed a flaw in Freud's science, it is a boon to these works. There is much that is left unexplained in these fictional lives, just as Dora's own voice was excluded from the case study. It is this lack of clarity that enables the reader to fill in the blanks, thereby creating a richer and more telling appraisal of fin-de-siècle society. The literary works step back from the focus into one woman's mind, casting their gaze instead upon society as a whole.

The three chapters in this dissertation follow a uniform pattern. Each begins with a brief introduction, followed by a reading of each work, which establishes the social

⁴⁰ Maria Ramas, "Freud's Dora, Dora's Hysteria" in Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane, eds. *In Dora's Case* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) 150-151.

environment that the author creates. Attention then turns to pertinent social discourses of the day, which comment on the perception of the female characters in the works. The female characters are themselves the focus of the final section, where their rebellion is extricated from the work and examined in its own light.

Chapter one examines Georg Hermann's *Spielkinder* and Arthur Schnitzler's *Das Vermächtnis*. Neither work has been afforded serious critical consideration, but the two can be very productively placed together. Both works address the problems posed by a lower class, unmarried woman who wants to integrate herself into the middle class world that the other characters embody. Both women, Lies and Toni, are reduced by these more mainstream and bourgeois characters to physical beings, entirely driven by their feminine sexuality. The classification and discussion of the figures of the prostitute and the femme fatale in fin-de-siècle Western society highlights exactly how pervasive these images were. These categories focused on the evil side of woman – the destructive, amoral and sexual Other. In both cases, the middle class characters around these two women are almost eager for them to degenerate into these “types,” and to disappear from their worlds, because classification removes the need to engage with such women on a meaningful level. As I argue in the final section of this chapter, Lies' and Toni's suicides are a form of rebellion, because they exert supreme and final authority over their bodies and their fates by ending their lives. Each character actively refuses to be turned into the type of woman the middle class wants them to become, thereby negating the social and conceptual framework that is created around them.

Chapter two addresses Hermann's *Heinrich Schön jun.* and Schnitzler's *Das Märchen*, which again lend themselves to a parallel reading. In these cases, the middle class world is threatened from within its own ranks, by two middle class women, Antonie and

Fanny. The social environment of each character is examined in each work, defining the role that the bourgeoisie would have its daughters play. Two more categorizations prevalent in their contemporary culture are then brought into the discussion, namely those of the actress and the New Woman. While the New Woman was also described in terms of her physical appearance, these discourses centered more on the intellectual threat that women could pose at the turn of the last century, as increasingly independent and intellectually engaged social beings, rather than timid and domesticated housewives. In these two works, it is the independent nature of the heroine that makes her abnormal. Antonie and Fanny both voice their dissatisfaction with society, but their protests fall on deaf ears. In their cases, the middle class characters again reduce them to a problematic “type,” and are relieved when the threat is removed, through the withdrawal of these female characters. As I argue in the final section here, though, this withdrawal is also a rebellion, because it is an active rejection of society’s expectations. Both women remove themselves from the social frameworks that stifle them, as Lies and Toni did, exerting absolute authority over their fate.

Chapter three builds on both the modes of rebellion and the social contexts established in chapters one and two. The environment of the two heroines in Hermann’s *Jettchen Gebert* and Schnitzler’s *Fräulein Else* are examined first, detailing the history and character of these two figures. Both come from middle class, Jewish families, and both are severely limited by their family and by their role as dutiful daughter figures in society. The discourse on the traffic in women is then introduced, appertaining as it does to each character’s tale. Jettchen is married to a distant relative for the sake of business relations, despite her infatuation with another man, and Else is encouraged by her family to approach a rich acquaintance for money, in exchange for the designs that he has on the girl. Jettchen

flees, and Else commits suicide, but these two are placed in a chapter of their own because neither does so without first voicing her rebellion in apparently hysterical symptoms. This fact allows them to be placed alongside Freud's famous patient Dora, who was brought to him because she protested, through illness, at the exchange that was taking place in her family. Dora's parents ignored the advances made by their friend Herr K., seemingly in return for his acceptance of the father's affair with Frau K. In all three cases, the problematic female, who refuses to allow herself to be treated as an object, and manipulated by society, is reduced to a "hysteric," a socially acceptable and accessible label which at once demarcates what is to be expected of them, and de-emphasizes any complaint that they might make. The hysteric's apparent lack of coherence is seized upon as weakness in the fin-de-siècle world view. As I show in this chapter, however, the hysterical was just another facet of rebellion available to women at the time, and another mode of rejecting society's hypocritical demands.

Dora and her literary sisters thus represent a whole spectrum of rebellion, from the physical, to the intellectual, to the psychological combination of physical symptom and intellectual cause. Each of these figures also represents an element of the fin-de-siècle imagination, as each was a product of the literary and scientific age. Taken together, then, these previously unheard voices can add volumes to the collective understanding of the era.

Chapter One

Introduction

Three of the most prominent images of the female body in fin-de-siècle literature are those of the prostitute, the femme fatale, and the corpse. All three images focus exclusively on the physical aspects of Otherness, and highlight an underlying assumption that the female body is a deviation from the masculine norm. Just as Jews were considered foreign to mainstream European society because of apparent physical differences, so too were women classified, or assimilated into groups and categories. The obvious result of such categorization is that the women themselves disappear from view, as has been the case in criticism of Schnitzler's *Das Vermächtnis* and Hermann's *Spielkinder*; in the former, Toni is dismissed as a weak and almost secondary character, whose eventual defeat manifests itself in suicide, while in the latter, Lies is afforded no more than cursory attention, as the narrator's love interest. The deeper significance of these characters must thus be reappropriated, and lifted out of the binary opposition in which they are trapped, where women can only be judged as the bourgeois ideal or as the abominable sexual monster, with no possibility of appeal.

The attention to the female form in the arts mirrors contemporary attempts by science to understand woman herself, either through psychoanalysis or through physical examination and intrusion. In life, a woman's body was closed to the scientific gaze, and despite recent scientific advances, her reproductive organs were still considered hidden and mysterious; in death, this mystery was compounded, with the unknown becoming the unknowable. The

female body was thus the site of speculation and investigation, in bourgeois society's ongoing campaign to understand, categorize, and therefore control the mystery of woman. By placing labels on different "types" of women, bourgeois society could appropriate the mystery of femininity into the realm of its knowledge. What this means for the women in question here is that they are reduced to their links with the body and physical sexuality. Prostitutes thus become objects to be bought or sold in a monetary transaction, femmes fatale become demonic figures who are ruled by destructive sexual drives, and the corpse an impassive body, at last fully subjected to masculine voyeurism and fantasy.

This chapter examines two instances of female characters whose roles as sexual beings are imposed upon them by bourgeois society in this way. Both are lower class women, and, as such, are in the double bind of being more easily placed in such categories, because they are at a remove from the upper classes who do so, and of being outsiders to bourgeois society, and, as such, less able to make their own voices heard. While chapter two will examine two very vocally rebellious characters, the characters discussed in this chapter, Hermann's Lies and Schnitzler's Toni, are marginalized and ignored, with both figures being extensively talked about but never consulted. Both are effectively silenced by a social order that cannot allow itself to acknowledge their protest. In Toni's case, her speech is halting and expressed with difficulty, as Schnitzler's punctuation indicates; in Lies', she is absent from much of the action of the novel, and eventually dies of tuberculosis, a respiratory illness symbolic of her inability to express herself successfully. Both women are "misdiagnosed," or misunderstood, as being driven by their sexuality, for the simple reason that they have broken bourgeois class taboos by trying to establish a family with a man from a higher caste. Most obviously in Toni's case, but also true of Lies', the bourgeoisie closes ranks, stripping these

two women of their individuality by placing them in categories, and thereby justifying their rejection of these dangerous women. Both Toni and Lies end their tales as female corpses, but theirs is not simply a defeated end: by removing their bodies from the discourse about them, by their own hand, these women bring bourgeois control into question, at once challenging its universality and bringing the possibility of an active, female subjectivity, which does not fit into society's binary frameworks, to light. While bourgeois society attempted to reduce these characters to mere bodies, it is they themselves who hold final authority over their body's fate. Whether this is to be read as a triumph over, or a doomed attack on societal control, these works problematize the very frameworks of gender roles and of power that have informed readings of them to date.

Spielkinder

Spielkinder (1897) was Georg Hermann's first novel, and enjoyed moderate success. As C.G. van Liere puts it, "Hermann selbst war mit der Aufnahme des Buches nicht zufrieden. Zwar war 'dem Werk ein kleiner Erfolg beschieden': 'es fand einen sehr willigen und stark mitgehenden Leserkreis'; auch haben ihn einige Kritiker – darunter vor allem Theodor Fontane – ermutigt."⁴¹ The work was largely influenced by the circumstances of Hermann's own life: in his hero's tale are all the elements of the Borchardt family's straitened financial and social standing. Hermann's father suffered a stroke and died after a prolonged period of illness, and Hermann witnessed the sale of the family's furniture and possessions during his childhood.⁴² This work, as with many of his other early novels, was

⁴¹ C.G. van Liere, *Georg Hermann: Materialien zur Kenntnis seines Lebens und seines Werkes* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1974) 146.

⁴² *ibid.* 18.

republished after the success of *Jettchen Gebert*, and all of his previous works received more popular acclaim in this way. *Spielkinder* is a short novel, compiled from a series of other pieces and finished during a period of convalescence after Hermann became ill with a lung infection during military service.⁴³ It was first published in the journal *Neue Welt*, and enjoyed moderate, if not lucrative, success.⁴⁴ Gert Mattenklott praises the work's contemporary style:

Da finden wir das Verflechten von gebundener und ungebundener Rede bis zum Experimentieren mit dem monologue intérieur [...da] begegnen wir neben anderen Anleihen bei der Poetik des Naturalismus den Dialektzitate[n] zur milieuhafte[n] Charakterisierung; stoßen wir auch auf die episodische Kleinteiligkeit, die literarisch am produktivsten wird, wenn der Erzähler sich wie selbstvergessen und absichtslos an sie verliert.⁴⁵

Each of these elements of the interior monologue, the use of dialect, and a free-flowing and apparently unconstrained style, can be found in Hermann's later works, in keeping with his own theory that his writing is all imbued with his subjectivity: "Was ich gegeben habe und geben will, sind Kristallisationsformen meines Ichs, bittere und süße Niederschläge, Selbstüberwindungen, schwermütige und heitere Exaltationen. Ich gab sie und will sie geben, um meinem Sein, das verrinnt, feste Formen zu verleihen..."⁴⁶ Written at a young age, *Spielkinder* was especially linked to Hermann's own life, as he says: "Es hat mir selten etwas so viele üble Stunden bereitet. Denn immerhin – es kann nicht geleugnet werden: es ist autobiographisch, dieses Buch. Autobiographisch, wie eigentlich all und jede Schriftstellerei

⁴³ Georg Hermann, *Spielkinder* (Berlin: Das neue Berlin, 1998) 274.

⁴⁴ *ibid.* 276.

⁴⁵ *ibid.* 280.

⁴⁶ *ibid.* 278.

mehr oder minder deutlich es ist und sein soll.”⁴⁷ *Spielkinder* is filled with autobiographical elements: the illness and death of the father, the deterioration of the family’s social and financial standing, Georg’s employment and time in the military. The autobiographical tone is limited to the character of Georg, however. The narrative and structural distance placed between the reader and Lies, with no access to her thoughts, and her repeated absences from the plot, shows that she plays no role in Hermann's self-depiction.

These autobiographical elements of the work are apparent from the beginning, where the father, Geiger, is tricked by his brother in law and an associate into buying worthless land. The deal falls through, and he is left with insurmountable debts. His first reaction is to write a suicide note, but is interrupted by his wife.⁴⁸ The family is forced to sell furniture and cut back on staff.⁴⁹ From there, Geiger is driven to swindling money out of anyone he can find, or by this stage, anyone who will allow him to talk to them:

Endlich mußte ich mitkommen, wurde irgend einem mir wildfremden Herrn vorgestellt, und Vater erfand eine sinnreiche Mausefallengeschichte, daß ich mitgekommen wäre, um mir ein paar Stiefel zu kaufen, daß er aber sein Portemonnaie vergessen hätte, und ob der Herr nun so freundlich sein wollte, ihm vielleicht hierzu zehn Mark zu leihen, er bekäme sie morgen, dann und dann, da und da sicher wieder.⁵⁰

As the years pass, the household has to relocate to a smaller apartment, is reduced to one maid, and then to none. The family often goes without food, to which the young Georg becomes accustomed: “Mit Essen war ich nicht sehr verwöhnt. Wenn eben einmal nicht da

⁴⁷ *ibid.* 275.

⁴⁸ *ibid.* 21, 24.

⁴⁹ *ibid.* 27, 28.

⁵⁰ *ibid.* 52.

war, dann bekam ich einfach nichts und tröstete mich auch so gut es ging.”⁵¹ The financial situation declines even farther after Geiger suffers a stroke: “Vor einem Jahr hatte ich Vater genau an derselben Stelle gesehen. Damals ein Bild wilder überschüssiger Lebenskraft und heute, ich mochte es nicht glauben, daß es derselbe war. Wie doch Krankheit einen Menschen herunterbringen kann!”⁵² This blow leads to years of ill health and deterioration before Geiger finally dies:

Mit Vaters Gesundheit, die sich lange auf gleicher Höhe gehalten hatte, ging es plötzlich rapide bergab. Das Gehen fiel ihm schwer, und bald konnte er nicht mehr das Zimmer verlassen. Den ganzen Tag saß er nun am Fenster, rauchte und schaute hinaus. Lesen strengte ihn an, und auch wenn man ihm etwas vorlas, war es ihm nicht angenehm. Er wurde anteillos, seine geistigen Kräfte waren wohl etwas umnachtet, aber sie verließ ihn doch nie gänzlich.⁵³

Following his father’s death, Georg works in a shop, before joining the military, and then returning to commerce. All of these details are mirrored in Hermann’s life, as he makes clear in the afterword. There is no indication of whether the figure of Lies is based in reality, however. Gert Mattenklott is dismissive of the story of Lies in this work:

Es ist leicht zu bemerken, daß Hermanns Absicht zu einem Zeitbild aus dem Material des eigenen Lebens durch eine Liebesgeschichte konterkariert wird, die erzählerisch eher addiert als integriert erscheint. Lebensrohstoff scheint hier so übermächtig gewesen zu sein, daß er der Katastrophenhandlung gegenüber auch literarisch so aufgesetzt erscheint, wie er womöglich bereits im Leben des Autors gewirkt hat. Schnell läßt sich hier eine Schwäche feststellen. Vielleicht ist diese aber die Voraussetzung dafür, daß die Episode einer jungen Liebe einfließen kann, deren Stunde schließlich auf einer Parkbank im Tiergarten schlägt: von so starker lyrischer Intensität, daß sie das vermeintliche erzählerische Ungeschick vergessen macht.⁵⁴

⁵¹ *ibid.* 51.

⁵² *ibid.* 102, 127.

⁵³ *ibid.* 136.

⁵⁴ *ibid.* 282.

This young woman's story is, however, when paid close attention to, more interesting than that of the narrator. Hers is a narrative of subjugation, repression, physical abuse and, ultimately, physical and literal escape. Mirroring the superficial emphasis of the novel on the character of Georg, Mattenklott clearly underestimates the significance of this female character, ignoring rather than reading the hidden narrative within the novel.

The relationship between Georg and Lies is described entirely from his perspective, as is the entire novel. After his family move into cheaper accommodation, the boy makes a number of friends. Lies is mentioned, along with another girl, last in a list of short descriptions of other, individual, friends.⁵⁵ She is by no means the least important in his life, though, even at this early stage: “[Im Tiergarten] war ich wieder umhergestrolcht, bis es fast gänzlich dunkel war – aber nicht allein, ich hatte eine treue Gefährtin, die mich überall wie ein wohlerzogener Hund begleitete – Lieschen Weise.”⁵⁶ The working-class daughter of a drunkard and a mother who has frequent visits from “gentlemen friends,” Lies does not come from an ideal home, and this is reflected in her character at the age of twelve:

Naturgemäß fühlte sich Lies in dieser Umgebung sehr unglücklich. Daheim bekam sie ja kein freundliches Wort zu hören, und niemand nahm sich im Guten ihrer an. Aber gerade das hatte ihrem Charakter etwas Geschlossenes, Bestimmtes und Selbstbewußtes gegeben. Sie war gewohnt, sich alles allein zu besorgen, überhaupt zu tun, zu lassen, was sie wollte. Züchtigungen von seiten ihrer Eltern ließ sie ohne Murren, wie selbstverständlich über sich ergehen. Sie bekam durchschnittlich alle zwei Tage ihre gehörige Tracht Prügel und war daran anscheinend derart gewöhnt, daß sie beinahe mißgestimmt war, wenn sie zur rechten Zeit noch keine erhalten hatte.⁵⁷

⁵⁵ *ibid.* 50.

⁵⁶ *ibid.* 158.

⁵⁷ *ibid.* 59.

In the earliest stages of the relationship, Georg remains somewhat detached from Lies. Lies is by this age already very pretty: “Gott, wie war das Kind hübsch geworden und wie anmutig ihre Bewegungen!”⁵⁸ Her beauty does not have any effect on Georg, at the age of 13, until Lies takes their physical relationship to another level by kissing him. Until that point, hers is a one-sided love affair:

da ich stets freundlich zu dem Mädchen war, so hatte sie sich mit der Zeit eng an mir geschlossen und hing an mir wie eine Klette. Sie tat alles, was sie mir an den Augen ablesen konnte, und ich glaube, mir zu Gefallen hätte sie sogar gestohlen. Ich nahm diese Huldigungen als mir gebührend hin, und nie auch nur im Traum fiel es mir ein, sie zu erwidern.⁵⁹

Just as he had lectured his other playmates like a teacher, Georg feels superior to Lies: “Ich fühlte mich trotz alledem durch Bildung, Alter und Stand über Lies erhaben: lag doch über uns das Bewußtsein vergangenen Reichtums!”⁶⁰ Lies is aware of his lack of feeling for her, crying one day, and comparing him to everyone else who is bad to her.⁶¹ Georg’s response to this is to talk to her, “wie man mit einem kranken Tier spricht.”⁶² In return, Lies very deliberately kisses him: “Plötzlich drückt sie den langsam nach vorn, sieht mir starr in die Augen, ganz starr und küßt mich.”⁶³ Georg is “entsetzt,” and wants to stop, which upsets Lies even more:

“Georg, mein Alter ist ein Suffkopp, meine Mutter kann mich nich ausstehn’, die is falsch auf mich wie Galgenholz. Ich muß doch irgend jemand gern haben dürfen!” Sie weint immer noch. Ich bin ratlos, das Kind tut mir leid, ich verstehe sie ja

⁵⁸ *ibid.* 58.

⁵⁹ *ibid.* 60.

⁶⁰ *ibid.* 60.

⁶¹ *ibid.* 61.

⁶² *ibid.* 62.

⁶³ *ibid.* 62.

vollkommen, aber – – Gott, wie hübsch sie aussieht! Diese wunderbaren großen, grauen Augen, die welligen, dunkelbraunen Haare.
“Lies”, sage ich, nur um etwas zu reden, “wart’ nur, als meine Frau sollst Du es besser als zu Hause haben, da kriegst Du alle Tage –“
“Georg, willst Du mich heiraten?!”
“Ja!”⁶⁴

In the face of her uncaring and abusive family situation, Lies thus seeks the attention that she craves from Georg. In order for the girl to develop, she needs what Jessica Benjamin calls an intersubjective relationship:

The intersubjective view maintains that the individual grows in and through the relationship to other subjects [...] It assumes that we are able and need to recognize that other subject as different and yet alike, as an other who is capable of sharing similar mental experience. Thus the idea of intersubjectivity reorients the conception of the psychic world from a subject's relations toward its object toward a subject meeting another subject.⁶⁵

Perhaps already influenced by her mother's infidelity, Lies turns to a male rather than a female partner. Georg thus becomes a replacement for her family, and an alternate father figure in her life, because, as a drunkard, her actual father is an absent figure even before his death. As will be shown, the death of Georg's own father furthers his inclination to fill this paternalistic role for the girl.

From this point, the two constantly find excuses to be together: “Und von nun an bestand zwischen uns beiden ein unsichtbares Band, das uns beim Versteckspielen ‘absichtslos’ in dieselben Winkel zusammenführte, wo wir im Halbdunkel oft viertelstundenlang still zusammen kauerten, kein Wort sprachen – was hätten wir uns auch zu sagen gehabt? – aber uns nach Herzenslust abküßten.”⁶⁶ The two remain close as more than a

⁶⁴ *ibid.* 62.

⁶⁵ Jessica Benjamin, *The Bonds of Love* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1988) 19.

⁶⁶ Hermann, *Spielkinder* 63.

year passes, although Georg begins to harbor suspicions about Lies being too “friendly” with his friend Eugen.⁶⁷ Lies is, from the beginning, portrayed in terms of a corporeal girl, as opposed to Georg’s male friends, who discuss philosophy and literature. As Lies gets older, she also becomes more aware of her physical appearance: “Auch wußte sie jetzt schon ganz genau, wie hübsch sie war, stellte sich gern vor den Spiegel, suchte alle möglichen Lappen hervor, um sich zu putzen und war stolz wie ein Pfau, als ich ihr einmal einen kleinen unechten Ring mit einem roten Stückchen Glas schenkte, den sie von nun an nicht Tag noch Nacht vom Finger ließ.”⁶⁸ The death of Georg’s aunt distracts him from Lies for a time, and when they meet on the street, as she and other children shout abuse at her drunken father, some of their intimacy is lost. After escorting her home that night, he does not see the girl again until he is sixteen. By this point, Lies has left school to work in a shop, and has plans to leave home. When she asks whether Georg still cares for her, he makes excuses for not having seen her recently: “‘Ich konnte nicht. – Ich hatte keine Zeit – ich darf nicht mehr spielen – –’ und ganz ernsthaft began ich ihr von meiner großen Zukunft, von meinen Aufgaben und Plänen zu erzählen, log mich in all das so hinein, daß ich es beinahe selbst glaubte.”⁶⁹ These are clearly plans in which Lies has no part, but she manages to reignite his attention to her with her body:

“Ich will aber, Du sollst bei mir bleiben!” und sie stampfte mit dem Fuße – “ich – ich – hab’ Dich lieb – so lieb – ” und wieder wollte sie meinen Kopf zwischen die Hände nehmen, aber ich riß mich los.

“Nein, nein, Lies, ich muß nach Haus, ich darf nicht länger bleiben!”

“Bleib’ doch noch bei mir!” und sie drückte sich schmeichelnd an mich.

“Aber Kind, es geht doch nicht!”⁷⁰

⁶⁷ *ibid.* 65.

⁶⁸ *ibid.* 66.

⁶⁹ *ibid.* 116.

⁷⁰ *ibid.* 119.

That night, Georg hears yet more fighting from Lies' house, and when he looks for her the next day he cannot find her.⁷¹ Lies' father dies soon after this, after apparently falling down drunk and freezing to death. Her mother is jubilant, and Lies does not mourn him either: "Auch Lies versuchte sich mit Gleichmut hierüber hinwegzusetzen. Sie war jetzt bald sechzehn Jahr, und trotz ihrer schlanken Figur körperlich wunderbar entwickelt. Sie war wenig daheim, began Tanzböden zu besuchen und Herrenbekanntschaften zu machen."⁷² By the time the two meet again, Georg does not immediately recognize her.⁷³ He is dumbfounded by the girl's beauty:

Ich sprach endlich gar nichts mehr, ich sah sie nur immerfort von der Seite an. War das Mädchen schön! Daß sie hübsch war, wußte ich, aber daß sie so schön war, so berauschend schön! [...] Ich ließ sie plaudern, ohne sie zu unterbrechen. Es war mir ja auch ganz gleich, wovon sie sprach. Ich lauschte den süßen Unsinn, als ob es Offenbarung wäre.⁷⁴

Georg clearly reverts to his old, patronizing attitudes toward Lies, but this time their relationship reaches a new level of importance in his life, because they have sex that night, on a bench in the park. From that point, Georg is able to reciprocate Lies' powerful emotions: "Ich liebte Lies, wie sie mich liebte. Jetzt wußte ich es. Wir gehörten ganz einander, mit Leib und Seele, mit Seele und Leib."⁷⁵ Georg again abruptly loses contact with Lies, distracted as he is by his father's death, until his mother uses her remaining connections to get him a job in

⁷¹ *ibid.* 122, 123.

⁷² *ibid.* 135.

⁷³ *ibid.* 138.

⁷⁴ *ibid.* 139.

⁷⁵ *ibid.* 141.

a shop, and, as it turns out, it is the same shop that Lies works in.⁷⁶ The girl has now left home, and she and Georg spend every evening together in her small apartment.⁷⁷ This stage of the relationship begins well:

Ja, und wenn sich für mich auch später manche herbe Stunde, manche schlaflose Nacht an den Namen "Lies" knüpfte, so denke ich jener ersten Monate unserer Liebe doch stets als der glücklichsten und ungetrübten meines Lebens. Ich liebte und wurde geliebt. Lies tat alles, was sie mir nur an den Augen ablesen konnte. Sie war mir willig und folgsam, wie damals, als sie noch ein Kind war und wir zusammen im Tiergarten umherliefen.⁷⁸

This lasts only a few months before the situation begins to cool.⁷⁹ Georg feels that Lies begins to withdraw from him, while at the same time becoming more demanding about what he should give her or do for her: "Die Pfennige sparte ich mir am Munde ab, um ihr eine Freude bereiten zu können und auf der anderen Seite zernagte und zerplagte ich mich tagelang in grundloser Eifersucht, wenn es mir schien, als ob sie doch nicht mehr so an mir hinge."⁸⁰ As a beautiful young woman, Lies does draw attention from admirers, but only their childhood friend Eugen poses a threat to their relationship.⁸¹ Georg runs into Eugen after a number of years, and agrees to attend a dance, organized by a theater group of sorts that Eugen has established. Eugen proceeds to offer Lies the role of his lover in a play he has written, which she accepts, once again clearly illustrating the male characters' desire to make

⁷⁶ *ibid.* 149, 153.

⁷⁷ *ibid.* 153, 155.

⁷⁸ *ibid.* 155.

⁷⁹ *ibid.* 156.

⁸⁰ *ibid.* 156, 157.

⁸¹ *ibid.* 156.

of Lies what they will.⁸² This is the beginning of the end, as Georg and Lies both realize, although they put off their actual parting:

“Georg –” und es klang so unendlich traurig, “ich weiß ja, lange wirst Du mich nicht mehr behalten, dann werden wir auseinandergehen [...] Ich sehe ja täglich, daß ich Dich stets hemme und aufhalte. Wir sind so grundverschieden. Sieh einmal, Du bist so ganz anders wie all die Menschen, die ich bisher kennen gelernt habe, und ich – Du wirst – Du mußt – Deinen eigenen Weg gehen, Georg, und ich – Gott – wer weiß, wo ich einmal verkommen werde.”

[...] All das, was Lies mir da sagte, hatte ich mir ja hundertmal selbst gesagt, es mußte ein Ende haben, aber jetzt nicht, jetzt nicht – später einmal – nur jetzt nicht.⁸³

The relationship must and does end, because, as Lies says, the two are from very different worlds. Georg’s is a world in which the shame of having a husband who drinks – on only one occasion, as opposed to Lies’ father – is a terrible blow for his mother.⁸⁴ When they begin to become poor, Georg’s mother explains the concept to him in terms of other people: “So arm, wie unten die Frau Dornack, denen du mein rotes Kleid geschenkt hast?”⁸⁵ Georg continues to feel at a remove from those other, poor children, taking on the role of teacher when they play, and is especially incensed when they are taunted when his family sells their furniture.⁸⁶ Despite their poverty, his mother continues to try to keep up appearances, speaking French so that the maids will not understand their conversation about unsavory topics, and continuing to live beyond their means, to the amusement of their neighbors when potential buyers come to look at the furniture: “Jeh’n Se man erst garnich zu Geigers ruff, das Billard is überhaupt nich zum ansehn, da essen se Mittag druff, weil se keinen Tisch haben und des Nachts

⁸² *ibid.* 163, 165, 176.

⁸³ *ibid.* 181.

⁸⁴ *ibid.* 18.

⁸⁵ *ibid.* 29.

⁸⁶ *ibid.* 32, 38.

schlafen de Jöhren druff, denn Betten haben die Geigers doch nicht, aber zwei Dienstmädchen müssen sie sich immer halten.”⁸⁷ Georg’s mother is mortified when her brother marries his mistress, who is not the right sort of woman: “Ja hübsch ist sie – sehr schön – aber weiter auch nichts.”⁸⁸ When Georg begins to spend every evening with Lies, his mother does not ask any questions, highlighting her need to retain pretensions of bourgeois values: she does not ask the questions in order to avoid hearing their answers. Despite being disparaging about her brother's decision, Georg's mother thus does not attempt to exert authority over her son's dealings with women.

Georg is nonetheless aware of the kind of woman he should ideally be looking for, a woman like his mother or aunt, self-sacrificing and respectable. His mother and sisters bear the brunt of the family’s financial ruin, with his mother often going without food for the sake of the others, and his sisters both looking for work as soon as they finish school:

Frieda und Grethe waren das geworden, was ich einst gedacht hatte, gesuchte Lehrerinnen [...] Sie hatten das Schicksal all jener Mädchen, welche ihrem Geldbeutel nach zum Proletariat und ihrer Bildung nach zu den besseren Ständen zählen: alte Jungfern zu werden und endlich, wenn ihre Angehörigen tot sind, als Erzieherinnen alte Tanten, oder Hausfaktoten zu enden, Wesen zu werden, welche kein eigenes Leben haben, sondern nur für andere leben und sich selbst darüber ganz vergessen.⁸⁹

Ideally, Georg should follow his uncle’s example of marrying a woman who is “brav” and “gut,” like his first wife. There is thus an apparently irreconcilable distance between his mother’s desires and his own desire for Lies. His uncle did not only set a moral example, however, as there was also an additional, financial advantage to his marriage, highlighting

⁸⁷ *ibid.* 57, 48.

⁸⁸ *ibid.* 121.

⁸⁹ *ibid.* 36, 128, 148.

the discrepancy between the appearance of bourgeois morality and its reality: “Unrecht wäre es nun, zu sagen, daß der Aristokrat vollends rücksichtslos gegen seine [erste] Frau gewesen wäre. Nein, ihr mußte er ja sogar dankbar sein, denn von ihr hatte er das Geld, das ihm Klugheit, Rang, Titel, Ehren und ein hübsches Verhältnis gegeben!”⁹⁰ The emphasis on reputation is another clearly autobiographical theme in the text, because as Hermann himself points out, his mother told him and his brothers that “wir Söhne [...] den Namen des Vaters wieder zu Ehren bringen [sollten]”⁹¹ Hermann’s mother’s words are echoed throughout this text: “[Dann sagte Mutter] wir sollten alle tüchtige, ordentliche, gesetzte Menschen werden, [...] und dem Namen des Vaters wieder einen guten Klang verschaffen sollten.”⁹² This desire is not purely honorable, of course: his mother needs the children to do well and provide for all of them financially:

Lies, sieh’ mal, eigentlich kann ich Dir ja gar nicht heiraten, Mutter hat gesagt, ich müßte einmal eine sehr reiche Frau bekommen, denn ich hätt’ nichts!

[Mutter] sagte mir täglich, daß Geld, sobald man es besäße, der Gipfel der irdischen Glückseligkeit, ja beinahe der himmlischen gleichzustellen wäre; daß all Klugheit ohne Geld doch nur Dummheit wäre.⁹³

The sight of Lies joining a group of children who are shouting abuse at her father thus has a strong and lasting impact on Georg, raising thoughts that will return later in life. She is clearly neither the upper class, wealthy woman he should marry, nor is she in line with his family’s bourgeois sensibilities, where any shameful aspects of life should be hidden from public view: “Anerzogene Pöbelhaftigkeit läßt sich abgewöhnen, angeborene nie

⁹⁰ *ibid.* 67.

⁹¹ *ibid.* 279.

⁹² *ibid.* 40.

⁹³ *ibid.* 63, 135.

verleugnen!”⁹⁴ Belonging to a lower class is thus perhaps Lies’ greatest sin, and she inevitably fulfils Georg’s bourgeois expectations of her, in his eyes, by becoming the kind of woman he most associates with the lower class – a prostitute. While Schnitzler’s character Toni is more complex because of her additional role as mother, both are essentially portrayals of the exertion of power over the lower class female body. As will be shown, both women will use death as their only possible active rebellion against these exertions of external power, by removing the site of the discourse – their bodies – from the realm of bourgeois society.

Das Vermächtnis

Arthur Schnitzler’s *Das Vermächtnis* (1899) has been practically ignored by critics, and what little attention it receives is negative. Julius Kapp describes the play as “das unerfreulichste und schlechteste Stück, das Schnitzler geschrieben hat.”⁹⁵ Kapp grudgingly concedes that the play raises valid issues about the morality of the bourgeoisie, although he finds the style too false:

Schnitzler zieht kräftig die verlogene, sich so edel dünkende Philistermoral zu Felde und prägt dabei manch feines Wort, das einem Blitze gleich in dieses finstere Gebiet der “Anständigkeit” hineinleuchtet, aber er verdirbt sich das Ganze durch die innere Unwahrheit der Entwicklung.⁹⁶

The drama has three acts, at the beginning of which the elder son of the bourgeois Losatti family dies after a riding accident. His final request is that the family should take in and care for his mistress and their son. The family complies, but the child dies at the end of the second

⁹⁴ *ibid.* 71.

⁹⁵ Julius Kapp, *Arthur Schnitzler* (Leipzig: Im Xenien, 1912) 61.

⁹⁶ *ibid.* 61.

act, and his mother leaves at the end of the third, with the intention of committing suicide. Bourgeois values are very clearly under attack throughout the work, by means of the character dynamics as well as by what is stated explicitly in dialogue between them. The Losatti family's need to create its own reality, while ignoring or blinding itself to anything that does not fit in with or which may challenge this reality, is what makes the portrayal of Toni as an outsider, and of her demise so compelling, and Schnitzler's criticism of bourgeois mores so damning.

Hugo's death of course comes to the Losatti family as a real blow. Their response to the fact that he had a long-term affair with a woman who is in their eyes unworthy of him is to idealize him, and therefore cleanse him of any impropriety. Each of the three acts, spanning a little over two weeks, takes place in his bedroom, which is filled with reminders of Hugo's solid, bourgeois character and achievements, as the stage directions show:

Im ganzen dunkel gehalten, mit Eleganz und mit einem – nicht allzu stark – aufs Sportliche gerichteten Geschmack ausgestattet. – Zwei Fenster rückwärts; die Läden halb geschlossen; die Nachmittagssonne fällt durch die Spalten herein [...] Zwischen den Fenstern Jadtrophäen. Links an der Wand neben der Tür ein Stand mit Flinten.⁹⁷

During the play this room remains "kaum verändert."⁹⁸ At first, the characters assemble in this room because it offers refuge from the glare of the sun, and from the noise and bustle of the street outside.⁹⁹ After Hugo's death, however, it becomes almost a shrine to his memory, as his father Adolf points out:

Ferdinand: *im Zimmer umherblickend* Also immer hier?
Adolf: Ja. Hier sind wir ihm am nächsten.

⁹⁷ Arthur Schnitzler, *Das Vermächtnis* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1994) 91. See also 124, 154.

⁹⁸ *ibid.* 124.

⁹⁹ *ibid.* 93.

Hugo was always well thought of while alive, and certainly had a number of female admirers, including his cousin Agnes:

Agnes: Glaubst du... hab' ich... *Zögernd* Hab' ich Chancen bei ihm? Ach Gott, lach' doch nicht.

Franziska: Ich versteh' dich ja so gut, Kind. Wenn er nicht mein Bruder wär', hätte ich mich wahrscheinlich selbst in ihn verliebt.¹⁰⁰

This hint at an incestuous devotion, although minor, is underlined by the rest of the family's relationships, as well as their eventual rejection of Toni, as an outsider. The audience is given the impression of a very promising youth, a former cavalry officer,¹⁰¹ in whose hands the Losatti family can place their future. In death, Hugo is elevated to an almost religious level, with his father exclaiming "Er war zu gut für diese Welt!"¹⁰² The Losattis are anxious to carry out Hugo's will and to act on his behalf, and the symbolism of his parents appealing to him in death is also remarkable:

Betty: Und was immer geschehen sein mag, – es war sein Wille! [...]

Adolf: *mit einem Blick zur Höhe und mit Tränen in der Stimme* Was glaubst du –, Betty, ist er jetzt zufrieden?¹⁰³

Hugo's sister Franziska also visits the home he had with Toni, in order to be close to him after his death: "Wenn Sie wüßten, Ferdinand, mit welcher Andacht ich diese Wohnung betreten habe! – Es war eine tiefere Andacht als draußen auf seinem Grab... Dort, wo er mit ihr gelebt hat, wo er glücklich gewesen ist, hab' ich mich besser seiner erinnern können als dort, wo er *schaudert* langsam zu Staub wird."¹⁰⁴ Such imagery is clearly exaggerated, but

¹⁰⁰ *ibid.* 100.

¹⁰¹ *ibid.* 121.

¹⁰² *ibid.* 141.

¹⁰³ *ibid.* 152.

¹⁰⁴ *ibid.* 145.

the need to idealize their lost son is genuine in this bourgeois family: it is a means to make Hugo's child and mistress better, through their association with Hugo, because otherwise, the family could not reconcile their duty and promise to Hugo with their bourgeois sensibilities. The Losatti family is representative of the bourgeois mentality as a whole, internalizing all of the bourgeois restrictions and attitudes, and each aspect of this mentality has a direct effect on how they can deal with Toni. What is important to them, as Franziska points out at the end of the work, is not the intrinsic value of bourgeois norms, but the appearance thereof. The importance of appearances is shown in the Losatti women's habit of sitting at their front windows, watching and commenting on the traffic and pedestrians that pass below them, as well as being seen themselves.¹⁰⁵ When Hugo is brought home after his accident, a crowd quickly forms around his carriage outside.¹⁰⁶ Concern about gossip and saving face is a major motivating factor in the plot, as is embodied in Franziska's fiancé Ferdinand and his attitudes toward Toni. The family also shows how such gossip and impropriety can be avoided, through the implementation of strict hierarchies, arranged by age, gender and class. Hugo's thirteen year old brother Lulu is repeatedly sent away, out of the way of the adults, because of his potentially embarrassing, uncivilized behavior: Hugo's death is met with silence, except by Lulu, who cries loudly.¹⁰⁷ Hugo's friend Gustav is patronizing toward the boy,¹⁰⁸ and he is lied to about Hugo's relationship with Toni, although he already knows better:

Lulu: *nimmt Agnes beiseite* Weißt, was die mir gesagt haben?

Agnes: *zerstreut* Wer?

Lulu: *mit einer Kopfbewegung nach links* Na, die... die behandeln mich noch immer,

¹⁰⁵ *ibid.* 91, 92, 96.

¹⁰⁶ *ibid.* 104.

¹⁰⁷ *ibid.* 123. See also 106, 119.

¹⁰⁸ *ibid.* 91.

als ob ich in der ersten wär'.
Agnes: Was haben sie dir denn gesagt?
Lulu: Also der Papa hat mir gesagt – *Winkt sie näher* der Hugo war mit ihr im
Geheimen verheiratet. Jetzt frag' ich dich, Agnes, warum erzählt man mir
solche Geschichten?¹⁰⁹

In the Lossatis' view, it is better for the boy not to know the truth of the matter, and it is therefore Adolf's duty to protect him from the reality of Hugo's life. The same attitude is extended toward the women in the play: Adolf and Ferdinand expend a great deal of effort to try to protect Franziska in the same way, even though she is older than Lulu.

The different roles expected of young men and women at the time is also shown explicitly in this work. The acceptable norm, as is made clear, is that young, bourgeois women are to remain pure and untainted, while young, bourgeois men are expected to have a succession of insignificant affairs, always with lower class women. Agnes accepts that this is the case, and proclaims herself willing to forgive Hugo's "past": "Wenn wir nur erst verlobt wären, das wäre' schon genug. Und siehst du, sofort würd' ich ihm alles verzeihen."¹¹⁰ Betty also realizes that this is the normal state of affairs, although Hugo's relationship with Toni did transgress the usual limits: "Wenn man einen Sohn in dem Alter hat, – muß man ja an manches denken."¹¹¹ Adolf's reaction is more wordly; he himself presumably had similar affairs when he was Hugo's age:

[E]ine Geliebte – das hab' ich mir denken können – ich weiß sehr gut, daß junge
Leute Geliebte haben.¹¹²

Siehst du, der Junge hat viel Geld gebraucht, ich muß sagen – eigentlich mehr, als
sonst Söhne aus gut bürgerlichen Häusern zu brauchen pflegen, aber ich habe mir

¹⁰⁹ *ibid.* 126.

¹¹⁰ *ibid.* 102.

¹¹¹ *ibid.* 133.

¹¹² *ibid.* 112.

gedacht, der Junge lebt wie die anderen jungen Leute, hat seine fidelen kleinen Aventüren, kurz und gut, er genießt sein Leben. Donnerwetter, man war ja auch einmal jung, man versteht das!¹¹³

Trivial affairs are thus expected of young men, to the extent that fathers can anticipate how much money they will have to give out for their expenses.

These attitudes toward sexuality, as well as attitudes toward gender, are criticized from within the bourgeoisie, in the form of Ferdinand, the most negative character in the work. As a man of very modest beginnings, Ferdinand is more driven than the others to protect the precious bourgeois world that he had to struggle to enter. In the final scene, Ferdinand admits to hating Toni, and resenting the fact that her elevation into the bourgeois realm was, in his view, easier and less deserved than his own: “Ich weiß auch, was Elend ist. Und besser als [Toni]. Unsereiner hat’s freilich nicht so leicht, sich daraus zu retten – wie ein hübsches Ding, dem alles gleichgültig ist, was anständige Menschen Pflicht und Sitte nennen”¹¹⁴ Ferdinand’s humble beginnings mean that he was jealous of Hugo, who he met when he became his tutor, employed by the Losattis. This jealousy takes the form of indirect criticism:

Agnes: Reiten Sie auch, Herr Doktor?

Ferdinand: Nein! – Ich habe leider nie Gelegenheit und Zeit gehabt, es zu lernen
[...] Diese Dinge muß man als ganz junger Mensch anfangen. Und als ganz junger Mensch hab’ ich eben andere Sachen zu tun gehabt. Ich habe mir mein Leben nicht nach meinem Belieben einrichten können.¹¹⁵

Ferdinand: Daß wir einander fremd gegenüberstanden sind – mag ja richtig sein. Ich bin eben ganz woanders hergekommen – aus einer armseligen und miserablen Kindheit – während er die Sorge nie gekannt hat. Er hat von

¹¹³ ibid. 137.

¹¹⁴ ibid. 169.

¹¹⁵ ibid. 97.

Jugend auf alles gehabt, was das Leben schön macht – und ich sehr lange nichts.¹¹⁶

Ferdinand's antagonism toward Hugo turns to Toni after her lover's death, and it is he who is most outraged by her presence in the Losatti home:

Das ist aber doch unerhört. Ja, warum hat man sie denn hereingelassen? [...] Ich bin einfach empört, daß man in so ernsten Momenten hysterische Weiber zu einem Kranken läßt [...] Ich bitte Sie, Fräulein, in Ihrem Interesse und dem der hier versammelten Familie, sich zu beruhigen. Ich hielte es für das weitaus Vernünftigste, wenn Sie sich – für einige Zeit entfernten.¹¹⁷

Ferdinand's greatest fear is that Franziska, his future wife, will be compromised in the eyes of bourgeois society due to her contact with Toni. The rest of the family does have such feelings about the lower class lovers of bourgeois men, as Agnes shows when talking about the "verdamnten Weiber" with whom she imagines Hugo to associate.¹¹⁸ The others' sentiments are weakened, however, when they are forced to confront a real woman.

Ferdinand remains resolute though, insisting that Toni must leave:

Ich bitte Sie, ich beschwöre Sie – bedenken Sie doch endlich, wen Sie in dieses Haus aufgenommen haben, wer mit Ihnen an einem Tisch sitzt, wem Sie erlaubt haben, mit uns allen am Grabe Ihres Sohnes zu beten [...] Seine Mätresse ist sie gewesen, das steht jedenfalls fest, also eines von den Weibern, die man sonst in solchen Häusern nicht über die Schwelle läßt [...] Ich gönne ihr alles Glück der Welt, nur hier darf sie nicht bleiben – aus Franziskas Nähe soll sie fort.¹¹⁹

Ferdinand even goes so far as to hint that he will not marry Franziska unless all links with Toni are severed.¹²⁰ Ferdinand clearly represents the public, bourgeois view of women such as Toni; they are women who have no morality, no shame, and have no difficulty in moving

¹¹⁶ *ibid.* 142.

¹¹⁷ *ibid.* 119, 122, 123.

¹¹⁸ *ibid.* 103.

¹¹⁹ *ibid.* 139, 140, 142.

¹²⁰ *ibid.* 143.

from one relationship to the next. Ferdinand accordingly has no concern about Toni's future, or her intention of suicide: "Sie ahnen gar nicht, wie wenig bang mir um sie ist!" "Sie wird sich schon irgendwo aufgreifen lassen – an den Ufern der Donau – auf einer Brücke – das kennt man ja. – Diese Art Weiber bringen sich nicht um – das Leben ist zu schön für sie –"¹²¹ Ferdinand is, in effect, the social conscience of the Losatti family, although his attacks on Toni imply both jealousy of her ability to become linked more closely to the Losattis, having borne Hugo's child, than he could, and jealousy of Hugo and, perhaps, his relationship with Toni. The majority of the other characters feel some doubt about keeping their promise to Hugo, but in the second act even Adolf makes moves to accept Toni into the family:

Adolf: Was "Herr" ... Vielleicht gar "Herr Professor". – Nennen Sie mich immerhin Vater. – Jawohl, Vater nennen Sie mich!

Toni *küßt ihm die Hand*.

Adolf: Nicht so, mein Kind! *Schließt sie in seine Arme* Hier ist Ihr Platz! *Winkt Betty zu, in der deutlichen Absicht, eine Gruppe zu arrangieren.*¹²²

It is Ferdinand who undermines their resolve, with his constant reminders that taking in a so called fallen woman is not the done thing:

Ferdinand: Ich weiß auch gar nicht recht, gnädige Frau, wie Sie sich den weiteren Aufenthalt Tonis bei Ihnen vorstellen. Wir wissen doch alle, daß die Trauer junger Witwen – wenn ich hier schon diesen Ausdruck anwenden darf – nicht ewig zu wahren pflegt... und es wäre doch uns allen – und insbesondere Ihnen, der Mutter, in hohem Grade peinlich, wenn sozusagen unter Ihren Augen –

Betty *ziemlich heftig*: Nein, nein, so ist Toni nicht.¹²³

Ferdinand also implies that Toni has already chosen her next lover, which proves to be a persuasive argument:

¹²¹ *ibid.* 161, 173.

¹²² *ibid.* 152.

¹²³ *ibid.* 161.

Ferdinand: Ich versichere Sie, gnädige Frau, es wird Ihnen nur angenehm sein, wenn Toni die Besuche, die ihr gelten, nicht in Ihrem Hause, sondern bei sich empfängt; es wäre Ihnen möglicherweise bei genauerer Betrachtung schon heute angenehm.

Betty: Was meinen Sie, Doktor?... Gustav? – Er war Hugos Freund.

Ferdinand: [...] Jetzt [ist] Hugo tot, und sie ist jung und schön.

Betty *viel schwächer*: Nein – sie wird meinen Sohn nie vergessen.¹²⁴

Because the child dies, Ferdinand's pressure is unhindered, and can have effect: until that point, Toni's association with Hugo could be maintained, as Franziska says: "Hugo hat sie lieb gehabt, und sie ist die Mutter seines Kindes – das ist der ganze Zauber, den sie für mich hat."¹²⁵ All of the Losattis focus their attention on the child while he is alive: "Gustav *ist eingetreten, geht vor allem dem Kinde entgegen und schließt es in die Arme* [...]" Franziska *wendet sich gleich dem Kinde zu*."¹²⁶ When the rest of society feels slighted by their actions, and turns its back on the Losattis,¹²⁷ Adolf tries to use the boy to regain favor:

Stübenmädchen: *tritt ein* Herr Professor Biber fragt, ob die Herrschaften zu sprechen seien.

Adolf: Biber? – Natürlich sind wir ... Professor Biber allein ... Frau Biber nicht?

Stübenmädchen: Nein, Herr Professor Biber ist allein.

Adolf: Führen Sie ihn gleich in den Salon.

Stübenmädchen *ab*.

Betty: Siehst du, er ist doch gekommen.

Adolf: Aber ohne Frau ... *Auf eine Idee kommend* Betty, hol das Kind.

Betty *bedauernd*: Ach Gott, es wird jetzt schlafen.

Adolf: Betty, hole das Kind – Biber soll sofort sehen, woran er ist. Wir haben keinen Anlaß, unsere Handlungsweise zu verbergen. Hole das Kind.

The Losattis do feel bound by the promise they made to Hugo, but after the child's death, Ferdinand succeeds in persuading them that Hugo was not in his right mind when he made such extreme and unreasonable demands:

¹²⁴ *ibid.* 162.

¹²⁵ *ibid.* 145.

¹²⁶ *ibid.* 130. See also *ibid.* 135.

¹²⁷ *ibid.* 138, 139.

Das letzte **Wille** Hugos? – Wissen wir, was sein letzter **Wille** war? – Seine letzte **Worte** kennen wir, die er gesprochen hat, als schon die Schatten des Todes über seinem Bewußtsein lag [...] eine Frage bleibt jedenfalls offen – ob er das Recht hatte, Verfügungen zu treffen, die so tief die Existenzbedingungen seiner nächsten Angehörigen berühren?¹²⁸

Sie fühlen selbst, daß alle Fäden allmählich zerrissen sind, seit das arme Kind tot ist. Schämen Sie sich dessen nicht, Franziska. Etwas in Ihnen hat schon längst begonnen, sich gegen diese aufgezwungene Schwesterschaft zu wehren.¹²⁹

The Biber family, who stopped visiting the Losattis, send a wreath to the child's funeral, making it clear that with him gone, only Toni stands between the family and their renewed acceptance into society.¹³⁰ Their will to be a normalized part of society thus overwhelms any compassion they may have for Hugo's lover. Adolf justifies this apparent contradiction by imagining that it would have been Hugo's true will:

Als junger Mensch wird man in sonderbare Abenteuer hineingezogen. Sprechen wir es endlich aus. Wäre unser Hugo am Leben geblieben, er hätte dieses Verhältnis sicher selbst gelöst. Er hätte eine Frau genommen aus unserem Kreise – aus der anständigen Gesellschaft, zu der wir gehören, wie es schließlich fast alle junge Männer tun, die ihre Eltern liebhaben und in der Welt und mit der Welt leben wollen.¹³¹

This is, finally, a compelling argument, and Ferdinand thus brings about by moral coercion Toni's banishment and subsequent suicide, thereby placing him in the coveted role of head of household, usurping Adolf and replacing Hugo.

Bourgeois morality is also attacked on another front in the work, however, and most directly in the figure of Emma. The characters can be divided into the strictly bourgeois and the rebellious, and she is placed with Hugo, Toni and, to some extent, Gustav in the latter

¹²⁸ *ibid.* 140, 141.

¹²⁹ *ibid.* 172. See also 171, 174.

¹³⁰ *ibid.* 160.

¹³¹ *ibid.* 172.

group. Hugo's resemblance to his uncle, Emma's husband, Betty's brother, who died fourteen years previously, is referred to at various points in the work, as Emma says: "Besonders wenn Hugo am Klavier gesessen ist, da war mir, als säh' ich **ihn** wieder vor mir. Ich glaube fast, ich hab' ihn oft nur deswegen gebeten, mir was vorzuspielen."¹³² Emma still mourns her husband. It is therefore not surprising that she was drawn to Hugo, and that the two had an affair. What angers Emma is that this affair is treated so differently from that with Toni, because of what is essentially only class difference. As Adolf's reactions to the relationship with Emma show, the bourgeois rules that he is so insistent upon displaying publicly are nevertheless expendable, when he or other bourgeois members of society choose: "Ich kenne die Welt, liebe Emma. Daher fasse ich die Dinge stets in ihrer wahren Bedeutung auf, nicht nach der landläufigen Moral. Und meiner Ansicht nach gibt es gar nichts, was einen jungen Mann mehr bildet, mehr reift, als – die Verehrung für eine schöne junge Frau - - oder Witwe... Du bist noch immer schön, Emma."¹³³ The fact that Hugo had what Adolf wanted is clearly what made the situation acceptable in his eyes, allowing him vicarious pleasure through his son. When Emma later tries to offer Toni a home, Adolf asserts that he and Betty would have nothing to do with them, in yet another show of hypocrisy:

Betty: Ich will's dir ja gestehn: es hat mich oft gekränkt, daß [Hugo] zu dir mehr Vertrauen gehabt hat als zu mir – aber nie habe ich an so etwas gedacht – ich schwöre es dir, Emma – hätt' ich denn sonst so mit dir sprechen können – die ganzen Jahre her, wie ich's getan? – Und auch Adolf glaubt es nicht.

Emma: Den kennst du nicht, Betty. Der hätte was anders gar nie begriffen. Aber das hat ihn natürlich nie gehindert, mit mir zu verkehren.¹³⁴

¹³² *ibid.* 135.

¹³³ *ibid.* 137.

¹³⁴ *ibid.* 167.

While the apparent sin of sleeping with Hugo could be tolerated, the sin of showing compassion toward Toni is unacceptable. The morality of the bourgeoisie as being based on playing by certain rules, rather than on being moral per se, an idea that is returned to at the very end of the play.

It is their attitude toward personal relationships that sets many of these characters apart. Emma implies that Betty's relationship with Adolf is lacking, and Betty herself does not deny this strenuously:

Betty: Ich denke an die Jugend eigentlich wie an eine schreckliche Verwirrung zurück – ich erinnere mich kaum deutlich – nur die Zeiten, in denen die Kinder kamen, erscheinen mir wie etwas sehr Ruhiges und Schönes.

Emma: Das ist ganz natürlich, wenn man zu seinem Manne in keinen wirklichen Beziehung steht.

Betty *Bewegung*

Emma: Es ist ja vorüber. – Du leidest heute doch nicht mehr im geringsten darunter.

Betty: Ich habe nie gelitten. *Pause* Wollen wir wieder zu den Kindern?¹³⁵

Betty lives for her children, which will, in part, allow her to accept Toni in her role as a mother, if not as a legitimate wife. Betty is concerned that she did not “have” Hugo, feeling that she did not have information about and therefore access to, or control over, parts of his life.¹³⁶ At the same time, however, she does not want to become any closer to Toni, as Emma suggests, because she suspects there are things that she would not want to know about her son and his lover, concentrating instead on their child:

Betty: Ja mein süßer, süßer Bub, da sind sie! Auf deinen Lippen, in deinen Augen, da sind alle die Tage, die mir der Hugo nicht gegeben hat!

Emma *sehr bewegt*: Glaub mir, Betty, in den Augen seiner Mutter fändest du vielleicht noch mehr davon, wenn du auch da suchen wolltest.

Betty: Ja, das ist schon möglich. Aber da fände ich vielleicht noch vieles andere,

¹³⁵ *ibid.* 95.

¹³⁶ *ibid.* 93, 133.

was ich nicht suche und was ich nicht finden möchte.¹³⁷

Toni can also tell that Franziska wants to know more about her life with Hugo, but is afraid to ask, presumably because of Ferdinand, and she is right about his attitude: he considers Toni's world to be something that Franziska should not even want to know about.¹³⁸ Traditional bourgeois relationships, even within families, are thus based on tenuous balances of knowledge and possession, and on silence, and a denial of anything that might challenge the status quo or be subversive in any way. Emma, by contrast, acknowledges that she does not "have" her daughter Agnes, and that this is as it should be.¹³⁹ Her continued mourning for her husband is also indicative of the depth of their relationship: "Ach Gott, Betty, ist das nicht die dümmste Lüge, die es gibt, daß die Zeit vergessen macht? – An manchem Tag ist's mir doch, als ob ich ihn gestern verloren hätte! – Und es sind vierzehn Jahre! Vierzehn Jahre! Nein, es wird nicht besser."¹⁴⁰ It is thus Emma who can best sympathize with Toni's loss, and she pays no heed to whether she is Hugo's legitimate widow or not. Stark contrast is made between the strong relationship between Emma or Toni with their husbands and with that between Franziska and Ferdinand:

Toni: Ist es denn wirklich ihr Bräutigam?

Emma: Gewiß.

Toni: Man merkt's so gar nicht. Haben sich denn die gern?

Emma: Mein Kind, das Gernhaben, wie wir zwei es uns vorstellen, ist freilich was anderes.

Toni: Nicht wahr? - ¹⁴¹

¹³⁷ *ibid.* 134.

¹³⁸ *ibid.* 128, 145.

¹³⁹ *ibid.* 94.

¹⁴⁰ *ibid.* 94.

¹⁴¹ *ibid.* 128. See also Betty's comment that Franziska is not the kind of girl who likes men "that way." *ibid.* 96.

Any hint of an emotional attachment between Franziska and Ferdinand is lacking throughout the work. As Agnes implies, Franziska is simply marrying the man her parents have chosen for her:

Franziska: Er ist ein ernster Mensch.

Agnes: Stimme deines Vaters.¹⁴²

Even Adolf remarks on how stilted conversation between the two is: “Kinder, was ihr noch für ein Art haben, miteinander zu reden. Hat man das je erlebt, daß Brautleute einander ‘Sie’ sagen?”¹⁴³ The supposedly model bourgeois relationship, with the spouse chosen by the parents, and both partners being from the bourgeois sphere, is thus placed in absolute contrast with the apparently more genuine relationships that Hugo enjoyed. This is the aspect of the Losatti family, and of the bourgeoisie that they represent, that is most explicitly attacked at the end of the work, when Franziska blames herself and the family for not accepting Toni, thereby causing her death:

Franziska: Nein – nein... wir werden sie nicht mehr sehen. – Alle... alle sind fort von uns – Hugo, das Kind, sie... sie sind alle zusammen... *Erschauernd* in diesem Augenblicke vielleicht geht sie zu ihnen. Und auch wir, Mama, sind schuld, auch wir –

Betty: Ich vielleicht... ich hätte – aber du nicht – du nicht –

Franziska: Auch ich, Mama, ich fühle es so tief. Wir sind feig gewesen, wir haben es nicht gewagt, sie so lieb zu haben, wie sie es verdient hat. Gnaden haben wir ihr erwiesen, Gnaden – wir! – Und hätten einfach **gut** sein müssen, Mama!¹⁴⁴

The idea of being worthy of esteem or of forgiveness recurs in the work. Before his death, Hugo asserts that Toni is just as worthy of respect as Franziska:

Es hätte nicht mehr lang gedauert, so hätt’ ich’s euch allen erzählt. Sie ist brav,

¹⁴² *ibid.* 100.

¹⁴³ *ibid.* 171.

¹⁴⁴ *ibid.* 176.

Mama – grad so brav, wie die Franzi ist, und ich hab’ viel an ihr gutzumachen.¹⁴⁵

Man wird dich hier halten, als wärst du meine Frau gewesen – verlaß dich darauf...
Zu seiner Mutter Sie ist mir soviel gewesen, sie ist mir mehr gewesen, glaub mir,
Papa...¹⁴⁶

Hugo believes that Toni is good: the Losattis, however, decide that they need to make her so, and that they have the power to bestow goodness upon her, thereby taking control of her. This happens through their concentration on the child, and her link through him with Hugo, but also through pronouncements of magnanimity – in this case accompanied by Emma’s outraged reaction:

Adolf: Wir wissen alle, daß dieses junge Wesen gefehlt hat, und ich bin, wie vielleicht als bekannt annehmen darf, sehr ferne davon, in dieser Hinsicht lax zu denken. Aber wir haben ein Recht gegenüber solchen Geschöpfen, das wir gelegentlich in Anspruch nehmen dürfen; das Recht: **zu verzeihen**. Und das wollen wir tun. Ich verzeihe ihr!

Emma: Verzeihen? – Du sprichst von Verzeihen? – Was hast du – *Pause*. Stark was hat überhaupt ein Mensch dem anderen zu verzeihen?¹⁴⁷

Despite Betty’s claims that they would naturally have taken their grandson in, even if Hugo had not asked them to,¹⁴⁸ it is made abundantly clear that the Losattis have no claim to any moral high ground, as Franziska says in the final, damning lines of the play. What makes this realization clear to these bourgeois characters is Toni’s death; before discussing this physical assault on bourgeois norms, however, the female body must first be placed in its contemporary social framework.

¹⁴⁵ *ibid.* 110.

¹⁴⁶ *ibid.* 118.

¹⁴⁷ *ibid.* 140.

¹⁴⁸ *ibid.* 141, 130.

Prostitutes and femmes fatale

Toni is lower middle class, and Lies is working class; as such, both are very firmly cast as outsiders in the bourgeois world that the Losattis inhabit, and to which Georg aspires. Class thus functions as one of the many structures or frameworks within which the bourgeois Self can be defined, against the, usually working class, Other. The study of class as a social category increased accordingly as the middle classes became established in nineteenth century Europe, as well as with the exponential growth of populations in large and increasingly industrial cities. As Françoise Barret-Ducrocq writes of Victorian Britain: “The ‘condition of the workers’ and the question of working-class morality in the capital were seen as early signs of malfunction in a healthy social body.”¹⁴⁹ The working class, as the Other, was easily targeted as the source of threats to the bourgeois social order. As working or lower class women, however, Toni and Lies are placed in a double bind: lower class women were cast as even farther removed from the bourgeois, male norm. The secondary framework of gender, when added to that of class, effectively captured and controlled specific ‘types’ of women in the social eye: the prostitute, the femme fatale, and so on. At the same time, these images tightened the imaginary grasp on their opposites in bourgeois families: the virgin, the mother, etc. As Barret-Ducrocq points out: “the most consistent, the most resounding sexual references are to be found in the immense literature dealing with the condition of the laboring classes, especially in the metropolis. Victorians saw the sexual depravity of the majority of Londoners as a threat to the moral and, potentially, political order.”¹⁵⁰

¹⁴⁹ Françoise Barret-Ducrocq, *Love in the time of Victoria* (New York: Verso, 1991) 2.

¹⁵⁰ *ibid.* 2.

The tradition of upper class men having liaisons with lower class women was well known in fin-de-siècle Europe. Because any open discussion of such ignominious practices may have opened the floor to criticism of its perpetrators, as undermining the political and social order, if nothing else, public and scientific discourse alighted instead upon the problem of prostitution, thereby also displacing to a certain extent the culpability of any men involved. Writing in America in 1914, Abraham Flexner sought to use a study of prostitution in Europe as a weapon against its bourgeoisie: “Europe has been a man’s world, – managed by men and largely for men, – for cynical men, at that, – men inured to the sight of human inequalities, callous as to the value of lower-class life, and distinctly lacking in respect for womanhood, especially that of the working-classes.”¹⁵¹ This did not mean, of course, that prostitution was unknown in North America; neither did it signify that Flexner himself or the Bureau of Social Hygiene for which he worked viewed prostitutes themselves as purely the victims of a male-dominated system. There were clearly significant, social reasons to study and condemn prostitution at the time, as Flexner enumerates:

Why do we object to prostitution at all? Obviously, it is repugnant for one or more of several reasons: in the first place, because of the personal demoralization it entails; in the second, because of economic waste; again, because it is by far the main factor in the spread of venereal disease; finally, because of its intimate association with disorder or crime. Unquestionably the full-time notorious prostitutes who are especial object of police care exemplify all the counts in this indictment; they are themselves demoralized and they spread demoralization; they cause enormous waste; they inevitably and invariably spread disease; as a rule they have criminal or quasi-criminal connections.¹⁵²

These elements are mirrored in Dietmar Schmidt’s more recent appraisal of prostitution:

Die Prostitution, so heißt von allen Seiten, läßt die Menschen verrohen; sie verbreitet gefährliche Krankheiten; sie gefährdet die Fortpflanzungsfähigkeit des

¹⁵¹ Abraham Flexner, *Prostitution in Europe* (New York: The Century Co., 1914) 44.

¹⁵² *ibid.* 12.

Volkes; sie erweitert die Herrschaft des Geldes auf intimste zwischenmenschliche Beziehungen – und befördert so letztlich den sittlichen und kulturellen Zerfall der Gemeinschaft.¹⁵³

Perhaps the most worrying element of the prostitute for fin-de-siècle polite European society was her potential for disruption. These were women that society did not doubt it needed,¹⁵⁴ but at the same time did not fit neatly into the bourgeois model of male versus female sexuality and character. As Amanda Anderson puts it:

In its classical formulation, [the doctrine of the separate spheres] assigns man to the public sphere of individual exertion, business, and politics, and relegates woman to the private, domestic sphere of the affections. As an oxymoronic “public woman,” the Victorian prostitute immediately troubles this structuring gender opposition and casts into question the idea of natural feminine “purity” that supports the dominant doctrine.¹⁵⁵

While by the mid-twentieth century critics such as Simone de Beauvoir were openly attacking the male “need” for prostitutes,¹⁵⁶ and while contemporary feminists such as Johanne Loewenherz condemned the male creation of prostitutes,¹⁵⁷ the image of the prostitute held great weight in fin-de-siècle society, both in Europe and in America. Helenefriederike Stelzner characterized the prostitute thus in 1911:

Woran erkennen wir die Prostituierte auf der Straße? [... In] der Hauptsache am Ausdruck des Gesichts, das nach und nach eine Reihe Eigentümlichkeiten, den Stempel der Habsucht, der sexuellen Exzesse oder innere Anteilnahme, das höhnische Lächeln des Desperado's, die künstliche Verachtung einer Welt, nach der

¹⁵³ Dietmar Schmidt, *Geschlecht unter Kontrolle* (Freiburg: Rombach, 1998) 26.

¹⁵⁴ Flexner, *Prostitution* 41. “At the present time, the demand on the part of the continental male is practically universal; so true is this, that until quite recently questioned, it has been taken to be an ultimate and inevitable physiological fact.”

¹⁵⁵ Amanda Anderson, *Tainted souls and painted faces* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) 13.

¹⁵⁶ Simone de Beauvoir, *The second sex* Trans. H.M. Parshley (New York: Knopf, 1978) “The prostitute is a scapegoat; man vents his turpitude upon her, and he rejects her. Whether she is put legally under police supervision or works illegally in secret, she is in any case treated as pariah.” 555.

¹⁵⁷ Loewenherz wrote in 1896 “Der Mann schafft [...] diese *häßlichste* aller häßlichen Erscheinungen in der Welt.” Quoted in Schmidt 27.

sie sich sehen, angenommen haben und die durch gewisse Toilettenmanöver, aufdringliche Frisuren, Bemalungen des Gesichts u.a. unterstützt werden. Wie der Schauspieler, der Gelehrte, der Börsenmann bekommt eben nach und nach auch die Prostituierte ihren Berufstypus.¹⁵⁸

Stelzner's contemporary Flexner wrote of the prostitute "type" in a similar style: "The definiteness of the type is, of course, indisputable. Characteristic traits, external and internal, mark the scarlet woman; she has a distinct gait, smile, leer; she is lazy, unveracious, pleasure-loving, easily led, fond of liquor, heedless of the future, and usually devoid of moral sense."¹⁵⁹

This pervasive image of what lower class women were like and were likely to do is what informs the Losatti family's responses to Toni. Their ineptitude in dealing with non-bourgeois figures is first highlighted in the earliest moments of their crisis, when an anonymous man helps to bring the wounded Hugo home:

Franziska: *gleich voll Bedacht zu dem Manne* Ah, Sie sind ... Wir sind Ihnen sehr... *Will ihm Geld geben*
Der fremde Mann: O nein! O bitte, nein, ich bin nur ... *Er geht*¹⁶⁰

This exchange is very quickly contrasted with the doctor who also accompanied Hugo:

Betty: Herr Doktor, wie sollen wir Ihnen ...
Arzt: Später.¹⁶¹

The doctor is of a similar standing, and can be paid for his services. The stranger, however, is visibly of a lower station,¹⁶² and is, as such, a puzzle for the Losattis, who assume that he will of course want monetary compensation for his deeds. His embarrassment at this assumption

¹⁵⁸ Quoted in Schmidt, *Geschlecht* 36.

¹⁵⁹ Flexner, *Prostitution* 68.

¹⁶⁰ Schnitzler, *Vermächtnis* 106.

¹⁶¹ *ibid.* 108.

¹⁶² *ibid.* 106.

is clear, underlining the fact that the bourgeois morality presented in this work is based on money and station, rather than values. When faced with the problem of Toni, the family follows the same thought processes as they did with this man. As has been shown, Ferdinand is easily able to make use of the bourgeois stock images of women at the time, and to cast Toni in the role of the fallen woman, or even the prostitute. This is highly effective in achieving his goal of hardening the family against her, because of the threat that such types of women were assumed to pose, to the family, to the bourgeoisie, and to the social order as a whole. Because of her status as the Other in this setting, Toni is firmly cast in the role that Ferdinand presents, and it is therefore only reasonable that they should also try to buy her off:

Betty: Ich hab' heute wieder die ganze Nacht darüber nachgedacht. Wir können sie nicht fortschicken, Ferdinand; die Verantwortung wäre zu groß.

Ferdinand: Ich sagte Ihnen schon! Es gibt ein sehr einfaches Mittel, sich gegen diese zu schützen – Geld.

Adolf: Das müßte man jedenfalls tun. Ganz selbstverständlich.¹⁶³

This is the only logical step that the family can consider, in order to deal with a woman who is in their eyes, for all intents and purposes, no better than a common prostitute. Again, Emma is the only bourgeois character who objects to this proposed transaction:

Ferdinand: Heute, Gnädige Frau, finden Sie [Toni] noch hier, aber es ist das letzte Mal.

Emma: Wie ist das zu verstehen?

Adolf: Das ist so zu verstehen, daß wir in reiflicher Erwägung der durch den Tod des armen Kindes neu geschaffenen Umstände ein weiteres Verbleiben Tonis in unserem Haus für – untunlich halten.

Emma: *zu Betty* Und du gibst das zu?

Betty: Wir werden sie trotzdem nicht verlassen, Emma.

Emma: Das heißt, ihr werdet ihr Geld geben? Darauf kommt es nicht an. Mit Geld ist diesem armen Geschöpfe nicht geholfen, ein Heim braucht sie.

Ferdinand: Sie wird bald eines gefunden haben, gnädige Frau.¹⁶⁴

¹⁶³ *ibid.* 161.

¹⁶⁴ *ibid.* 163.

As will be discussed below, Toni's suicide is an active rejection of the role in which the Losattis see her, and into which their money would force her.

The term prostitution denotes an objectification of the body, and the female body as a site of violence, whether sexual or not, is far more evident in *Spielkinder*. Violence against wives and daughters recurs throughout the work, as an almost exclusively working-class trait. As well as Lies' regular beatings from her parents, her father beats her mother, their other female friends are beaten as children, the family's maid leaves her husband because of drunken violence, a cousin's husband beats her, and Eugen beats Lies when the two live together.¹⁶⁵ One reason Lies' parents fight is that her mother has affairs:

Sie schrie, wo der Wochenlohn geblieben, und er meinte, sie solle das Geld von "dem" geben lassen; wenn er ihn aber träfe, würde er ihm sämtliche Knochen im Leibe kaput schlagen, das sage er und dafür zahle er seine Steuern, und die Lies würde genau so "Eine" werden – wo das Mensch sich schon wieder herumtriebe! – ja, die würde noch einmal im Rinnstein enden, trotzdem er ehrlich seine Steuern bezahle.¹⁶⁶

Prostitution, or at the very least a loose sexual morality, is clearly a possibility for the child. Living in one of the poorer quarters of Berlin, prostitutes are a visible part of city life. The first time that Georg is really aware of seeing them, he is reminded of Lies:

Sie beginnen meine Aufmerksamkeit zu fesseln; aber fein scheinen sie doch eigentlich nicht zu sein, denn manche haben so recht gewöhnliche Gesichter, breite Mäuler, breite Nasen. Und sieh nur mal, die da, die Rotblonde – so rotblondes Haar habe ich doch noch nie gesehen – hat ja auch den niederträchtigen Zug um die Nase, der einzige, der mir manchmal bei – ach ja, wie mag's dem armen Kind noch ergangen sein?¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁵ Hermann, *Spielkinder* 58, 47, 50, 76, 149, 237.

¹⁶⁶ *ibid.* 75.

¹⁶⁷ *ibid.* 78.

These are creatures who are far beneath Georg's bourgeois standards of elegance and femininity: "Da waren selbst alte, in Unehren ergraute Familienväter und fragwürdige Existenzen aller Art zusammengewürfelt. Und die Damen, mit denen sie dort saßen! Halbseide – ja, sogar Baumwolle! Pöbelhafte Baumwolle!"¹⁶⁸ Despite his snobbery, Georg does willingly allow himself to be seduced by Lies, on a park bench for that matter.¹⁶⁹ It thus appears that the links in his imagination between Lies and the prostitutes of the city are satisfied: he is able to experience a decidedly unsuitable liaison, with a woman he can control with impunity. Georg succumbs to Lies' beauty and sexuality, but these are also the traits he blames for the end of their relationship. Because she accepts the role of Eugen's lover in his play, Georg begins to suspect Lies of being unfaithful. Lies denies that Eugen's feelings for her are reciprocated, at one point begging Georg to stay with her.¹⁷⁰ He leaves, passing Eugen on the stairs to her apartment, in a moment of symbolic turnover as one leaves and the other enters her life: after that, Lies and Eugen do extend their stage relationship from acting as lovers in the play into an affair, as Georg becomes aware during a performance: "Wie die Vorstellung weiter verlief, weiß ich heute nicht mehr, ich weiß nur, daß Lies mich weinend bat, ich solle von ihr nie etwas Schlechtes denken und sie könne nicht anders."¹⁷¹ Lies loses her job shortly after the end of her relationship with Georg, because of the type of woman that she has become, in her supervisor's eyes: "Eine gute Arbeiterin war sie mal, ist es aber lange nicht mehr, das wissen Sie ebenso gut wie ich. Außerdem ist meiner Meinung nach das Mädchen reif für die Friedrichstraße, und solche korrupten Elemente dürfen wir in unserem

¹⁶⁸ *ibid.* 205.

¹⁶⁹ *ibid.* 140.

¹⁷⁰ *ibid.* 192.

¹⁷¹ *ibid.* 196.

Geschäft absolut nicht dulden.”¹⁷² After this, Georg does not see the girl again until Eugen’s mother asks him for help.

What brings Frau Salle to write to Georg, after his return to Berlin from his time in the military, is her shame and concern that Eugen has been led into a dangerous way of life by Lies.¹⁷³ Always having doted on her son, Frau Salle allows no blame to be placed on him.¹⁷⁴ Georg agrees to confront Eugen and Lies with her, although he doubts he can have any influence on the situation.¹⁷⁵ On the day, Frau Salle is dressed “in Galauniform,” because “so etwas imponiert derartigen Mädchen immer.”¹⁷⁶ By “derartigen Mädchen,” Frau Salle means prostitutes, and this is by now what Lies has become. She and Eugen have been together since Georg left, and he has been living with her, and off her earnings.¹⁷⁷ Frau Salle has intervened, asking Lies to free Eugen, but to no effect:

In meiner Todesangst habe ich mich so weit erniedrigt, daß ich zu der Dirne selbst hingegangen bin. Fußfällig habe ich sie angefleht, sie solle mir meinen Sohn zurückgeben. – Und das Weibstück hat geweint, mich gestreichelt und geküßt und gesagt, sie könne es nicht! Sie könne es unmöglich – sie liebe Eugen – sie hätte ja sonst niemand, den sie wirklich lieben dürfe [...] so gern sie mir auch sonst zu Willen sei, sie könne ihn nicht friegeden, sie liebe ihn und, solange sie liebe, kenne sie keine Rücksichten und Gesetze.¹⁷⁸

In his mother’s eyes, Eugen is thus the victim of Lies’ evil ways: “[Frau Salle] ließe sich ihren Sohn nicht verschimpfieren und am allerwenigsten von solch einem gemeinen Mensch.

¹⁷² *ibid.* 213.

¹⁷³ *ibid.* 227.

¹⁷⁴ *ibid.* 64.

¹⁷⁵ *ibid.* 238.

¹⁷⁶ *ibid.* 239.

¹⁷⁷ *ibid.* 236.

¹⁷⁸ *ibid.* 237.

Sie und alle Welt wisse genau, an wem die Schuld liege.”¹⁷⁹ In coming to Georg, then, Frau Salle is looking for someone who can save Eugen from this dangerous woman:

Sie müssen Eugen von ihr befreien, – Sie müssen es! – Eugen ist ein verlorener Mensch, wenn er noch länger mit ihr zusammenlebt. Sie müssen ihn befreien! – O, Herr Geiger, ich sage Ihnen, ich bin ja die unglücklichste Mutter auf Gottes Erdboden! [...] O, Herr Geiger, denken Sie, all diese Schmutzereien, retten Sie meinen armen Eugen aus den Krallen dieses Weibesbilds.¹⁸⁰

Frau Salle turns to Georg as the only figure capable of controlling Lies. With her father dead and her mother unconcerned about her fortunes, there is no one else who might have any influence on her behavior. Although the narration implies that Georg is unwilling to become involved, his later fantasies of saving Lies are indicative of his compliance in taking over her father's role. Upon his own father's death, Georg was able to take over as the head of his household, earning money, whereas his father had only had debts, and then by moving into the authoritarian and masculine world of the military. Always having viewed the lower class as somehow deficient, as his attitude to his local playmates showed in his childhood, Georg's desire to take over the management of Lies' life and future is an embodiment of the bourgeois ideals that a woman must be dependent on a man. Because she is now a prostitute, Lies needs this paternal control more than ever.

The danger of the sexual woman is not only to be found in the figure of the prostitute, however. By the turn of the century, the figure of the femme fatale was firmly established as a literary and artistic type. As Virginia Allen puts it:

The femme fatale is usually described as an image that became popular during the closing decades of the nineteenth century, characteristic of the art and literature of the Aesthetes, Decadents, and Symbolists; one whose visual traits entered the

¹⁷⁹ *ibid.* 245.

¹⁸⁰ *ibid.* 236, 238.

design style of Art nouveau. As commonly depicted, she is Siren, Circe, Salome, Cleopatra: seducer and destroyer of men.¹⁸¹

Each of these figures is representative of life and death, beauty and destruction, as is so deftly embodied in Frank Wedekind's enigmatic Lulu: "Like Wilde's Salomé, she is a fin-de-siècle incarnation of an ancient myth; like the biblical Salomé, the mythological Pandora, created to punish mankind for Prometheus' theft of fire from the gods, is both beautiful and a source of evil, reflecting the fundamental and persisting ambivalence of men toward the female sex."¹⁸²

Carola Hilmes describes the appeal of such dangerous figures in the arts thus:

Die Femme fatale fasziniert durch ihre Schönheit und das in ihr liegende Versprechen auf Glück, einen Wunsch nach leidenschaftlicher Liebe. Gleichzeitig wird sie jedoch auch als bedrohlich empfunden. Die Gefahr geht aus von der in ihr verkörperten Sexualität und der Einbindung in eine Geschichte voller Intrigen, in der ihr meist die wenig rühmliche Rolle einer Rächerin zugeschrieben wird. Die Femme fatale repräsentiert die permanente Verführung, die ebenso sehr gewünscht wie gefürchtet wird.¹⁸³

Allen concludes that the femme fatale can be described with the adjectives "beautiful, erotic, seductive, destructive, exotic. To these we may add self-determined and independent."¹⁸⁴

Lies does almost fit into this categorization. Her beauty is remarkable, and her sexual nature is apparent long before she actually becomes a prostitute. Her effect on the men around her is also cast in an extremely negative light. Georg feels he cannot work or train while he is distracted by her.¹⁸⁵ Frau Salle is convinced of Lies' control over Eugen, who cannot stay away from the girl: "ich habe mit Eugen geredet, wissen Sie, wie nur eine Mutter

¹⁸¹ Virginia M. Allen, *The femme fatale* (New York: Whitson, 1983) 1.

¹⁸² Gail Finney, *Women in modern drama* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1989) 80.

¹⁸³ Carola Hilmes, *Die Femme fatale* (Stuttgart: J.B. Metzler, 1990) xiii.

¹⁸⁴ Allen, *femme fatale* 4.

¹⁸⁵ Hermann, *Spielkinder* 157.

mit ihrem Sohn reden kann! Er hat mir fest versprochen, von dem Mädchen zu lassen. Er sieht ja selbst ein, daß es sein Unglück ist. Zwei bis drei Tage war er bei mir, und dann ist er wieder zu ihr.”¹⁸⁶ This is also echoed in Lies’ relationship with another of Georg’s friends, Walter.

This third relationship begins when Walter takes Georg out for a drink, and they see Lies with Eugen. Walter does not know of Georg’s past with the girl, but is captivated by her, and arranges a dinner date with her, despite Eugen’s presence: “Ich hab’ auch in aller Eile von ihr erfahren, daß sie ein Verhältnis hat, das sie aber möglichst bald abwimmeln will.”¹⁸⁷ At first, Walter remains impressed with Lies: “die kleine Wetterhexe ist überhaupt ein famoses Weib!”¹⁸⁸ He is also happy to indulge her taste for the theatre and expensive dinners: “So fünfundzwanzig bis dreißig Mark werden schon draufgegangen sein. Na, was schadet’s! Weißt Du, ich bin ganz futsch von der Kleinen! Ich bin selten nach einem Mädels so verrückt gewesen, wie gerade nach der.”¹⁸⁹ Georg tries to warn him that Lies will ruin him, but Walter pays no attention.¹⁹⁰ By the time Georg enlists in the military, Walter is spending “Unsummen” on her, but can afford to.¹⁹¹ When Georg returns two years later, however, he finds his friend financially ruined, living in a shabby room, and apparently dying, unable to walk or tolerate bright light:

“Ja, aber wo hast Du denn Dein Geld gelassen? Arm kannst Du doch unmöglich

¹⁸⁶ *ibid.* 237.

¹⁸⁷ *ibid.* 207.

¹⁸⁸ *ibid.* 220.

¹⁸⁹ *ibid.* 221.

¹⁹⁰ *ibid.* 221.

¹⁹¹ *ibid.* 224.

gewesen sein!”

“Da mußt Du Fräulein Lies Weise und einige amerikanische Montan- und Eisenbahngesellschaften fragen.”

“Ja, Walter, hast Du denn gar nichts mehr?”

“O, doch – drei- bis viertausend Mark – das reicht für zwei Jahre, und länger kann ich doch selbst beim günstigsten Prognostikon nicht mehr leben.”¹⁹²

Walter’s description of how Lies ruined him is strongly reminiscent of contemporary portrayals of the femme fatale:

“Sag einmal, Walter, was war das mit Lies?” [...]

“Georg, weiter nichts! Daß sie mich Tausende von Mark gekostet und mich außerdem noch hintergegangen und mit einem Andern mein Geld durchgebracht hat. Denn allein kann sie nicht damit fertig geworden sein. Du kannst Dir gar nicht vorstellen, wie wahnsinnig verliebt ich in das Mädchen war [...] Was ich ihr auch Gutes tat, nichts genügte ihr, stets wollte sie mehr. Und dabei ließ sie mich jede Minute merken, daß sie mich eigentlich nicht liebte, daß sie einen anderen liebte und mich nur hielt, um aus mir Geld herauszupressen. Und trotzdem ich alles deutlich sah – ich konnte nicht von ihr lassen. Wenn ich zwei Tage nicht bei ihr gewesen – wenn ich zwei Tage mir fest vorgenommen, niemals mehr zu ihr zu gehen – dann trieb’s mich wieder zu ihr. Das Weib hatte dämonische Macht über mich.”¹⁹³

Just as Eugen could only leave her for a few days, so too was Walter bound to Lies. Her hold over him is only broken when his investments fail and he cannot pay her bill at the dressmaker’s, as she says: “So? Unmöglich ist es Dir? Du willst nur nicht! Nun gut, dann wird sich schon ein anderer finden der sie mir gern bezahlt!”¹⁹⁴ It is also at this point that Walter meets Eugen on the stairs to Lies’ apartment, just as Georg did, and, as with Georg, he also becomes able to see Lies in a different light:

Ihre Lippen hatten sich geschürzt, und das ganze Gesicht hatte im Augenblick etwas so unglaublich Gemeines und Pöbelhaftes, unglaublich, Georg! Und im Augenblick war meine Liebe gestorben. Da war auch nichts mehr an dem Weib, was mich reizte. Nur Ekel, Ekel, gräßlichen Ekel hatte ich vor dem Frauenzimmer. Ich hatte

¹⁹² *ibid.* 230.

¹⁹³ *ibid.* 232.

¹⁹⁴ *ibid.* 233.

schon den Arm gehoben, um sie zu schlagen, aber ich senkte ihn, um mich nicht zu beschmutzen.¹⁹⁵

In the weeks after their relationship ended, Walter's health deteriorates rapidly, and Lies is very clearly shown to be to blame, in his eyes and in Georg's.

Dead Women

Both Tony and Lies are cast as prostitutes and as dangerous sexual creatures. A closer examination shows, however, these women are both victims of circumstance, who are forced into categories created for them by the bourgeois world, but which are negated by their speech, their silences and their actions in the works. As Emma points out, Toni cannot be compensated for her losses with money, and Toni herself does not wish to be financially provided for by the Losatti family.¹⁹⁶ What the girl fears is solitude, and what she needs is a family, rather than freedom to find another lover:

Toni: Aber vor dem Alleinsein hab' ich Angst! – Und wenn ich einmal von hier fort bin – bin ich ganz allein.

Gustav: Nicht verzweifeln, Toni. Das Leben geht doch weiter, Toni, nicht wahr? – Wer weiß, was es noch bringt.

Toni: Was soll's mir denn bringen? [...] Glück – für mich? ... Nein, Gustav. Was müßt'ich da sein! – Glück nach all dem, was ich durchgemacht habe! – Gustav, Gustav, wie kannst du das glauben? [...] Vor allem hab' ich Angst, Gustav – vor der Verlassenheit... und auch davor – daß es einmal anders sein könnte. Es ist schon das beste, ich bleib' hier – sonst ist es aus – so oder so.¹⁹⁷

In order to keep her love for Hugo and their son pure, Toni believes that she must stay with those who were closest to him: “Das sind doch die Menschen, die ihn gern gehabt haben

¹⁹⁵ *ibid.* 233.

¹⁹⁶ Schnitzler, *Vermächtnis* 158.

¹⁹⁷ *ibid.* 159.

– es ist doch die Luft, in der er geatmet hat – und jetzt soll ich hinaus, hinaus aus alldem ... ja warum – warum?“¹⁹⁸ Through her devotion, Toni clearly negates the model of the dangerous fallen woman that the Losattis imagine her to be, in spite of her lower social standing and her past.

The labeling of Lies as a prostitute and femme fatale is also clearly flawed. She does indeed work as a prostitute, but as a result of coercion. When faced with this allegation, Georg still has difficulty believing the worst of Eugen, and he continues to doubt Lies' story, as well as her love for him, until it is corroborated by Walter:

“Und, Walter, ich kann ja Lies auch nicht ins Herz gucken. Wer sagt denn, daß sie es wirklich so meint?”

“Ich!!” unterbrach mich Walter heftig, “denn ich kenne sie, *ich* weiß, wie sie an Dir gehangen hat, *ich* weiß, wie sie Nächte lang nach Dir geweint hat, wenn sie mit mir zusammen war [...] Auf Schritt und Tritt bin ich ihr heimlich gefolgt, habe gesehen, wie sie von Stufe zu Stufe gesunken ist [...] Nicht freiwillig ist sie diesen Weg gegangen, da war ein anderer dran schuld.” –

“Wer?”

“Eugen Salle, der Lump! [...] Ich habe den Menschen ganz genau beobachtet. Ich weiß, wie es kam. Erst hatte er keine Stellung, er fand keine, und die Mutter gab ihm Geld, und dann wollte er keine finden, und die Mutter gab ihm nichts mehr; [...] und dann began er sich von Lies, die einen reichen Freund hatte, Geld auszuborgen, und dann – Schritt für Schritt hat er sie gedrängt, der Lump!”¹⁹⁹

Only through this male voice, then, can Lies' explanation be credible. Walter has had renewed success in the stock markets by this stage, which explains his renewed sympathy for Lies. As Hilmes points out, the tale of the femme fatale always tells an underlying tale about her male partners: “Die heimlichen Helden der Geschichten sind ihre männlichen Gegenspieler. So kann das Weib nur deshalb übermächtig erscheinen, weil ihr Gegenspieler in einer schwachen und verunsicherten Position ist [...] Die Femme fatale spiegelt das

¹⁹⁸ *ibid.* 168.

¹⁹⁹ Hermann, *Spielkinder* 248, 259.

Prekäre der männlichen Situation.”²⁰⁰ Accordingly, for a man’s position to be restored, the woman must be destroyed.

Links with the discourse on death and the feminine are made clear in the dismissal of lower class women as prostitutes: just as corporeal and sexual attributes, both male and female,²⁰¹ are embodied in the female body, so too is the greater unknown, death.²⁰² It is thus no accident that literature and the arts are permeated by dead or absent women. As Gail Hart puts it in her examination of the *bürgerliches Trauerspiel*: “For this study it is important that, in bourgeois tragedy, threats to stability are imagined as ‘feminine,’ and represented as female figures who are then purged from the drama.”²⁰³ Discussing the roles of women in opera, Catherine Clément enumerates their modes of death:

How many bodies wearing the veil of darkness, how many criminal and consumptive women wearing white shifts stained with blood, how many wrapped in tears and murders? [...] Dead women, dead so often. There are those who die disemboweled, like Lulu at the sacrificial knife of Jack the Ripper, in a cruddy attic of smoggy London; there are those who die for having embodied too well the false identity of a marionette woman, or for having simply affirmed that they are not there where the men are looking for them.... Those who die of nothing, just like that – of fear, or fright, or sadness, or anxiety. Those who die poisoned, gently; those who are choked; those who fold in on themselves, peacefully. Violent deaths, lyrical deaths, gentle deaths, talkative or silent deaths....²⁰⁴

As both Hart and Clément stress, it is often the actual death scene that marks the female character’s crowning moment: “None of them resists death and most of them provide a

²⁰⁰ Hilmes, *Femme* xiv.

²⁰¹ Hilmes argues that sexuality itself, whether male or female, was seen as uncontrollable and therefore dangerous. She goes on to locate the femme fatale as the site at which male sexuality can be expunged, at the same time that female sexuality is. *Femme* 65.

²⁰² See Finney, *Women* 52.

²⁰³ Gail Hart, *Tragedy in Paradise* (Columbia, S.C.: Camden House, 1996) x.

²⁰⁴ Catherine Clément, *Opera, or the undoing of woman* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1988) 43, 47.

stirring and dramatically satisfying death scene”; “All women in opera die a death prepared for them by a slow plot, woven by furtive, fleeting heroes, up to their glorious moment: a sung death.”²⁰⁵ Both Toni and Lies’ deaths occur at the end of the works, marking a point of conclusion, and, presumably, a resumption of life as it should be:

Femininity and death cause a disorder to stability, mark moments of ambivalence, disruption or duplicity and their eradication produces a recuperation of order, a return to stability [...] Over her dead body, cultural norms are reconfirmed or secured, whether because the sacrifice of the virtuous, innocent woman serves as a social critique and transformation or because a sacrifice of the dangerous woman reestablishes an order that was momentarily suspended due to her presence.²⁰⁶

Both Toni and Lies are viewed in precisely this light, as a disruption that must be feared and disposed of. As Elizabeth Bronfen goes on to argue:

Both femininity and death inspire the fear of an ultimate loss of control, of a disruption of boundaries between self and Other, of a dissolution of an ordered and hierarchical world [...] the fear of death translates into a fear of Woman, who, for man, is death. She is constructed as the place of mystery, of not knowing, Freud’s “dark continent,” as the site of silence but also of the horrifying void that ‘castrates’ the living man’s sense of wholeness and stability.²⁰⁷

This Other is a stark contrast to the imagined role of the masculine, espoused in the bourgeois ideology as stable, normative, rational and secure:

Women’s bodies occupy no such stable and comforting relation to the unknown; since they are themselves the unknowable, the unpenetrable mystery, they are not so much vehicles of epistemological consolidation as they are sources of change, disruption, and complication [...] Women became both metaphors for the unknowable, and metaphors for metaphor, their bodies figures of figuration.²⁰⁸

The feminine must be first constructed in this light, and then disposed of, in order for bourgeois normality to prevail. In its creation and subsequent destruction, the feminine can

²⁰⁵ Hart, *Tragedy* 4. Clément, *Opera* 45.

²⁰⁶ Bronfen, *Over* xii, 181.

²⁰⁷ *ibid.* 182, 205.

²⁰⁸ Helena Michie, *The flesh made word* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987) 7.

thus be controlled: “Killing (be it implicit or explicit sacrifice) a feminine body is a way of distancing femininity as real sexual difference and as a signifier for death, and stabilizing it into a figure of Otherness, clearly secured from the masculine as norm, rather than inhibiting it.”²⁰⁹ The reduction of the female subject to the female corpse thus has the same binding or defining function as the reduction to the category of femme fatale or of prostitute: by focusing on types, the subjects at their cores can be effectively ignored and denied: “The language in which [...] Victorian observers and sexologists describe prostitutes underscores her sexual neutrality, her physical invisibility and – a related concept – her function as a symbol or figure rather than human being.”²¹⁰ In this respect, then, the death of the female is a means of controlling her, and eradicating her dangerous potential. In both *Spielkinder* and *Das Vermächtnis*, the death of the lower class woman restores order and uniformity to the bourgeois world, and purity to its sexual dealings and gender roles. Both cases are in agreement with Clément’s formulation that in the death of female characters, “there is always this constant: death by a man. Whether they do it themselves, like Butterfly, or are stabbed, like Carmen, the provenance of the knife, or the choking hand, or the fading breath is a man, and the result is fatal.”²¹¹ If bourgeois ideology can be assigned a gender, then it is male, and Lies and Toni’s options are limited to “prostitution, severe illness, or death,”²¹² because they are female.

There can be freedom and choice within these constraints, however. As Clément points out: “Carmen, in the moment of her death, represents the one and only freedom to

²⁰⁹ Bronfen, *Over* 189.

²¹⁰ Michie, *Flesh* 71.

²¹¹ Clément, *Opera* 47.

²¹² Michie, *Flesh* 57.

choose, decision, provocation. She is the image, foreseen and doomed, of a woman who refuses masculine yokes and who must pay for it with her life.”²¹³ While Hugo’s death is accidental, and his son’s is tragic, death has dimensions of retaliation in *Spielkinder*. Georg’s cousin commits suicide as an act of revenge, because his father married his mistress soon after the death of his first wife, due to illness.²¹⁴ Georg’s own vengeful nature extends only as far as flirting with other girls, to make Lies jealous when she dances with Eugen,²¹⁵ but suicide as a willful act is a part of Lies’ consciousness even in her early teens:

“Aber Lies, es bleibt Dir doch nichts anderes übrig, wo willst Du denn hin?” [...] “Ins Wasser!”
 Das hatte ich nicht erwartet! Ich bin starr vor Schrecken, sehe sie scheu an, sie weint nicht mehr. Ihr Gesicht ist vollkommen bewegungslos, ernst und spöttisch. Ich hätte nie gedacht, daß diese hübschen, großen Augen einen so kalten Ausdruck annehmen könnten [...]
 “Lies, willst Du denn wirklich ins Wasser gehen?”
 “Ja!” – “Weshalb denn?”
 Ich fasse sie unwillkürlich etwas fester um das Handgelenk.
 “Ach, es ist so scheußlich, sie sind alle so schlecht zu mir! [...] Ja, und dann würde sich mein Vater grämen, und siehst Du, das soll er, das ist seine Strafe, und Du würdest Dich auch grämen, und das wär Dir ganz recht!”²¹⁶

Walter also wanted to kill both himself and Lies, in order to regain control her and over their relationship and the degrading situation in which he found himself.²¹⁷

Lies and Toni turn to death for the same reasons. Because both of their fathers are dead, others can step into the role of patriarchal authority figure. Both of their fates are decided by others, in their absence, by the Losattis, who discuss how to get rid of Toni while

²¹³ Clément, *Opera* 48.

²¹⁴ Hermann, *Spielkinder* 125.

²¹⁵ *ibid.* 178.

²¹⁶ *ibid.* 73.

²¹⁷ *ibid.* 232.

she is out, and by Georg, who decides in his imagination how he will arrange Lies' life for her. Lies is at first delighted by Georg's return, because she has been waiting for him to do so:

Ach Georg, daß Du nun endlich kommst, endlich. – Wenn Du wüßtest, wie ich mich nach Dir gebangt habe, die lange Zeit; wie ich mich nach Dir gesehnt habe. – Ach! Wärest Du nur ein Jahr früher gekommen!! – Aber nun verläßt Du mich doch nicht mehr, nein, jetzt nicht mehr! Sieh mal, ich will ja wie ein Hund – – und wenn Du mir nur ein freundliches Wort gibst – –²¹⁸

Georg disappoints her, however, because he feels he cannot love her, or even touch her, again. He promises to find a better place for her to live and recuperate, but Lies is unimpressed:

“Lies, und wenn ich noch des Nachts hindurch Straßen kehren soll, Dir soll nichts abgehn, – ich will Dich pflegen, wie Deine Mutter!”
Lies spie aus.
“Und glaubst Du denn, ich würde auch nur einen Pfennig von Dir annehmen?”²¹⁹

When Georg goes, Lies is impassive, yet takes her final leave of him, apparently agreeing to his plans:

“Ja, Georg, ich will es tun,” sagte sie müde und gleichgültig, “aber – aeh – ich möchte schlafen, ich bin so matt, ich fühle mich – gar nicht – wohl. Komm morgen wieder, dann reden wir – zusammen.” [...] Als ich schon an der Tür war, sprang Lies plötzlich auf, umarmte mich und küßte mich wieder und wieder, als ob sie mich gar nicht mehr von sich lassen wolle.²²⁰

Georg is conflicted about how to proceed when he has left her: “Ich dachte und dachte [...] Jetzt stieß ich die Dirne von mir, und jetzt breitete ich sehnsüchtig die Arme aus, um sie zu umfassen.”²²¹ By the end of the night, he decides to love her again, as he did before, or at

²¹⁸ *ibid.* 242.

²¹⁹ *ibid.* 252.

²²⁰ *ibid.* 253.

²²¹ *ibid.* 261.

least to tell her as much.²²² He borrows money from Walter, and finds a clean room with respectable people, and goes triumphantly to tell Lies.²²³ When he arrives, however, she is gone, as the landlady tells him:

Ja, jestern abend hat sie ihre Sachen jepackt. Na, wissen Sie, schöner Herr, ville hat ja so'n Mächen nich, hat mir alles bezahlt un is weggegangen. Als ick ihr nu jefragt habe: "Aber, Fräulein Lieschen, wo wollen Se denn hin? – Jetzt in de finstre Nacht?" Da hat se nur jemeint, se zieht weg [...] se müsse fort. Nu hab ick ihr denn wieder jefragt: Wo sie denn hinzöge?! Ja, des wisse se selbst noch nich – un weg war se.²²⁴

Georg looks for Lies for over a month, eventually finding her through another childhood friend, who has also become a prostitute, the night before he must leave for another eight weeks of military service. The girl is extremely ill with tuberculosis – an illness associated at the time with moral degradation²²⁵ – and spends the eight weeks in hospital. Georg is anxious that he will be too late to see her one last time when he returns: "Diese Angst und Ungewißheit während der langen Fahrt, ob ich sie noch lebend sehen würde! Oh, vielleicht traf ich sie noch lebend, um ihr zu sagen, daß ich ihr immer – – – –"²²⁶ Upon his arrival, he thinks he may have given her one last moment of happiness, although the movement of her face may merely have been some kind of muscle spasm: "Plötzlich lief eine kaum merkliche Bewegung, ein ganz mattes Lächeln über ihre Züge – sie hatte mich erkannt. Möglich auch, daß dieses Lächeln nur der Todeskampf in den Mundwinkeln war, und ihr überhaupt nicht

²²² *ibid.* 262.

²²³ *ibid.* 260, 262.

²²⁴ *ibid.* 263.

²²⁵ "In 1861 Dr. James Copland outlined fourteen causes of consumption, most of which were 'moral inferences drawn from the belief that tubercular illnesses were culpable deviations from a normal moral, healthy state.'" Linda Hutcheon and Michael Hutcheon, *Opera: Desire, Disease, Death* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 1996) 38.

²²⁶ Hermann, *Spielkinder* 268.

mehr das zu Bewußtsein kam, was sie erblickte.”²²⁷ The focus of all Georg’s attention and worry is not Lies, however: he wants to get to her deathbed only in time to see himself in the role of redeemer. It is clear throughout the work that the girl functions only as a series of developments in Georg’s life and character, and as a series of circumstances in which he can imagine his own role. Even before Lies becomes a prostitute, Georg imagines being her savior:

Den ganzen Weg sprach ich vor mich hin, verzieh ich ihr tausendmal in eigennützigem Wohlwollen, träumte mich reich, um ihr Wohltäter werden zu können, der die “Gefallene” erhob, die “fast Entmenschte” Schritt für Schritt zurückführte, ja, ich sah sie sogar schon als meine Gattin, sah Kinder und Kindeskindern vergnügt auf meinen Knien spielen.²²⁸

At that stage, he wanted to elevate Lies, and bring her into his stable, bourgeois world of home and family. When this is no longer possible, he glories in images of her gratitude for his grace: “Den ganzen Weg über sprach ich zu mir selbst, wie ich mit ihr reden wollte, so gut, so liebevoll. Ich malte mir aus, wie sie in Dankbarkeit zu mir emporschauen würde, und wie ich sie dann in meine Arme schließen würde und auf die Stirn küssen.”²²⁹

The Losattis develop the same kind of sanctimonious attitude toward Toni, although their lofty claims of accepting her as part of the family falter after the death of her child. Toni is able to fight Ferdinand to some extent, protesting her own worth:

Toni: Sie würden ja doch dem Himmel auf den Knien danken, wenn die Franzi Sie nur den tausendsten Teil so gern hätte, wie ich [Hugo] gehabt hab’!
Ferdinand: Sprechen Sie den Namen meiner Braut nicht aus. Ich verbiete es Ihnen.
Toni: Warum denn? Bin ich vielleicht was Schlechteres als sie?
Ferdinand: Das fragen Sie noch?!²³⁰

²²⁷ *ibid.* 269.

²²⁸ *ibid.* 209.

²²⁹ *ibid.* 262.

²³⁰ Schnitzler, *Vermächtnis* 168.

As it becomes clear that the whole family is rejecting her, Toni is unable to voice her own defense:

Ferdinand: Das Fräulein weiß alles.

Toni *will reden; kann nicht*.

Adolf: Ja, Toni, das Schicksal scheint es zu wollen, daß die Zukunft wieder frei vor Ihnen liegt [...] Der Doktor hat Ihnen wohl mitgeteilt, daß für Ihre materiellen Bedürfnisse in ausreichender Weise –

Toni *will sprechen*

Adolf: Das ist natürlich [...] in dieser Zeit müssen Sie uns schon den Gefallen erwiesen, unsere Hilfe anzunehmen.

Toni *will sprechen, ist noch immer fassungslos*

Betty: Ich weiß, Toni, Sie werden brav bleiben.

Adolf: Wer zweifelt daran?

Betty: Sie bleiben selbstverständlich hier, solange Sie wollen.

Toni: Ich danke... sehr... aber ich habe die Absicht, schon heute fortzugehen.²³¹

Adolf graciously offers Toni words of apparent comfort: “Sie haben viel Leiden durchgemacht, Toni – ja! Man kann sagen: Wenn Sie einmal gefehlt haben, – Sie haben alles gesühnt! – Möge dieses Bewußtsein Ihnen für Ihren weiteren Weg Kraft verleihen!... Woher **wir** sie nehmen sollen – die wir uns keiner Schuld bewußt sind, weiß ich freilich nicht.”²³²

This blessing is of as little consequence for Toni as Georg’s forgiveness is for Lies: neither is actually about the woman concerned. Secure in the knowledge that the woman is either dying or leaving, Adolf and Georg can grant absolution, thereby retaining their own control of the moral high ground: forgiveness remains firmly theirs to give, thereby denying any culpability on their part, or power on the women’s part. Both works thus reflect the prevailing bourgeois attitude of the period, that lower class women could be reduced to types, that they were an Other to be studied, categorized and thereby controlled, and that forgiveness could be granted or withheld by the bourgeois classes with impunity. What Toni and Lies embody, however,

²³¹ *ibid.* 169.

²³² *ibid.* 170.

are reactions and revolts against such categorization and control. Toni refuses to be paid for the sexual “services” that she provided for Hugo, and thus turned into a figure of exchange, a symbolic prostitute, and Lies refuses to be redeemed and restored to life by Georg. Both use death as a way of removing themselves from the web of discourse about women that obscures them.

Chapter Two

Introduction

As chapter one shows, lower class, problematic women could be reduced to physical and sexual “types” in fin-de-siècle society and art. Toni and Lies are thus representative of figures that could be silenced by a disavowal of their right to expression, or of their right to be heard, as unrespectable and dangerous women of the lower social order. Their silencing was made all the easier by their remove from the bourgeoisie. What, however, was to be done with respectable, middle-class women who expressed their criticism of society? If the bourgeois mentality was to be able to retain its ideal of the woman as wife and mother, then middle-class women all had to be distanced from sexual impurity. Deviations from the bourgeois norm of middle-class femininity were thus placed into categories that, while still linked with either promiscuity or an “unnatural” sexuality, were more intellectual, rather than physical, categories: if the figure could not be easily reduced to a physical type, then assimilation into a mental category could step in. Two such intellectual categories were that of the working woman and the so-called New Woman. The characters discussed in this chapter, Schnitzler’s Fanny and Hermann’s Antonie, have been treated almost as superficially as have the characters discussed in chapter one; while the former is afforded the label of rebellious by a few critics, she has not been placed alongside Schnitzler’s later heroines, and criticism of Antonie is as sparse as that of Lies in Hermann’s works. A sensitive reading of the two characters does place them in the same position as Toni and Lies,

however, and shows that they are even more problematic than their lower-class sisters, precisely because, as bourgeois women, they should ideally know better than to want to rebel.

Because of the changing economic status of middle-class families, more and more women had to support themselves in the world of employment. Those who worked in the theatre counted as a “type” unto themselves, because of age-old associations between actresses and prostitutes. The New Woman was a phenomenon throughout Western Europe and North America, as education became more readily available for women, and as feminism and political activism became more prevalent among the educated classes. Working and New Women were not only deemed guilty of breaking sexual taboos, but also of challenging the fundamental images of what women were and were capable of, thereby also challenging the corresponding images of what men were, as defined by their contrast with women.

Hermann’s *Antonie* and Schnitzler’s *Fanny* embody the more intellectual challenges to bourgeois society. Both coming from the middle class, they represent a new generation of women who were self-sufficient, either financially or personally, and who were not content to uphold a social order that sought to limit and restrict their potential. Both express their discontent in no uncertain terms, but once again, bourgeois society closes ranks against them in the works. *Antonie* and *Fanny* are both viewed as malcontents, misfits who should adapt to the role expected of them as young, bourgeois ladies. Neither woman is able to find significant support or acceptance within the bourgeoisie, and so both leave its confines. Their escapes are thus more promising than Toni’s or Lies’ suicide, as leaving does not mark the end of their lives, but at the same time, this is also not an entirely triumphal end to either work. While neither woman is able to change society from within, theirs is an active form of

rebellion, made all the more problematic by their proximity to respectable society. This assault from within its own ranks is what makes the characterization of the bourgeoisie itself in these works most telling. The women discussed here are forced to flee, but not before exposing flaws in the frameworks intended to contain and control them.

Heinrich Schön jun.

Georg Hermann's *Heinrich Schön jun.* is the tale of a marriage between an older man, Eduard, and a younger woman, Antonie; of her love for her new stepson, Heinrich, and her eventual flight with another young man. It is also an example of Hermann's love of Potsdam, a town he devoted an entire work to.²³³ Just as *Spielkinder* and *Jettchen Gebert* describe the streets of Berlin in great detail, so too does this work take the reader on a tour of its town. The depth of detail does not only serve to create a geographical and historical milieu, however: the plot's entrenchment in the relative backwater of Potsdam is also symbolic of the old-fashioned yet still dominant bourgeois mentality of the town. This is not only underlined by the historical remove of the novel, set in the mid-nineteenth century, but also by frequent reminders that Potsdam is by no means on a par with the more fashionable Berlin, as Antonie discovers. Potsdam is described as a town in which nothing happens, from the novel's first line onward:

Alles war geblieben wie einst, nichts war geschwunden, nichts war geändert. Mit all ihren Putten und Kränzen standen die Straßenzüge in der hellichten Sonne, still, verschlafen und vornehm [...] Nein – nichts hatte sich geändert! [...] Nein – wirklich nichts hatte sich geändert, nichts von Bedeutung [...] Nein, nein, nichts hatte sich geändert.²³⁴

²³³ *Spaziergang in Potsdam* was published in 1929.

²³⁴ Georg Hermann, *Heinrich Schön jun.* (Berlin: Verlag das neue Berlin, 1998) 5, 7, 8.

Hermann goes on to enumerate events of great historical interest, which have, nevertheless, occurred in Potsdam, but always as exceptions to the norm, and in muted tones: “Und doch manches war so ein ganz klein wenig anders geworden [...] Immerhin – manches war ein wenig anders geworden [...] Ach ja – manches war anders geworden, aber doch nicht gar soviet.”²³⁵ It is only after seventeen pages of such description that the Schön family is first mentioned. The family’s merchant business, which is now in the hands of Eduard, was begun by his father Samuel, who made his fortune by buying houses at an especially low price and making a large profit.²³⁶ Since then, the Schöns have counted among the town’s bourgeoisie, although the industrialization of English competitors has led to a steady decline in their fortunes.

The stage is set, by this detailed description, for characters who are equally immersed in the greater, social life of the town; figures who are equally well aware of their history and of their place in the social hierarchy. Geography can serve to unite figures in the work, against the outsider Antonie, for example, and generation serves the same uniting and dividing functions. Of the main characters, Eduard Schön and the von Mühlensiefens most represent the older generation, and the traditional values associated with it. The young Hannchen von Mühlensiefen, as will be shown, also belongs in this group, but Heinrich, his friend Maltitz, and Antonie unite as the younger generation. It is Hannchen’s mother, Aurelia, who is most outraged by Antonie’s independent behaviour. She is frequently referred to as “Aurelia von Mühlensiefen, geboren von Grävenitz,” closely linking her to the noble past that she wants to uphold. Eduard sees the gap between his and Antonie’s

²³⁵ *ibid.* 8, 9, 10, 15. See also 16, 17.

²³⁶ *ibid.* 21.

generations as something natural. As his son Heinrich agrees in the beginning of the work, the young should not question the actions of the old because they are, quite simply, different: “Ich glaube, [...] es ist schwer für uns, die Handlungen eines Menschen zu verstehen, der den doppelten Weg zurückgelegt hat wie wir.”²³⁷ Heinrich does not understand Eduard, as the two are not similar, and their character differences are clear throughout the work: “[Eduard hatte] wenig Sinn [...] für Dinge und Menschen, die außerhalb seiner Linie lagen. Und deswegen mußte zwischen ihm und Heinrich Schön so etwas wie eine Fremdheit und geheime Spannung bestehen.”²³⁸ As a fifty-seven year old, with a wife thirty-four years his junior, Eduard is jealous of his son’s youth and understanding: “In seinen Augen blitzte so ein ganz kleiner geheimer Neid. Man war doch alt. Man sollte wieder von der Jugend lernen, Scherze Ernst zu nehmen und Ernstes scherzhaft.”²³⁹ Rather than being more able to join in with their conversation because of his age and experience, the younger characters’ jokes are often beyond Eduard’s comprehension, leaving him behind and making him feel superfluous and estranged: “[Eduard] hatte ganz unbestimmt, aber doch peinigend die Empfindung, daß er eigentlich hier der dritte in diesem Raum war, der immer wieder fruchtlos versuchte, in die Lebenssphäre der anderen einzudringen.”²⁴⁰ His naturally reserved character prevents Eduard from any expression of his jealousy, or even of pursuing his vague suspicions any further.²⁴¹ Eduard consoles himself with the idea that it is only fitting that his son and his wife should enjoy each others’ company so much, even if it means that they ignore him, as is the case

²³⁷ *ibid.* 49.

²³⁸ *ibid.* 71.

²³⁹ *ibid.* 93.

²⁴⁰ *ibid.* 94.

²⁴¹ *ibid.* 82.

during one of their walks together: “Was sollte er denn sagen? Eigentlich waren es doch junge Menschen, die zusammengehörten.”²⁴² When Eduard informs his son that Antonie has left him at the end of the novel, it is with an attitude of dejection rather than anger:

Frau Antonie soll sich mit dem jungen Herrn von Maltitz in Wien befinden. Andere sagen, sie wären schon wieder auseinander. Du kannst Dir denken, daß ich darüber sehr traurig bin, aber ich bin nicht ungerecht genug, um ihr die Schuld daran zuzuschreiben. Es war wohl mein Fehler, zu glauben, man könne sich alles formen, wie man will.²⁴³

Eduard goes on to compare Antonie to a comet, and as such, as a force of nature, over which he could not have hoped to have any control, and at which it would be pointless to be angry. His only regret is that he transgressed the laws of bourgeois common sense by marrying such a “junges, seltsames Wesen.”²⁴⁴ This apparently magnanimous attitude is not as generous and simple as it may appear: as will be discussed below, his reduction of Antonie is in fact a way to deny her agency, and thus her threat to the bourgeois world.

The large age difference between Eduard and Antonie would not have been so remarkable fifty years earlier, as it was far from unheard of that a man of means could have a succession of younger brides. Eduard and Antonie’s marriage is also a traditional one in terms of its arrangement. Eduard had had business dealings with the Arnstein family since Antonie was a girl, but although the two had an amicable relationship, theirs was by no means a romantic courtship. At first, Heinrich is critical of Antonie’s motivation for agreeing to the marriage, blaming avarice: “sie hatte seinen Vater wohl nicht genommen, um ihren Eltern das Geschäft zu retten, wie man drüben in Berlin klatschte, – sondern einfach um so

²⁴² *ibid.* 211.

²⁴³ *ibid.* 384.

²⁴⁴ *ibid.* 384.

weiterleben, wie sie es gewöhnt war.”²⁴⁵ Her parents’ business is in some trouble, and her link with Eduard will ensure the family’s financial future.²⁴⁶ As he gets to know her, however, Heinrich’s opinion softens, and he can see the transaction that involved, but was not made by, Antonie:

[Eduard] hat sie doch mit goldenen Ketten an sich gekettet. – Was war es denn anders?! Komödie! Iffland, Kotzebue, Rührstück: daß er ihr so gefallen, daß er sie von Kind an geliebt hat und sie ihn. Sie hat ebensowenig daran gedacht, daß sie einmal die Wedersche Kirche heiraten würde, oder Oliver Cromwell, wie diesen da. Sie wurde eben ganz einfach von den Eltern draufgezahlt bei dem Handel, zugegeben wie der Knochen beim Schlächter. Doch eigentlich zu häßlich und schmutzig! Sie wurde gekauft von dem alten Herrn, wie er ein Coupon Seide oder ein Dutzend neuer Türkenschals kauft.²⁴⁷

Antonie is fully aware of this situation, but does not take any opportunity to voice an opinion about it, either through a sense of duty and resignation, or of compassion:

[Antonie,] die doch das von der ersten Stunde an gewußt hatte und die Eltern schwer hatte fühlen lassen, *daß* sie es wußte, – ohne daß sie es deshalb auch nur mit einer Silbe erwähnt hätte, oder daß es ihr gegenüber erwähnt worden wäre. Nein – Antonie Arnstein war nicht solch eine, der man lange Vorträge zu halten brauchte [...] Sie sah schon den Dingen auf den Grund, wenn sie auch über sie hinweglächelte.²⁴⁸

Antonie thus appears to be a complicit, if grudging, partner in the business transaction between her parents and Eduard.

Heinrich’s fiancée Hannchen’s parents, on the other hand, would have liked to have had the opportunity to find a more lucrative and socially desirable match for their daughter than he is, and their disappointment that she chose him is apparent:

²⁴⁵ *ibid.* 46.

²⁴⁶ *ibid.* 47.

²⁴⁷ *ibid.* 66.

²⁴⁸ *ibid.* 83.

jedesmal, wenn von der Hochzeit die Rede war, bekam die Frau Rätin – Aurelie, geboren von Grävenitz – Weinkrämpfe, und man mußte schnell zu etwas anderem übergehen. In Wahrheit aber, um Farbe zu bekennen, hofften die alten Herrschaften immer noch, daß für ihr Hannchen der Richtige käme.²⁴⁹

When their engagement is broken off, Hannchen's father is happy to be able to find a more suitable candidate, who will be better able to further his own aspirations: "wenn man ihn zurückhole in den Dienst [...] so könne ihm ein Schwiegersohn, der Kaufmann und zudem noch religiös zweifelhafter Herkunft, nur hinderlich sein."²⁵⁰ Happily, Heinrich's friend Winterfeldt is free to take over the role of bridegroom, and is deemed by all a good connection for the family to make.²⁵¹

There is no reason to believe that Hannchen will be unsuccessful as a wife. It is made clear that Potsdam has its own expectations of its inhabitants, and Hannchen complies with them entirely: "die Frauen in Häubchen und mit silbernen Stricknadelscheiden; [...] die Töchter, die Harfe spielten und die Mode von vor drei Jahren trugen."²⁵² In comparing her to Antonie, Heinrich decides that Hannchen belongs to the "Provinz."²⁵³ Heinrich soon realizes that the two young women are polar opposites: "Und es wurde ihm bewußt, daß er eigentlich die ganze Zeit an [Hannchen] gedacht hatte, daß jeder Gedanke sich auf sie bezogen hatte, und daß er, ohne ihren Namen zu nennen, sie immer in Gegensatz gestellt hatte."²⁵⁴ Heinrich's appears to be an ideal engagement, as he describes it to the skeptical Maltitz:

²⁴⁹ *ibid.* 121. See also 127.

²⁵⁰ *ibid.* 376.

²⁵¹ *ibid.* 190, 210, 385.

²⁵² *ibid.* 21.

²⁵³ *ibid.* 152.

²⁵⁴ *ibid.* 118.

“Lieber Freund – es hat ja auch seine großen Vorzüge: du kannst in ein braves, gutes Bürgerhaus gehen, so oft du willst, ohne daß es peinlich auffällt und Gerede gibt [...] hat dir schon einmal jemand eine solche Geldbörse gehäkelt? [...] Und hat dir jemand solch ein Notizbuch gestickt?”²⁵⁵ Hannchen is twenty two, and very pretty, but of limited abilities beyond needlework. She enjoys her life of ease and her social standing, and has the same social sensibilities as her mother: “Hannchen [...] riß sich von ihren Freundinnen los und flog [Aurelia] entgegen. Sie hatte den Sinn für kleine dekorative Szenen von ihrer Mutter geerbt.”²⁵⁶ Hannchen blossoms after their wedding date is decided upon, making arrangements for their future home with her mother, and disregarding Heinrich’s wishes altogether.²⁵⁷ Hannchen does like to read, but not the kind of books that Heinrich finds so impressive in Antonie’s library, and he is embarrassed by her intellectual restrictions.²⁵⁸ Because of these limitations, Hannchen instead relies on emotional expressions of power, trying to make Heinrich jealous, and crying:

Ach Gott! Große geistige Gaben hatte nun Hannchen von Mühlensiefen gewiß nicht – aber Tränen kleideten sie vorzüglich [...] Sie verfügte über jene Sorte von Frauentränen, die ein Verlobter hunderttausendmal wegküssen möchte und die einen Ehemann zum Selbstmord treiben können...²⁵⁹

While she realizes that something is amiss in Heinrich and Antonie’s relationship, Hannchen is powerless to take any action.²⁶⁰ It is this lack of independent action and intellectual

²⁵⁵ *ibid.* 55.

²⁵⁶ *ibid.* 308. See also 153.

²⁵⁷ *ibid.* 250, 342.

²⁵⁸ *ibid.* 131, 144, 155.

²⁵⁹ *ibid.* 138. See also 210.

²⁶⁰ *ibid.* 160, 171.

prowess that lies at the heart of Hannchen's portrayal as an ideal bourgeois wife, who will in no way challenge her husband: "Hannchen hörte kaum hin. Geschäft war Männersache [...]. In Hannchen [...] befestigte sich die Meinung, daß Männer doch sehr langweilige Geschöpfe sind, die immer mit den ernstesten Mienen von Dingen reden, die keinen Menschen was angehen."²⁶¹

The character at the fore of the novel, and after whom it is named, is Heinrich, from whose perspective brief passages are narrated, as the plot becomes entrenched in his thoughts.²⁶² While other characters' psychological processes are also made available to the reader, it is thus Heinrich with whom we are most encouraged to identify. Eduard is jealous of his son's youth and character, and he is regarded by all as sympathetic:

Er war sonst das gewesen, was man einen guten Jungen nennt: liebenswürdig, sorglos, etwas sarkastisch und überlegen, interessiert, kein Flachkopf [...] Nicht gerade blendend geistreich war er, aber energisch und von ruhiger Klugheit und gleichmäßigen Naturell, wohlhabend und gut gezogen [...] Er fühlte sich in seiner Haut recht wohl. Und warum auch nicht?! Er kannte seine Grenzen.²⁶³

His friend Maltitz offers Heinrich the somewhat damning praise of being utterly average at school: "Er schwamm immer seelenruhig in der Mitte. Man vergaß mit der Zeit ganz, daß er da war."²⁶⁴

Despite his lack of any remarkable features or talents, Heinrich is successful with women.²⁶⁵ It is his relationships with women that form the dramatic core of the novel. His engagement to Hannchen is at first very healthy, with his frequent assertions that he loves

²⁶¹ *ibid.* 221, 298.

²⁶² *ibid.* 64, 334.

²⁶³ *ibid.* 251.

²⁶⁴ *ibid.* 37.

²⁶⁵ *ibid.* 72.

her, and his praise of her: “ein so reizendes Wesen wie Hannchen, ein so entzückendes, göttliches Geschöpf wie meine Braut ist.”²⁶⁶ When she tries to copy Antonie’s hairstyle, Heinrich delights in her simplicity and old-fashioned ways: “‘Närchen!’ rief Heinrich, küßte sie und wirbelte ihren Kopf zwischen den Händen hin und her. ‘Hundchen, du – du mußt Rosen tragen – und viele Löckchen, überall um deinen netten kleinen Dummkopf.’”²⁶⁷ His patronizing manner toward her continually resurfaces, with him referring to her as “Kind,” both verbally and in his thoughts.²⁶⁸ Heinrich thus does not respect Hannchen as a woman, nor pay heed to her wishes: “Denn er pflegte die Verstimmungen Hannchens wie die Launen eines Kindes nicht schwer zu nehmen.”²⁶⁹ The fact that his future wife is so limited intellectually is not viewed as a problem – indeed, Heinrich is filled with anticipation at the prospect of taking her into his care: “‘solch ein reiner Kristall, ein blondes, sanftes Kind wie Hannchen...’ Heinrich Schön war es ganz heiß in den Augenwinkeln ... ‘ein unbeschriebenes Blatt’ –”²⁷⁰ Heinrich is sure that he will be able to improve upon the raw material of Hannchen’s character: “bald hätte er sie ja ganz aus dieser Sphäre und könne beginnen, einen Menschen aus ihr zu machen.”²⁷¹ Hermann goes on to dismiss the will to change a loved one as unrealistic, but this desire is an important part of Heinrich’s character. In his confidence that he will be able to wield a creative power over Hannchen, he thereby removes her own potential, both to determine her own fate, and, perhaps, to challenge him in

²⁶⁶ *ibid.* 57.

²⁶⁷ *ibid.* 159.

²⁶⁸ *ibid.* 144, 167, 175, 211.

²⁶⁹ *ibid.* 130.

²⁷⁰ *ibid.* 64.

²⁷¹ *ibid.* 241. See also 123.

his absolute authority. Heinrich imagines Hannchen as the ideal bourgeois wife, restricted, undemanding and acquiescent. He is clearly looking for the kind of wife who will allow him to see himself reflected in and by her in the way he wishes: with no real character or will of her own, Hannchen will not challenge his image of himself.

This image of the ideal woman is challenged from the very beginning of the work, however, where the young men of Potsdam are described: “Den Jungen, den Halbflüggen waren diese Käfige zu eng, und sie sahen sich ganz geheim um, wie es drüben aussah bei den andern, mit denen man eigentlich nicht verkehren durfte, und mit denen man jedenfalls sich nicht öffentlich zeigen durfte.”²⁷² Through brief allusions, the reader is made aware of Heinrich's relationship of this forbidden kind, with a working class girl referred to only by her surname, Wulkow. When Heinrich becomes especially unhappy in his unrequited love for Antonie, he goes to Wulkow for sympathy:

Sie hatte eine wundervolle Art, die Wulkow, einen Mann in die Arme, an ihre Brust zu nehmen [...] kaum neunzehn, mit dem Körper einer Dreißigjährigen, mit Augen, wie die eines treuen Hundes, der alles sieht und alles fühlt, und alles weiß, aber dem die Sprache fehlt. Sie stammte von Menschen, die nicht viel zu sprechen gewohnt sind.²⁷³

Even though his future father-in-law hears of this relationship through town gossip, all he asks is that Heinrich should entertain himself in the more anonymous setting of Berlin.²⁷⁴ This is, therefore, a relationship in which there is no risk of any repercussions, especially as Wulkow is fully aware that Heinrich is engaged, and will no longer visit her after he is married. The most wonderful aspect of this fling, in Heinrich's view, is that Wulkow makes

²⁷² *ibid.* 21.

²⁷³ *ibid.* 254.

²⁷⁴ *ibid.* 284, 303, 304, 316.

no demands of him: “Sie wollte gar nichts von ihm, die Wulkow; sie verlangte *gar nichts*.”²⁷⁵ She understands why he is depressed, and pities his situation, but poses no challenge to him or his bourgeois existence. This lower-class girl, who is in effect little more than a body, and an outlet for Heinrich’s physical desires, is thus similar to Hannchen, sharing her lack of both agency and challenge. Her place in the work, as an alternative to the ideal fiancée, underlines the badly hidden flaws and failings in the role bourgeois society demanded of its women.

When he is faced with Antonie, Heinrich finds her an attractive alternative to his more docile fiancée and girlfriend. Their relationship is doomed, however, precisely because she is not the kind of woman to whom he is accustomed. Antonie’s very entrance into Heinrich’s life is a source of upheaval and embarrassment for him.²⁷⁶ Heinrich is of the opinion that her marriage to his father is somewhat undignified, and he is made uncomfortable by the whole situation: “wenn [Eduard] durchaus noch einmal heiraten mußte – das hat er mit sich abzumachen – Gut: ’ne Frau von vierzig, fünfundvierzig Jahren, eine respektable Witib [...] Aber so ein junges Ding – das ist doch ein gewagtes Experiment, meine ich.”²⁷⁷ Antonie thus poses a challenge to Heinrich’s decorous, bourgeois world. She also challenges Heinrich’s sense of self-control, however. Although she is not a beautiful woman, she entrances him: “Er wollte irgendwo anders hinsehen, ganz unbefangen – aber er kam nicht mit den Blicken von ihr los, wie sie jetzt so mitten im blauen Raum stand und die Augen schweigend und versonnen wandern ließ [...] Er kam nicht los davon.”²⁷⁸ Heinrich is physically unable to control his behavior when he is with Antonie, although she makes no

²⁷⁵ *ibid.* 254.

²⁷⁶ *ibid.* 47, 65.

²⁷⁷ *ibid.* 45. See also 44.

²⁷⁸ *ibid.* 78, 178.

particular effort to exert any control over him. It is rather this lack of apparent concern and involvement that causes Heinrich real difficulty. Instead of crying, or trying to win Heinrich's favor, as Hannchen does, Antonie leaves him in doubt as to whether she has any interest in him at all:

Heinrich sah zu ihr hinüber: war das noch die gleiche, die vorhin ihm übers Haar gestrichen, die eben nur für ihn gesungen? Wo war er jetzt für sie? [...] Und doch mußte er sich täglich und stündlich sagen, daß all das keinerlei Erwiderung und Ermunterung fand. Frau Antonie war genau wie vorher [...] Sie schien all das von neulich Abend ganz vergessen zu haben. Ja, in Heinrichs Hirn setzte sich langsam die Meinung fest, daß sich das vielleicht doch nur alles in seiner Phantasie abgespielt hatte, oder zumindest von ihm eine falsche Auslegung gefunden hatte.²⁷⁹

This uncertainty, about even his own perceptions, is a marked departure from the control that he is accustomed to wielding in his dealings with women. In their central scene together, when Heinrich takes Antonie on a boat trip, and during which they finally acknowledge their feelings for each other, Heinrich's relationship with Wulkow is mirrored, but in reverse. She too goes on boat trips with Heinrich, but in their relationship, he is in control. Antonie, on the other hand, suggests the trip, asks Heinrich not to invite Hannchen as he had intended, and clearly takes control in the boat: "Ich will denken, du bist mein Ruderknecht, der Gondoliere, den ich für ein, zwei Stunden in meine Dienste stelle, den ich nicht einmal sehe, und dessen gleichmäßige Ruderschläge mich so angenehm blinzeln und schläfrig machen."²⁸⁰ Heinrich is so comfortable in this scenario that he sings the same fisherman's song that Wulkow sings during their trips, clearly placing him in the feminine, and subordinate, role.²⁸¹ It is he who poses no threat to Antonie, and she who therefore has control over him, and this is why their

²⁷⁹ *ibid.* 329, 345.

²⁸⁰ *ibid.* 352.

²⁸¹ *ibid.* 368.

relationship cannot be developed any further. At first, Heinrich reacts to Antonie's strength of character by retreating back to his more comfortable role with Hannchen: "Und im Augenblick packte Heinrich Schön eine solche Sehnsucht nach seinem großen, blonden Mädchen, daß er anfing zu laufen."²⁸² As time passes, Heinrich attempts to avoid Eduard and Antonie, which is made difficult by their living in the same house.²⁸³ In the end, Heinrich is forced to break away from Antonie. On the same evening as their boat trip, Heinrich asks Eduard to break off his engagement to Hannchen for him, and leaves on a business trip to Rio de Janeiro, thereby escaping any relationship Antonie might want to pursue with him. It is thus Antonie, as a woman who takes control of her own decisions and actions, and who exerts power over others, especially over men, who poses a direct threat to bourgeois society in this work.

Das Märchen

The problems posed by a woman who steps out of her "natural" role as wife, thereby challenging masculine authority and identity, are also present in Arthur Schnitzler's *Das Märchen*, a drama in three acts, in which the actress Fanny at first tries to persuade Fedor to admit his love for her, and then abandons this attempt in favor of her career, because Fedor proves incapable of accepting her past experiences with other men. The title refers to two separate ideas in the course of the action: at first, it refers to the myth of the woman as inherently fallen, and then to the myth that the fallen woman can be redeemed. Both ideas are

²⁸² *ibid.* 119.

²⁸³ *ibid.* 252.

discussed and perpetuated by the male characters, while the heroine eventually rejects and abandons the entire discourse.

Two of the work's three acts take place in the Theren household, where Frau Theren and her daughters, Fanny and Klara, hold a weekly "Jour," inviting various friends for tea and conversation.²⁸⁴ These guests do include some members of the upper class, but it is a lower bourgeois family: "Weißt, der ganze Kreis, es ist nicht die noble Welt, nein – aber auch nicht die eigentliche Vorstadt."²⁸⁵ The setting in the Theren house is simple and relatively poor,²⁸⁶ and Frau Theren blames their financial situation on the death of her husband: "Ach Gott, zu tun haben [Klara und Fanny] viel. Und ich auch. Ich bitte Sie Herr von Wandel – wenn kein Vater im Haus ist!"²⁸⁷ Her elder daughter Klara works giving music lessons, while Fanny has recently won a role in a play, which is expected to further her career very quickly. The death of the father is thus also implicitly to blame for the family's lower social standing: because they have had to work, Klara and Fanny have been forced into roles apparently unnatural for bourgeois daughters, and have been compromised by this. As Barbara Franzoi puts it, men were ideally to be placed firmly at the head of any household, and, even in working class households, the "wages of wives and daughters were only supplemental."²⁸⁸

What would be more natural for these two girls would be to marry, and allow their husbands to care for them financially and make their decisions for them, thereby filling the

²⁸⁴ Arthur Schnitzler, *Das Märchen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1993) 195.

²⁸⁵ *ibid.* 216.

²⁸⁶ *ibid.* 193.

²⁸⁷ *ibid.* 197. See also 199.

²⁸⁸ Barbara Franzoi, *At the Very Least she Pays the Rent* (Westport, Connecticut: Greenwood Press, 1985) 42.

place of the absent father. It is thus a cause for congratulation that Klara has found a future husband, as Emmi says: “Ach, es ist wirklich schön, daß Klara endlich einen Mann kriegte!”²⁸⁹ Her fiancé is Herr Wandel, who most represents normative bourgeois morality in the work, and is therefore somewhat out of place among the Therens’ other guests, who he dismisses as artists: “Es ist ja nicht zu leugnen, noch immer bringt man der Künstlerwelt, insbesondere der dramatischen, ein gewisses achtungsvolles Mißtrauen entgegen, das ja leider in der großen Mehrzahl der Fälle gerechtfertigt ist.”²⁹⁰ The influences in society that Wandel finds dangerous come from the young, intellectual, and artistic circles that Fanny, as an actress, travels in. As Frau Theren points out, Fanny’s associations mean that some sense of bourgeois decency becomes superfluous, and that their young male guests take advantage of this: “Ja, seit die Fanny beim Theater ist, meinen sie, sie können schon über alles reden...”²⁹¹ Wandel tries to defend his own point of view, condemning the other men as immature: “Ja, sehen Sie, Frau Theren, diese jungen Leute mit ihren neuen Richtungen und neuen Ideen! Ja, was brauch’ ich denn ihre neuen Ideen? Ich hab’ schon meine Ideen – was geht mich denn der Maler eigentlich an... ich meine seine speziellen Ansichten. Nicht wahr, Frau Theren?”²⁹² It is inconceivable for Wandel that anyone would want to change the status quo, and he has internalized his bourgeois morality to the extent that any possible challenge must be fought, in very serious terms, even if it only arises in conversation and pontification among the artists: “Ja, meine Herren, merken Sie denn gar nicht, daß Sie mit solchen

²⁸⁹ Schnitzler, *Märchen* 250.

²⁹⁰ *ibid.* 260.

²⁹¹ *ibid.* 222.

²⁹² *ibid.* 198.

Paradoxen die ganze Gesellschaftsordnung untergraben?“²⁹³ For Wandel, then, the gender roles and moral codes that the others are dismissive of are so important that they uphold civilization itself. Wandel sees Fanny’s involvement in the theatre as an active subversion of bourgeois roles, and, as such, as a threat to his future marriage. Klara asserts that she wants to be able to watch over her younger sister: “[es ist] doch gerade tausendfach meine Pflicht, über dieses Kind zu wachen! Warum soll sie denn in die Welt hinaus, wo ich nicht bei ihr sein kann, wo ich sie nicht schützen und hüten kann?“²⁹⁴ Wandel finds this idea ridiculous, because, in his view, Fanny is a willingly, and therefore completely, lost cause: “In dem Augenblick, wo sich ein junges Mädchen in diese Welt des Theaters stürzt, kann sie auch dem Tratsch nicht entgehen, der sich von nun an an ihr ganzes Leben knüpft. Es ist rein unmöglich, dem auszuweichen – und sie selbst wird bald lernen, sich darüber hinwegzusetzen.”²⁹⁵ Not only is Fanny a part of this world of the theatre, but she also chooses to play a highly dubious character, that of a lower class woman who becomes the lover of a nobleman.²⁹⁶ Wandel’s disapproval is expressed in a question that, coming from him, becomes extremely negative: “Ist es sehr **modern**, das Stück?“²⁹⁷ The best solution, as far as the bourgeois characters are concerned, is that Fanny should accept a contract in Russia. As Wandel says: “Ich hab’ ihr zugeredet. – Ich muß ihr zureden; es ist ein glänzender Kontrakt.”²⁹⁸ Although his recommendation is carefully masked by concern for Fanny’s

²⁹³ *ibid.* 219.

²⁹⁴ *ibid.* 261.

²⁹⁵ *ibid.* 261.

²⁹⁶ *ibid.* 251.

²⁹⁷ *ibid.* 218.

²⁹⁸ *ibid.* 257.

future, it is an act of selfishness on Wandel's part. The bourgeois reaction to threats such as Fanny is thus that they must be removed in order for society to continue as desired.

As is often the case in Schnitzler's work, however, the ideal posited by bourgeois society is challenged. If Wandel's image of the perfect, traditional marriage were accurate, the drama itself would be obsolete. Even Wandel has to admit that there are discrepancies between what is publicly desired and privately done, especially by men:

Wandel: Na, da wären wir glücklich bei der freien Liebe.

Fedor: Als ob sie für uns Männer nicht existierte!

Wandel: Das ist doch was ganz anderes.²⁹⁹

As the example of Friedrich Witte, one of Fedor's peers, shows, marriage can serve special purposes, but is otherwise not necessarily desirable:

Witte: Aber siehst du – in unseren Jahren ist man doch im Grunde reif zum Heiraten – ich möchte fast sagen, es ist notwendig...

Fedor: Wieso...?

Witte: Weißt du – besonders für einen Arzt wie mich!... Es gehört dazu. – Man wird früher nicht für voll genommen.³⁰⁰

Although he should ideally be satisfied with his domestic situation, Witte has previously enjoyed affairs – most notably with Fanny – and it is regrettable for him that his fiancée will put an end to them. She has already prevented him from visiting the Therens or from seeing Fanny's play, as her friend Emmi tells the others assembled at the house: "nachdem er sich doch mit den anderen verlobt hat. – Sie ist wohl eifersüchtig, die Braut, und hat ihm verboten, je wieder eure Schwelle zu betreten."³⁰¹ The fact that such affairs take place is an open secret. The young Emmi, who wants to follow Fanny's footsteps into the theatre, has a clear idea of what the life of an actress will entail:

²⁹⁹ *ibid.* 220.

³⁰⁰ *ibid.* 236.

³⁰¹ *ibid.* 204.

Emmi: Ach was... wenn man einmal beim Theater ist, da braucht man nimmer reich zu sein!... Gib nur acht, wie sie zappeln werden – an jedem Finger zehn! Die Fanny kriegt einen Fürst und ich einen Baron.
 Klara: Gehen Sie etwa darum zur Bühne?
 Emmi: Was fällt Ihnen ein? – Darum! Aber man sieht's ja alle Tage. – Für alle Fälle will ich zuerst eine große Schauspielerin werden –
 Fanny: Du bist ein Kind, so ein Kind – red'st was zusammen!
 Emmi: Nun, ist denn das was Schlechtes – ? Wenn wir schon arme Mädels sind und man uns so nicht nimmt –
 Klara: Sie wissen wirklich manchmal nicht, was Sie reden!
 Emmi: O, ich weiß genau, was ich rede. – Ich hab' Talent, werde meinen Weg machen, und wenn mir das Komödienspielen zu dumm ist und ich genug Applaus und Ruhm gesammelt hab' – dann heirat' ich einen Kavalier.³⁰²

Actresses, in the popular view, make themselves available to rich suitors, who can shower them with expensive gifts. The idea of an eventual marriage is not likely, however, as the painter Robert exemplifies. His affair with his model Ninette, who is beautiful yet stupid,³⁰³ is entirely based upon a sense of fleeting pleasures, rather than serious plans for the future: “Ihr werdet mir die elementare Freude an meiner Ninette nicht vergallen – [...] schmerzlose Liebe – schmerzlose Begeisterung – die Dinge nehmen, wie sie sind – hinaus über alles! Über der Empfindung stehen!”³⁰⁴ As soon as Robert tires of the situation, he is free to end it, in this case, without even informing the woman concerned: “Wozu ihr die Laune verderben? – Die Frauen vertragen schon den letzten Kuß – man darf ihnen nur niemals sagen: dies ist der letzte.”³⁰⁵ The kind of woman who enters into such a relationship is afforded no concern or respect: by the very fact that they lower themselves to such an extent that unscrupulous men can have a relationship with them, they also become fully unworthy of any serious consideration. August Witte, Witte's brother, and his friend Berger, both members of the

³⁰² *ibid.* 205.

³⁰³ *ibid.* 241.

³⁰⁴ *ibid.* 214. Schnitzler would of course return to this topic in *Liebelei* (1895).

³⁰⁵ *ibid.* 265.

upper class, enter the Theren household looking for just such an affair, and as Witte implies, actresses are infinitely available, because they belong to the world of artists:

Berger: Was sind denn das dort für Leut'? *Auf Robert usw. mit den Augen deutend.*
Witte: Ah, das sein keine Leut', das sein Künstler...³⁰⁶

There are of course rules that must be followed in these "Liebelei" relationships, such as Robert and Ninette's, which can only function if neither party shows any concern for either the future or the past:

Leo: Nun, ich glaube, daß man mit einer Dirne, die viel erlebt und doch eigentlich nichts zu vergessen hat, glücklicher sein muß, als mit einer deiner keuschen Gefallenen, deren Herz noch von ihrer letzten Enttäuschung blutet!...
Robert: Was seid ihr für Grübler, ihr beide! Im Augenblicke, wo ein Weib mein ist, gibt es keine Vergangenheit für sie wie für mich!
Fedor: Hat Ninette jemals geliebt?
Robert: Ich frage sie nicht darum.³⁰⁷

As Witte explains to Fedor, "Ich bitte dich, diese Liebeleien lassen einen ja doch nie zum richtigen Ernst kommen."³⁰⁸ These are, for Witte, not women that one can marry, and so it is better to enjoy one's adventures on a purely superficial level, before returning to the more respectable world of bourgeois morality and marriage.³⁰⁹

It is Witte's affair with Fanny that makes any future for her and Fedor impossible. Fedor, who is described as nervous and reserved, in contrast with his peers, is an artistic and idealistic young man.³¹⁰ As his friend Robert points out, Fedor tends toward the depressive:

³⁰⁶ *ibid.* 217.

³⁰⁷ *ibid.* 224.

³⁰⁸ *ibid.* 236.

³⁰⁹ *ibid.* 238.

³¹⁰ *ibid.* 191.

“Du hast dir wieder einen Kummer anphilosophiert.”³¹¹ It is made clear from the beginning that Fedor and Fanny have feelings for one another:

Klara: Er spricht ja immer von dir!

Fanny: So! Wirklich? – Was hat er denn gesagt...?

Klara: Ach, allerlei. – Er hat entschieden eine Schwärmerei für dich.

Fanny: Ich weiß.

Klara: Er hat dir’s wohl schon gesagt?

Fanny: Muß man das denn sagen...?³¹²

It is also clear from his opinion of her role, however, that Fedor has no idea of Fanny’s past:

Fedor: Nun, ich glaube – in diese Person, die Sie da geben sollen, da können Sie doch nicht so ganz hinein –

Fanny: Glauben Sie – ?

Fedor: Ich bin ja überzeugt, Sie werden es treffen – aber eigentlich liegt Ihnen – das Fach doch recht ferne – .³¹³

Not knowing that her play’s subject matter is not so very different from Fanny’s own experiences, having been involved with the upper class Witte, Fedor is thus free to agree with his friends’ ideals of a new treatment of women in society. These ideals are placed in direct contrast with Wandel’s, who feels that the young artists’ new ideas are untenable: “O, mit Worten, die kein Mensch versteht, sind sie sehr groß, die Neuen!”³¹⁴ As Robert points out, however, Wandel need not fear for the immediate future, because any movement toward change in society is being held back by those that he calls the “Übergänglinge:” “Die Männer, die schon das Wahre ahnen, aber selbst eigentlich den Mut ihrer Überzeugungen nicht haben – Männer, die sich in ihren tieferen Anschauungen schon als neue Menschen

³¹¹ *ibid.* 242. See also 214.

³¹² *ibid.* 200.

³¹³ *ibid.* 206.

³¹⁴ *ibid.* 209.

fühlen, die aber mit ihrem äußeren Wesen noch unter den alten stehen.”³¹⁵ While this comment is not intended for Fedor, it soon turns out to be an accurate description of him.

Fedor first discovers Fanny’s problematic past when conversation among his friends turns to Witte:

Robert *sinnend*: Es ist doch merkwürdig...
Fedor: Was?
Robert *Fanny betrachtend*: Wenn man dieses Mädel ansieht –
Fedor: Was?
Robert: Nun, sie soll ja... mit ihm... sehr gut gewesen sein...
Leo: Ja, es war die Rede davon.³¹⁶

Fedor’s reactions to the revelation that Fanny and Witte were lovers switch back and forth between disbelief and dismissal, in an attempt to ameliorate his own shock at this increasingly negative speculation about Fanny’s past:

Fedor *spielt den Ruhigen*: Ich glaube im übrigen nicht daran.
Robert: Im übrigen – so ein Gerücht entsteht bald – auch Fanny war einmal verlobt!
Fedor: Verlobt – ?
Robert: Man sagt ja – mit Doktor Witte.
Leo: O nein, das war ein anderer; der dann ebenso urplötzlich aus dem Kreis verschwand wie Doktor Witte.³¹⁷

In a scene reminiscent of Georg seeking information from Walter in *Spielkinder*, Fedor’s perception is shaped here by a discussion among men about a woman, underlining the importance of such information being kept in check and strictly in the realm of masculine control. Fedor struggles against his old-fashioned, jealous reaction to the news, trying to redeem himself in his friends’ eyes by espousing the more progressive ideals they share,

³¹⁵ *ibid.* 209.

³¹⁶ *ibid.* 214.

³¹⁷ *ibid.* 215.

expounding upon them in some of the work's longest statements up to this point, and criticizing their negative attitude about the girl:

Nun ja, im Ton lag es... die gewisse banale Verachtung für das Mädchen mit dem zweifelhaften Ruf. – Noch immer, in irgendeinem Winkel unsres Verstandes kauern diese alten, sterbensmüden Ideen... nur ein Hauch braucht uns anzuwehen aus dieser kindischen Welt, die wir ja alle verachten – und schon regt es sich wieder in diesem Winkel... und diese alten Ideen werden wieder frech und lebendig und jung...³¹⁸

When Fanny comes under attack for accepting a role which depicts a woman of “loose” morals, Fedor defends her, claiming to be opposed to any hypocrisy that tries to hide the truth of women's situation: “lieber Herr Wandel, [wir sind] über alles, was Brutalität und Vorurteil ist [...] Nur die Schablone hasse ich und die alten Vorurteile!”³¹⁹ In a damning indictment of the bourgeois creation and subsequent condemnation of the “Gefallene,” Fedor highlights the injustice of society's expectations of women: “Denn wir haben kein Recht, Unnatürliches zu fordern und für Natürliches zu strafen. Und ich finde es höchst anmaßend von der Gesellschaft, ein Weib einfach darum, weil es wahr und natürlich liebte, mit gedankenloser Verachtung aus ihrem Kreise auszuschließen.”³²⁰ Fedor thus makes every appearance of wanting freedom from bourgeois morality and norms,³²¹ and, in doing so, instills hope for their future in Fanny.

Upon consideration, however, Fedor discovers that he cannot yet break from his bourgeois mentality after all: “Ich bin nicht mehr fertig, nicht mehr groß – ich bin wie die

³¹⁸ *ibid.* 215.

³¹⁹ *ibid.* 219.

³²⁰ *ibid.* 219.

³²¹ *ibid.* 222.

andern alle.”³²² In the second act it has been a week since his last contact with Fanny, and his friend Leo advises him not to return to the Therens’.³²³ As Leo puts it, “man [soll] in eine solche im Niedergang befindliche Familie nicht hineinheiraten.”³²⁴ Nor should Fedor have an affair with Fanny, and ruin her even further.³²⁵ Fedor is not quite ready to admit that there is no hope at this point. When Witte unexpectedly visits him, however, the relationship’s fate is sealed. Fedor takes the opportunity to question Witte, without naming Fanny, but hoping to uncover some knowledge that would redeem her in his eyes:

Fedor: Aber sage, wenn du so nachdenkst – unter allen deinen Erlebnisse – kein einziges wäre einer tieferen Erinnerung wert...?
 Witte: Ach, viele sogar... Es ist ja voll Anmut, wenn man so zurückdenkt – warum sollte man’s nicht gerne tun?
 Fedor: Nun ja – aber ich meine, ob unter allen diesen besseren Geschöpfen keine... völlig... nach unseren Moralbegriffen nun einmal völlig gut war...
 Witte: Ach, was fällt dir ein! [...]
 Fedor *bitter*: Also... anständig warst du eigentlich immer...
 Witte: Gewiß... du denkst doch nicht im Ernst, daß ich so was tun würde – ?
 Fedor *springt auf*: Du... du... redest nicht die Wahrheit! [...] Du hast nie ein Mädchen verführt – ?
 Witte: Nein, nein!... Was ist dir denn – ?³²⁶

The bourgeois image of the fallen woman is that she is guilty, or at least complicit, in her own downfall. In his attempts to find an indication of Witte’s guilt, Fedor tries to make Fanny an exception to this rule. If Witte felt ashamed by his own conduct in the affair, Fedor might possibly be able to save face, by being able to blame Witte’s machinations, and attempt to elevate Fanny from the role of complicit sinner. Fedor himself would thus be able

³²² *ibid.* 227.

³²³ *ibid.* 229.

³²⁴ *ibid.* 230.

³²⁵ *ibid.* 230.

³²⁶ *ibid.* 239.

to feel more self-righteous, by being the one to save Fanny from another malicious, less scrupulous man. Because this is not the case, as Leo says, Fedor would be bound to leave Fanny eventually.³²⁷ Fedor comes to accept the truth of this, in imagining a meeting with Witte and his new bride:

Er, Arm in Arm mit seiner Frau, begegnet mir mit ihr... Kennst du dieses Lächeln, das um unsere Lippen zuckt, wenn wir einem Weibe begegnen, das uns einmal gehört hat [...] Und wir sehen sie dann am Arme eines anderen, der sie anzubeten scheint [...] Um seinem Mund würd' ich es spielen sehen, auch wenn es seine Lippen nicht bewegte – und hinter seiner Stirne würd' ich mit einem Male alle jene Erinnerungen steigen sehen, die er mit mir teilt – ah!....³²⁸

Marrying Fanny would make Fedor look ridiculous.³²⁹ The convention in which men have affairs is thus for Fedor only really about the men involved, and the fact that they can enjoy a certain prestige, and power or possession over the women long after the relationship is over. Having to share any part of his possession of Fanny with another man would be impossible for Fedor, in spite of his idealism and his affection for her. Fedor is also troubled by Fanny's past because he cannot control it, or its part in her memory. Fedor imagines a scene that may have played out in the past: "Ich sehe [Witte] noch vor mir, wie er, der liebe freund des Hauses, sich hier *Auf den Schaukelstuhl deutend* vornehm wiegte, eine Zigarette rauchend. Fanny stand ans Fenster gelehnt, die Mutter strickte!"³³⁰ In this case, then, it is a woman who has presumed to make decisions, about her body and her sexuality, as well as about her career, who must be excluded from bourgeois society in order for it to continue unharmed.

³²⁷ *ibid.* 230.

³²⁸ *ibid.* 255.

³²⁹ *ibid.* 254.

³³⁰ *ibid.* 254.

Actresses and New Women

As daughters of middle or lower middle class families, Fanny and Antonie's roles in society should have been clear. As Deborah Gorham puts it: "The image of the ideal middle-class daughter was that of the sheltered flower, a creature whose role in the home was to adorn it and assist in its maintenance."³³¹ Within the "cult of domesticity,"³³² women were supposed to be centered in the home, creating a space in which men could recuperate from their time in the outside world. The character traits that would be suited to such a life accordingly played a key part in the popular image of the nature of woman:

The ideal woman was willing to be dependent on men and submissive to them, and she would have a preference for a life restricted to the confines of the home. She would be innocent, pure, gentle and self-sacrificing. Possessing no ambitious strivings, she would be free of any trace of anger or hostility. More emotional than man, she was also more capable of self-renunciation.³³³

Confined to this role, a woman could only enjoy status or achievement vicariously, through the man she thus supported.³³⁴ The incentives for women to comply with the role expected of them were two-fold. On the one hand, the role of woman as safe haven for man was elevated, and seemingly very reasonably explained as an appeal only to the "natural" feminine character and needs. On the other hand, it was made clear that any deviation from this role would lead to both physical and social disadvantage and punishment. As Gorham puts it:

The Victorians frequently spoke of the way in which males were "hardened" by their exposure to the rough and tumble of the outside world, but they also believed that, should a woman be so exposed, she too would be hardened. Thus, women were told that they must remain within the domestic sphere both because their

³³¹ Deborah Gorham, *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1982) 11.

³³² *ibid.* 4.

³³³ *ibid.* 4.

³³⁴ *ibid.* 8.

duties were to be performed there, and because contact with the wider world would damage their ability to perform those duties.³³⁵

The all-important social sensibilities of the bourgeoisie were threatened by “unnatural” women, who wished to deviate from the norms of behavior or attitude, and society was thus intolerant of any woman who broke with tradition, especially if that entailed working: “Indeed no middle-class girl or woman could raise her own status through effort in the world of work, because earning money, for a girl or woman, meant loss of caste.”³³⁶

The fact that some women simply had to work in order to survive was an extremely problematic issue at the turn of the last century. As Franzoi puts it, the question of work brought women from the private arena to which they were confined into the public sphere, where only men were supposed to feature:

Women were a public question that entered the political arena with all the moral and religious fervor that policymakers could bring to bear. Industrially employed women challenged and outraged social order at an elemental level. Working women outside the home evoked a cry of danger that converted the personal into the political sphere, private concerns into public issues, and domestic life into civic responsibility.³³⁷

Actresses as working women were thus especially open to attack due to the nature of the work they undertook, because they not only crossed the boundary of the domestic realm, but also stepped into the public realm of the theatre. As Tracy C. Davis puts it:

No matter how consummate the artist, pre-eminent the favorite, and modest the woman, the actress could not supersede the fact that she lived a public life and consented to be “hired” for amusement by all who could command the price. For a large section of society, the similarities between the actress’s life and the

³³⁵ *ibid.* 6.

³³⁶ *ibid.* 8. See also Vivien Gardner and Susan Rutherford, *The New Woman and her Sisters* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1992) “Simply by working they were transgressing the social boundaries that required middle-class women to be dependent on either father, husband or brother.” 3.

³³⁷ Franzoi, *Rent* 60.

prostitute's or *demi-mondaine*'s were unforgettable and overruled all other evidence about respectability.³³⁸

As Mary Poovey argues: “variously public and impure women serve as unsettling reminders of an aggressive female sexuality that the dominant culture sought to disavow and suppress, since it upset the structuring binary opposition between masculinity and a sexless, maternal femininity.”³³⁹ Women who rebelled against their traditional roles with their minds and intellects, as well as with their bodies, were more troubling to society than the prostitute or femme fatale, because they exerted a control and authority in their own lives that bourgeois women were not supposed to have access to. As Davis puts it: “Actresses were symbols of women’s self-sufficiency and independence.”³⁴⁰

The danger of deviating from the bourgeois ideal of femininity in this way is shown in Schnitzler’s depiction of Agathe, career actress and theatre mentor to Fanny. Agathe is happy to advise and help Fanny in her career, because she reminds her of herself, as the stage directions indicate: “[Agathe] hat für Fanny Theren eine ausgesprochene Sympathie, in der, ihr selbst kaum bewußt, die Erinnerung an ihre eigene Jugend liegt.”³⁴¹ Agathe encourages Fanny to do everything possible to further her career, assuring her that leaving her family will be worth the sacrifice:

Agathe: Ach Gott, liebes Kind, wenn man bei der Bühne ist, darf man sich aus diesen Geschichten nichts machen! ... Heimweh! ... Ich bin gleich hinaus, kaum aus der Theaterschule weg – und es hat mir nicht geschadet.

Fanny: Aber Sie sind froh, daß Sie heute wieder da sind?

Agathe: Nun ja, aber es würde mir gar nichts dranliegen, wieder hinauszukommen.

³³⁸ Tracy C. Davis, *Actresses as Working Women* (New York: Routledge, 1991) 69.

³³⁹ See Amanda Anderson, *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1993) 13.

³⁴⁰ Davis, *Actresses* 69.

³⁴¹ Schnitzler, *Märchen* 192.

Man lernt so viel kennen, Dinge und Menschen ... und so
Verschiedenes...³⁴²

The implications of this knowledge are clear, and come to the fore when Agathe offers to lend Fanny her jewelry, because the cleaning woman Fanny is playing receives diamonds from her aristocratic lover.³⁴³ Wandel is concerned that this will enhance the public's impression that Fanny is a fallen woman, because the same is true of Agathe's reputation. As Emmi points out, the common perception of actresses is that they will sell themselves physically in exchange for gifts from their suitors. Emmi even goes so far as to explain how she already arranges such gifts: "O, ohne Visitenkarte können Sie mir schicken, was Sie wollen; der Dienstmann muß aber nur schnell davon – sonst muß ich's ihm ja zurückgeben."³⁴⁴ Wandel is concerned that the same kind of behaviour will be linked with Fanny, if she appears on stage with lavish jewelry:

Wandel: Nicht wahr, die Brillanten, welche Ihr Fräulein Schwester als Albine im dritten Akt trägt, gehören Fräulein Müller – ?

Klara: Gewiß! –

Wandel: Nun ja, Sie wissen das, und ich und ihre Mama und Fanny und noch zehn Leute! Glauben Sie aber, daß man es unterlassen hat, Bemerkungen darüber zu machen? Ich bitte Sie, kann man das auf den Theaterzettel drucken: "Die Brillanten sind von Fräulein Agathe Müller beigestellt"? [...] erklären Sie die Geschichte von den Brillanten anderen Leuten, beispielsweise meinem Onkel. – Es ist immer wahrscheinlicher, daß man Brillanten von einem Fürsten geschenkt als von einer Kollegin geliehen bekommt.³⁴⁵

³⁴² *ibid.* 194.

³⁴³ *ibid.* 193.

³⁴⁴ *ibid.* 256. See also 204. As Helena Michie also writes in her discussion of nineteenth-century English literature: "Walter, the narrator-hero of *My Secret Life*, sums up Victorian attitudes with a series of displacement; he reaches a turning point in his sexual knowledge when he has 'learnt enough... to know that among men of his class the term lacemaker, along with actress and seamstress, was virtually synonymous with prostitute.'" Michie, *Flesh* 67.

³⁴⁵ Schnitzler, *Märchen* 261.

Already having compromised her virtue and respectability by becoming an actress, Fanny becomes an even less desirable sister-in-law for Wandel, because, in his mind, she will now be viewed as Agathe is by all bourgeois society.

There is little about Fanny's character that Wandel would indeed find desirable. In contrast to the description of Fedor, which is only about his attitudes and emotional motivation,³⁴⁶ Fanny is described in terms of her physical appearance: "Mittelgroß, schlank, biegsam, große, dunkle Augen. Viel natürliche Grazie der Bewegungen, in denen nur zuweilen etwas Fahriges und Unfertiges liegt. Ein Gesicht voll Munterkeit und Jugend; um die Lippen nur, wenn sie zornig wird, ein etwas frecher Zug."³⁴⁷ Her youthful and lively characteristics, and her tendency toward insolence, do not comply with the traditional image of the ideal young woman. While her sister Klara has chosen the more demure profession of giving piano lessons in the homes of her students, thus demonstrating her ladylike musical talent, and remaining securely within the domestic sphere, Fanny's chosen career is far more problematic. Fanny began work in the theatre at the age of seventeen,³⁴⁸ and is, by all accounts, a talented actress. As Agathe says: "O, Sie mit Ihrem Talent! – Nein, nein, wirklich! Unter unseren Jüngeren sind Sie weitaus die Begabteste! Es ist sehr vernünftig vom Direktor, daß er Sie in einer größeren Rolle hinausstellt!"³⁴⁹ Fanny's attitude toward her work is not entirely positive, however, and stands in stark contrast with Emmi's naïve impressions of the life of an actress: "Man ist eigentlich eine Sklavin. – Denken Sie doch... wegen ein paar Gulden mehr – und man soll gleich hinaus in die Welt! [...] Ach, glaub' mir,

³⁴⁶ *ibid.* 191.

³⁴⁷ *ibid.* 192.

³⁴⁸ *ibid.* 203.

³⁴⁹ *ibid.* 194.

die Bühne – es ist nicht so schön, als man sich's vorstellt!"³⁵⁰ In Frau Theren's view, Fanny should have married and spared herself the effort of having to work.³⁵¹ A difference is also depicted between the value of the work that Klara and Fanny do:

Frau Theren: [Klara] hat jetzt so viel zu tun... Heute nachmittags hat sie gar drei Stunden zu geben.

Wandel: Das ist wirklich schauerlich... Sich so plagen zu müssen!

Fanny: Ich plag' mich auch.

Wandel: Nun ja; aber da gibt es doch wenigstens einen Erfolg!³⁵²

Fanny's work as an actress is seen as unnecessary, frivolous, or even selfish, as it is not what bourgeois society expects nor wants of its daughters. While Klara does transgress norms by working, she addresses the need to do so in the most socially acceptable way. As Franzoi argues, women could undertake "safe" professions, such as that of a music teacher, because they were close enough to the ideal role to be palatable to bourgeois sensibilities: "Women were virtually caught in the middle of a recurrent dilemma which required handling economic need and family responsibilities simultaneously. Women attempted to integrate the two by bringing paid labor into as closely as possible into coincidence with their domestic role."³⁵³

Fanny's attitude toward her sister Klara is remarkable. Fanny is under no illusion as to how she is viewed by respectable society: "Ich bin ja so ein Mädel, mit dem es zu nichts führen darf [...] Nicht wahr? – Ich bin kein Mädel, das man heiratet?"³⁵⁴ Far from being jealous that Klara has finally become engaged, however, Fanny is instead extremely critical:

³⁵⁰ *ibid.* 195, 203.

³⁵¹ *ibid.* 195.

³⁵² *ibid.* 197.

³⁵³ Franzoi, *Rent* 3.

³⁵⁴ Schnitzler, *Märchen* 200.

“Und du meinst vielleicht, das ist etwas so besonders Anständiges, wenn du diesen Narren heiratest, diesen Wandel, der dir ja eigentlich zuwider ist! [...] du kommst mir gar nicht so besonders groß vor – seit du dich *dazu* entschlossen!”³⁵⁵ Fanny’s attitude not only highlights the hypocrisy of Klara “selling” herself in marriage to a man she does not love. Her denial of marriage as an ideal also negates the allegedly natural role of woman as a wife, placing emphasis instead on personal and emotional satisfaction. As Fanny says: “Nun, ist das gerade ein so großes Glück, eine brave Hausfrau zu werden?... Unermeßlich geliebt werden, ist das nicht besser... schöner?”³⁵⁶

A refusal to sacrifice her own happiness was one of the key characteristics of the popular image of the New Woman in fin-de-siècle bourgeois society. Mary Louise Roberts places this characterization in the wider context of shifting perspectives on the subject at the time: “Linked with the twentieth century cult of personality, which swung attention away from moral qualities such as sacrifice, and self-denial, and emphasized instead self-development and self-fulfillment, the New Woman wanted a life of her own beyond traditional domesticity.”³⁵⁷ As with the image of the prostitute or the femme fatale, the New Woman’s character was apparently clearly defined by scholarship at the time:

She is dark; and one feels that if she were fair she would be quite a different person. For fairness usually goes with an interest in children, and other gentle weaknesses of which Novissima is conspicuously innocent [...] Prettiness is one of her pet aversions. Novissima is, by the way, not pretty. She is white. Pink girls call her sallow. She has a long face, with a discontented mouth, and a nose indicative of intelligence, and too large for feminine beauty as understood by men.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁵ *ibid.* 201, 267.

³⁵⁶ *ibid.* 223.

³⁵⁷ Mary Louise Roberts, *Disruptive Acts* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2002) 21.

³⁵⁸ H. S. Scott and E. B. Hall, “Character Note: the New Woman” in Ann Heilmann, *The New Woman and Female Independence* (London: Routledge / Thoemmes Press, 1998) 365-368. 365.

It was her unfeminine appearance and attitude that made the New Woman stand out from her contemporaries, as Roberts puts it: “The New Woman [...] continued to look, as well as to act, like a man. In 1897, the German critic Max Nordau described her as ‘a hybrid figure, wearing pants, walking in the streets with her hands in her pockets and a cigarette on her lips.’”³⁵⁹ Other such critics painted a picture of an “unsexed, terrifying, violent Amazon ready to overturn the world.”³⁶⁰ Revulsion at these unnatural New Women took a moralizing tone, when the women themselves were blamed for their behaviour: “They ought to feel they have fallen short of the healthy instincts of their kind, instead of posing as in some sense the cream of the universe, on the strength of what is really a functional aberration.”³⁶¹ When the commentator felt that the disproportionate number of single women in Europe at the time was the cause of women having to seek work, their attitudes were also based on pity:

Deprived of the “natural duties and labours of wives and mothers,” [odd women] had to “carve out artificial and painfully-sought occupations for themselves;” and, overall, instead of fulfilling women’s destiny by “completing, sweetening and embellishing the existence of others,” they were compelled to “lead an independent and incomplete existence of their own.”³⁶²

It was not only morality that was used to discredit the New Woman, however, as Showalter goes on to point out: “As women sought opportunities for self-development outside of marriage, medicine and science warned that such ambitions would lead to sickness,

³⁵⁹ Roberts, *Acts* 26.

³⁶⁰ Talia Schaffer, “‘Nothing but Foolscap and Ink’: Inventing the New Woman” in Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, eds. *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) 39-52. 39.

³⁶¹ Grant Allen, quoted in Ann Ardis, *New Women, New Novels* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1990) 23.

³⁶² William R. Greg was a journalist in England in the 1860s. Quoted in Elaine Showalter, *Sexual Anarchy* (New York: Viking, 1990) 19.

freakishness, sterility, and racial degeneration.”³⁶³ Those women who found themselves under attack in journals and newspapers also defended themselves in essay form. Hulda Friederichs described the situation the New Woman was placed in by criticism in society: “Is there in all this world a creature that has been slandered like her? Slandered, ridiculed, calumniated, scorned, mocked, caricatured, and abused, till you can hurl no more insulting epithet at any girl or woman than to call her a New Woman.”³⁶⁴ When New Women were defended in literary portrayals, their characteristics were as positive as were the negative traits of the figures created by their opponents: “Not only was the New Woman cast as a lady; her values, too, were feminized, with traits like courage, self-respect, knowledge, education, independence, intellect, strength of body and mind, self-determination, and sense of purpose being linked to the traditional feminine attributes of domesticity, motherliness, gentleness and purity.”³⁶⁵ As Lyn Pykett points out, the effect of this contradictory discourse on the nature of the New Woman was to create a nebulous mixture of images:

“New Woman,” both in fiction and in fact, was (and remains) a shifting and contested term. [...] The New Woman was by turns: a mannish amazon and a Womanly woman; she was oversexed, undersexed, or same sex identified; she was anti-maternal, or a racial supermother; she was male-identified, or man-hating and/or man-eating, or self-appointed saviour of benighted masculinity; she was anti-domestic, or she sought to make domestic values prevail; she was radical, socialist or revolutionary, or she was reactionary and conservative; she was the agent of social and/or racial degeneration, or symptom and agent of decline.³⁶⁶

³⁶³ *ibid.* 39.

³⁶⁴ Hulda Friederichs “The ‘Old’ Woman and the ‘New’” in Ann Heilmann, *The New Woman and Female Independence* (London: Routledge / Thoemmes Press, 1998) 202-276. 202.

³⁶⁵ Ann Heilmann, *The New Woman and Female Independence* (London: Routledge / Thoemmes Press, 1998) xvi.

³⁶⁶ Lyn Pykett, “Foreword” in Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, eds. *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) xi.

As Heilmann puts it: “At a time of social, cultural and political upheaval, the New Woman epitomized the anxieties but also the hopes of the fin de siècle.”³⁶⁷ The anxiety awoken by the New Woman was both far-reaching and deep-seated by the 1890s. The New Woman was “immediately identifiable but somehow unknown,”³⁶⁸ which rendered any threat she posed appear disproportionately serious. While nowadays the danger of a woman who affects “emancipated habits, like smoking, riding a bicycle, using bold language and taking the omnibus or train unescorted”³⁶⁹ appears ridiculous, such behavior was seen at the time as subversive, and the suspicion of even worse behavior was quick to follow. As Schaffer says: “Today, ‘New Woman’ has a positive sense; in the 1890s, however, it generally referred to an exaggerated, parodic, grotesque version of feminism.”³⁷⁰

By challenging the supposedly natural role of women, New Women also immediately brought the nature of man into question. As Ardis puts it: “Indeed, for her transgressions against [...] sex, gender, and class distinctions [...], she was accused of instigating the second fall of man.”³⁷¹ The New Woman’s attitude about men, and their role in society, was her most dangerous trait:

“masculinity” as the concept embracing the social, political and sexual behaviour of men, was what upheld the patriarchal hegemony against which the New Woman was rebelling. Her attack – in the 1890s at least – on the social and domestic constructs of marriage, the family, sexuality, constituted a subversion of the male power-base so fundamental as to produce [...] a “crisis of masculinity.”³⁷²

³⁶⁷ Ann Heilmann, *Marriage and Motherhood* (London: Routledge/Thoemmes Press, 1998) ix.

³⁶⁸ Gardner, *New* 3.

³⁶⁹ *ibid.* 4.

³⁷⁰ Schaffer, *Nothing* 49.

³⁷¹ Ardis, *New* 1.

³⁷² Gail Cunningham “‘He-Notes’: Reconstructing Masculinity” in Angelique Richardson and Chris Willis, eds. *The New Woman in Fiction and in Fact* (New York: Palgrave, 2001) 94-106. 94.

Because of her links with questions of gender and sexuality, the New Woman was placed in the same kind of social category as the homosexual or the decadent, two of the other most subversive threats to bourgeois identity, as Linda Dowling points out: “The New Woman [...] was perceived to have ranged herself perversely with the forces of cultural anarchism and decay precisely because she wanted to reinterpret the sexual relationship.”³⁷³

The bourgeois characters of *Heinrich Schön jun.* would not use the term New Woman about Antonie, set as the work is in the mid-nineteenth century, but she certainly bears the marks of the New Woman discourse in Hermann’s contemporary society. While she does not comply with the image of the brash, manly or exaggeratedly feminist New Woman, Antonie is described in stark contrast to the blond and beautiful Hannchen. It is her intellectual and willful character that is more in line with many depictions of the New Woman, however. The male characters of the work are impressed by her dignity, her charm and her demure nature. Despite her youth, Antonie has “[eine] Gelassenheit, die ihren Jahren alle Ehre machte.”³⁷⁴ Upon entering her new home, she shows none of the inappropriate enthusiasm that might be expected of a more impressionable young woman: “Eine andere hätte vielleicht übermäßige Freude und Entzücken zur Schau getreten [...] Aber die junge Person hier war eine von denen, denen man nichts schenken konnte und die selbst die reichste Gabe immer noch durch das Geschenk überbot, daß sie sie annahm.”³⁷⁵ Antonie is not unaware of her charms,

³⁷³ Linda Dowling, “The Decadent and the New Woman in the 1890s” in Lyn Pykett, *Reading Fin de Siècle Fictions* (New York: Longman, 1996) 47-63. 52. See also Showalter: “Unlike the odd woman, celibate, sexually repressed, and easily pitied or patronized as the flotsam and jetsam of the matrimonial tide, the sexually independent New Woman criticized society’s insistence on marriage as a woman’s only option for a fulfilling life.” Showalter, *Anarchy* 38

³⁷⁴ Hermann, *Heinrich* 74. See also *ibid.* 75.

³⁷⁵ *ibid.* 77.

however: “Sie wußte Männer zu beschäftigen.”³⁷⁶ Antonie is able to control Heinrich and Eduard, and she does so from her very arrival in Potsdam:

die beiden standen vor dem Wagen [...] Das junge zierliche Wesen [...] legte jedem, Vater und Sohn [...] rechts wie links, ganz zart und weich und doch für einen Mann fühlbar bis in die letzten Winkel, eine ihrer kleinen Händchen auf die Schulter und verweilte so einen ganz kurzen Augenblick – kaum einen Bruchteil einer Sekunde – und doch lange genug, um gleichsam damit anzukündigen, daß sie von diesen beiden nunmehr Besitz ergriffe...³⁷⁷

It is Antonie’s strength of character and self-possession that make Hannchen pale in comparison to her, and lead Heinrich to lose interest in his fiancée:

alles Gefühl [Hannchen] gegenüber, [die] da am Fenster in der Sonne saß, war im Augenblick erstorben, starr, eisig, gleichgültig geworden, zu tiefer Fremdheit gewandelt. Er wußte selbst nicht, wie das zuging, [...] je mehr er dieses weiße Stück Leben an sich preßte, desto schmerzhafter schien es ihm, daß es von sich selbst nichts wußte, ohne Stimme, Ton und Gesang war, daß nichts vermochte, ihm seine eigenen Klänge zu entlocken...³⁷⁸

While Hannchen reads lowbrow literature, Antonie reads Goethe and Schiller.³⁷⁹ Heinrich arranges Antonie’s library for her before she arrives in the house, and the two bond over their shared interest in literature and philosophy.³⁸⁰ They also share a similar sense of humour, so that they frequently enjoy private jokes that exclude the other characters, and especially Eduard.³⁸¹ Antonie misses the opportunity to attend lectures in Berlin,³⁸² and regrets that her education had to be cut short: “‘Ach Gott,’ verteidigte sich Frau Antonie, ‘es ist ja nicht der

³⁷⁶ *ibid.* 78.

³⁷⁷ *ibid.* 69.

³⁷⁸ *ibid.* 134, 175.

³⁷⁹ *ibid.* 94, 104.

³⁸⁰ *ibid.* 105, 309.

³⁸¹ *ibid.* 73, 110, 171, 216.

³⁸² *ibid.* 282.

Rede wert, was ich gelernt habe; aber interessiert hat es mich schon. Ich hätte es nicht aufgeben sollen – schade!”³⁸³ Her educational aspirations were influenced by Jason Gebert, from Hermann’s other novel *Jettchen Gebert*: “Er hat eigentlich, wenn ich so sagen darf, meine allerersten Gehversuche als Mensch überwacht.”³⁸⁴ It is the fact that Antonie is a “Mensch” that sets her apart from good, bourgeois women such as Hannchen: “Wenn es eine Puppe wäre, ein schönes Stück Fleisch – aber es war doch ein Mensch mit Sinnen und Leben und Fühlen – seltsam und tief, wie ein Stück Kunst... O ja, sie war schon jemand!”³⁸⁵ Because Antonie is fully formed in this way, Heinrich is able to love her body and her mind, rather than simply admiring Hannchen’s superior beauty.³⁸⁶ It is thus through Antonie’s strong will and her active, rather than passive, behaviour and engagement in the world that makes her stand out in this bourgeois setting. When she is bored with Eduard’s conversation, she stops him and changes the subject.³⁸⁷ Soon after her arrival, Antonie surprises Heinrich by frankly discussing his animosity toward her, and by demanding that they must be friends.³⁸⁸ Antonie does not play according to the rules of social gatherings either, and makes Hannchen’s conventional parents uncomfortable: “sie hatten die Rechnung ohne Frau Antonie gemacht [...] Sie kehrte den Spieß um: sie *wurde* nicht empfangen, sie *empfangt*.”³⁸⁹

³⁸³ *ibid.* 206.

³⁸⁴ *ibid.* 218.

³⁸⁵ *ibid.* 100. See also 104.

³⁸⁶ *ibid.* 239.

³⁸⁷ *ibid.* 91, 92, 299.

³⁸⁸ *ibid.* 114.

³⁸⁹ *ibid.* 147.

She is not concerned about whether their servants can hear her conversation,³⁹⁰ nor does she keep her opinions to herself in company, dismissing Hannchen's wedding plans,³⁹¹ and offending Hannchen's parents once again by refusing an invitation to join a church group: "Frau Rätin war auf ihrem Stuhl noch etwas steifer geworden. Der Herr Rat hatte seine Verbindlichkeit um eine Nuance zurückgeschraubt. Es entstand eine Pause. [...] Eduard Schön war zusammengezuckt: – das war deutlich!"³⁹² Antonie's most shocking *faux pas* is announcing that prostitutes should be pitied rather than reviled: "man soll eigentlich über so etwas scherzen – so wenig, wie man über jemand lacht, der im Krieg zum Krüppel geschossen wurde. Das sind ja auch nur welche, die im Lebenskrieg zu Krüppeln geschossen worden sind."³⁹³ Hannchen's parents do not want to discuss such topics in front of their "innocent" child, despite the fact that Antonie is only one year her senior.³⁹⁴ They share a negative view of Antonie, and both find her behavior unfit for bourgeois society:

Herr und Frau Rat wechselten wieder einen ihrer verständnisvollen Blicke, an denen ja eine ältere Ehe so reich zu sein pflegt, als Zeichen jener äußeren Übereinstimmung, die an Stelle der inneren gesetzt wird. Eine solche Antwort hätte noch heute Frau Rätin ihrem Gatten gegenüber nicht gewagt. [...] Frau Geheimrat stellte mit schmerz erfüllter Befriedigung fest, daß es der jungen Frau schwer an Demut fehle... "Was aber wäre alle Klugheit ohne Demut?!"³⁹⁵

While Heinrich is impressed by Antonie's strong character, Eduard is patronizing: "Ich hör dich so gern reden, Antonie," meinte Eduard Schön freundlich. 'Du mußt aber deswegen

³⁹⁰ *ibid.* 97.

³⁹¹ *ibid.* 149.

³⁹² *ibid.* 148.

³⁹³ *ibid.* 180.

³⁹⁴ *ibid.* 180.

³⁹⁵ *ibid.* 219, 289.

nicht glauben, daß ich deiner Meinung bin. Man kann auch eine schlechte Sache gut verteidigen, mein kleiner Advokat... Na, nun sind wir ja bald zu Hause, da um die Ecke. Würdest du denn hier schon allein finden, Dummchen?“³⁹⁶ In Eduard's opinion, all Antonie need do is look pretty and run the household,³⁹⁷ and he hopes that she will be happy, but Antonie's view of her life is markedly different: “sie dachte [...] daran, wie seltsam und heimatlos doch das Leben einer Frau ist, die ihr Zuhause plötzlich mit einem anderen wechsele – wie ein Vogel, der von dem Käfig in jenen gesetzt wird.”³⁹⁸ Antonie does not protest openly about her transfer from one such cage to another, but when her parents visit, Heinrich is able to interpret their words as he imagines she would herself:

Heinrich [...] wiederholte sich langsam das, was die Stimme [der Mutter] in Wahrheit gesagt hatte: “Aber Antonie, man muß doch immer die Dinge nehmen, nicht wie sie sind, sondern wie sie sein sollten... Du brauchst gar nicht böse mit uns zu sein; es ging doch nu mal nicht anders. Wirklich, wir haben nur dein und unser Bestes gewollt. Was haben wir für dich schon alles im Leben getan, – nicht wahr?...“³⁹⁹

The marriage has taken its toll on Antonie by this stage, and she feels she has to pretend to be happy: “Sie war keineswegs so freimütig und unbefangen mehr wie einst. Ihre Augen waren noch größer und erstaunter geworden, hatten ewig eine Frage auf ihrem Grunde. Alles an ihr war *noch* eine Nuance zierlicher, morbider und betörender geworden. Ihr Lächeln *noch* ein wenig feiner und schwingender.”⁴⁰⁰ It is only when she and Heinrich spend their one, illicit

³⁹⁶ *ibid.* 228.

³⁹⁷ *ibid.* 232.

³⁹⁸ *ibid.* 231.

³⁹⁹ *ibid.* 269.

⁴⁰⁰ *ibid.* 248.

afternoon together that Antonie can drop her pretence and acknowledge her unhappiness: “Was habe ich für Wochen und Monde hinter mir! Und immer lächeln, immer lächeln!”⁴⁰¹

Both Antonie and Fanny thus stand out from the bourgeois norm, encouraging others to think of them as a problematic type, rather than address the failings in the “normal” type that their differences raise. Both characters rebel, however, by first complaining about, and then removing themselves from the society that would categorize and control them.

Absent Women

Writing at the turn of the last century, Ella Hepworth Dixon discussed why women no longer necessarily saw marriage as their highest goal: “No, the reason why women are ceasing to marry must [...] be attributed to a shifting feminine point of view, to a more critical attitude toward their masculine contemporaries.”⁴⁰² Antonie does indeed marry, but she is representative of young women in her situation at the time. As Marion W. Gray writes: “An unmarried middle-class woman was a misfit, yet women often had little choice about their marriages.”⁴⁰³ Antonie is certainly not satisfied with the marriage that was arranged for her, and is unmoved by Eduard’s love for her:

“Weißt du, Heinrich,” sagte Eduard Schön ganz leise und ziemlich unvermittelt, “ich glaube, ein junger Mensch begreift so etwas gar nicht ... ich wenigstens habe es früher nicht gewußt, heute weiß ich es – : das Schönste, was es auf der Welt gibt, ist doch das Lächeln einer Frau.”

Heinrich Schön sah seinen Vater an und fühlte ein Stechen in den Augenwinkeln. Aber die junge Frau schien auf die Worte nicht geachtet zu haben.⁴⁰⁴

⁴⁰¹ *ibid.* 366.

⁴⁰² Ella Hepworth Dixon, “Why Women are Ceasing to Marry” in Ann Heilmann, *The New Woman and Female Independence* (London: Routledge / Thoemmes Press, 1998) 391-396. 391.

⁴⁰³ Marion W. Gray, *Productive Men, Reproductive Women* (New York: Berghahn Books, 2000) 2.

⁴⁰⁴ Hermann, *Heinrich* 87.

Antonie is eager for Heinrich to join her and her husband for meals and afternoon walks, because the older man bores and patronizes her, despite his feeling rejuvenated by her.⁴⁰⁵ Although Heinrich is unsure of her feelings for him, Antonie is certainly drawn to him, if only as the closest alternative to her husband: “[Antonie fand] nur bei Heinrich Gegenliebe.”⁴⁰⁶ Antonie shows physical signs of attraction to Heinrich, although he does not see or become aware of many of them. When Heinrich admits his feelings for her, it is Antonie who prolongs their embrace: “Als Heinrich sich emporrichten wollte, hing sie an seinem Nacken und preßte ihn wieder zu sich herab.”⁴⁰⁷ Antonie is conflicted, however, because she also feels guilty, and sorry for Eduard: “Oh, um sich hätte sie keine Bedenken gehabt, und wenn er sie aus dem Hause gejagt hätte, so wie sie ging und stand, und wenn sie kein Dach überm Kopf hätte haben sollen. Aber der alte Mann!”⁴⁰⁸ Antonie wants individual happiness, as did the stereotypical image of the New Woman, and she feels that it may be possible with Heinrich: “Das soll mein Liebster sein. Das ist mein Liebster. Und wenn es auch Wahnsinn ist, unmöglich – er bleibt es *doch*. Ich bin nicht für Massenschicksale – ich nicht, Antonie Arnstein – ich gehe *meine Wege*.”⁴⁰⁹ Just as Fedor wants information about Fanny’s life, so too does Antonie demand information from Heinrich:

Du, erzähl mir von deiner Mutter, deiner Jugend. Wo warst du, was hast du bisher getan, wie konntest du so lange ohne mich sein? Ich möchte alles von dir wissen, jede Minute deines Lebens, alle Stunden, die du ohne mich warst, alle Menschen,

⁴⁰⁵ *ibid.* 88, 99.

⁴⁰⁶ *ibid.* 170.

⁴⁰⁷ *ibid.* 365.

⁴⁰⁸ *ibid.* 371. See also 302, 370.

⁴⁰⁹ *ibid.* 370.

die dich gern hatten, ich möchte ganz du sein, in all deinen Gedanken leben; es soll nichts in dir sein, an dem ich nicht Anteil habe und von je gehabt habe.⁴¹⁰

Her reversal of traditional gender roles in a relationship is thus complete: whereas Heinrich controlled his role in Hannchen's or Wulkow's life, Antonie places him in the feminine position of uncertainty, in that he does not know how she feels for him, and of providing a relief for her from the outside world, just as the bourgeois wife was imagined to do: "Denk' mal, mit dir kann ich reden, wann *ich* will, und schweigen, wann *ich* will, [...] Wenn ich mit dir bin, bin ich so gut wie allein mit all dem da draußen."⁴¹¹ By demanding knowledge of his life, she also places Heinrich in the feminine role of being pruned open and assessed. Although he admires her as a "kluge Wunderding,"⁴¹² and appreciates that she is far superior to the more traditional bourgeois women around them, Heinrich fails to live up to Antonie's hopes of him. He does not tell her all that she wants to know; in fact, he says little at all in the face of Antonie's outbursts: "Heinrich hatte eigentlich bisher wenig gesprochen. Er hatte das Gefühl eines Mannes, der einen hohen und gefährlichen Berg erklommen hatte, beseligt, alles sich zu Füßen sieht und doch kaum einen Fuß setzen wagt, und fast schon ahnt, welcher grausiger Abstieg ihm bevorsteht."⁴¹³

According to C. G. van Liere, Heinrich dies because of his love for Antonie:

Die durch das ganze Werk zerstreuten Zitate aus Schillers Drama [*Don Carlos*] haben dieselbe Funktion wie die leimotivischen Wendungen in *Jettchen Gebert*: sie erinnern an die Unabwendbarkeit des Schicksals, dessen Fäden die Normen längst gesponnen haben. Das Gesetz ist unabänderlich: Heinrich Schön jun. wird an der Liebe zu der jungen zweiten Frau seines Vaters zugrundegehen.⁴¹⁴

⁴¹⁰ *ibid.* 365.

⁴¹¹ *ibid.* 351.

⁴¹² *ibid.* 227.

⁴¹³ *ibid.* 367.

⁴¹⁴ C.G. van Liere, *Hermann* 113.

More seems to be at work in this tale, however. If Heinrich were able to love Antonie under his own terms, in the balance of male and female power to which he is accustomed, he would only have guilt to contend with. As it is, however, he must face not only his guilt at having betrayed his father as well as his fiancée,⁴¹⁵ but also the fact that he cannot pursue his love for this other woman. Heinrich's feeling that he has lost his footing shows that he, as a traditional bourgeois man, is unable to cope with Antonie's progressive and untraditional nature. There is no room within the triangle of Antonie, Heinrich and Eduard for him to usurp the role of the father, because Antonie has unbalanced the norms of gender roles and power to such an extreme degree. Antonie does not need Heinrich to draw her opinions from, nor is she in awe of his intellect or strength, and in contrast to Hannchen, she does not need him to exert a creative power over her, making her into a "whole" person. There would thus be no opportunity for Heinrich to carry out the masculine role expected of him in Antonie's life, and his only available course of action is to remove himself from the situation, by leaving for Rio, and pretending that it is because of gossip about him and Wulkow.⁴¹⁶

Heinrich's retreat is thus an admission of his own failings and weaknesses. The figure of Antonie has also been read as weak or insignificant, as with Gundel Mattenklott's negative comparison of her with Hermann's other, more famous, heroine Jettchen Gebert: "Nein, verglichen mit Jettchen, bleibt Antonie trotz ihres aparten Wesens und ihrer Gelehrtheit die 'kleine Frau,' als die sie im väterlichen-herablassenden Gestus so häufig angeredet wird: eine lebenshungrige Sentimentale, deren Schmerz sich in Tränen löst ... Kaum eine Spur von

⁴¹⁵ Hermann, *Heinrich* 367.

⁴¹⁶ *ibid.* 373.

Jettchens schwierig verschränktem Konflikt...”⁴¹⁷ In this light, Antonie’s own retreat serves as an expression of her inability to take active control of her life. Her distress and struggle are not only expressed in tears, however. As has been shown, Antonie is a problematic character precisely because she voices her opinions, disagreements and desires – in stark contrast to Jettchen Gebert. Her choice of companion in her escape from the Schön household is also telling. Karl von Maltitz is a schoolfriend of Heinrich’s who is also something of an outsider to respectable society. Eduard does not approve of his close friendship with Heinrich, and Hannchen plans to put an end to it as soon as she and Heinrich are married.⁴¹⁸ More intelligent than Heinrich, Maltitz is the one who leads, rather than follows, their fashions: “Ja ... er gab etwas auf sich, der Maltitz, und er war unbestritten Autorität bei seinen Altersgenossen in allen Fragen des Schicks.”⁴¹⁹ Antonie finds her niche when with Heinrich and Maltitz, feeling young with them, and free to share literary jokes that Eduard would not understand.⁴²⁰ Maltitz is able to perceive Heinrich’s feelings for Antonie,⁴²¹ and he also sympathises, because he feels sorry for Antonie, and admires her himself.⁴²²

Antonie thus withdraws from bourgeois society because it is unable to fulfil her individual needs. Fanny does the same in *Das Märchen*, Schnitzler’s first attempt “einem seiner Hauptanliegen Gestalt zu geben, dem Verhängnis von Vergangenheit und Gegenwart

⁴¹⁷ Gundel Mattenklott, “Nachwort” in Georg Hermann, *Heinrich Schön jun.* (Berlin: Verlag das neue Berlin, 1998) 387-398. 388.

⁴¹⁸ Hermann, *Heinrich* 227, 63.

⁴¹⁹ *ibid.* 27.

⁴²⁰ *ibid.* 194, 196, 202, 291.

⁴²¹ *ibid.* 211, 292.

⁴²² *ibid.* 203, 208, 311.

und dessen Auswirkungen auf die Psyche des Menschen.”⁴²³ It took three years of persistence to get the work onto a stage, because directors were afraid its topic was “moralisch anstößig,” with Schnitzler’s treatment of the “[psychologische] Widerstand zwischen Verstand und Gefühl” going largely unnoticed.⁴²⁴ It is precisely this psychological conflict that gives body to the work, with Fedor’s ideals and jealousy both creating the central crisis, and bringing about Fanny’s eventual departure. As has been shown, Fedor claims to have views on women, and the “Märchen” of the “Gefallene,” that demand equality and freedom for all from restrictive and outdated bourgeois norms. When faced with the reality of Fanny’s past, however, he retreats into his bourgeois mindset. As Elizabeth G. Ametsbichler puts it:

Das Märchen is the quintessential Schnitzler play about double standards. There is no deadly, tragic end, yet Fedor is unable to incorporate the principles he espouses into his life, which clearly exposes the degree to which social convention trumps personal conviction and permeates society. Fedor mouths liberal, tolerant words [...] but his inability to live up to his alleged idealism underscores how deeply imprisoned he is by normative social standards and, more generally, how deeply rooted double standards are in this society. With this work, the language skeptic Schnitzler again demonstrates just how empty and inadequate words can be.⁴²⁵

If there is a split in Fedor’s attitudes, however, Fanny’s reactions to him are equally contradictory. At first, Fanny wants to stay in Vienna for Fedor’s sake, displaying an honesty similar to Antonie’s direct character: “Ach, ich bitte Sie, müssen **wir** denn miteinander Komödie spielen? Sie wissen sehr gut, warum ich lieber hier bin als – in Petersburg?”⁴²⁶ Fedor’s idealistic attitude toward “fallen” women is similar to the Losattis’ ideas of saving

⁴²³ Jens Rieckmann, *Aufbruch in die Moderne* (Königstein: Athenäum, 1985) 150.

⁴²⁴ *ibid.* 147.

⁴²⁵ Elizabeth G. Ametsbichler, “A Century of Intrigue: the Dramatic Works of Arthur Schnitzler” in Dagmar C. G. Lorenz, ed. *A Companion to the works of Arthur Schnitzler* (New York: Camden House, 2003) 193.

⁴²⁶ Schnitzler, *Märchen* 206.

Toni in *Das Vermächtnis*: “Wie viele Weiber sind rettungslos verkommen, weil derjenigen Männer, welche sie hätten retten können, sich vor dem Lachen der Menge fürchteten.”⁴²⁷

Fedor clearly finds the image of a man as savior, redeeming the weaker sex, appealing, if only in abstract terms. Fanny immediately takes on the role he imagines for such women. Already having described herself as a sinner, she is almost overwhelmed by the possibility of Fedor becoming her savior. As the first act draws to a close, Fanny makes two devotional gestures, fervently kissing Fedor’s hand, and, when he leaves, watching him out the window: “*Sie entfernt sich vom Fenster, dann wieder hin, kniet davor nieder, flüstert mit inbrünstiger Gebärde Anbeten...*!”⁴²⁸ This use of semi-religious language and gesture serves to underline the religious baggage that the bourgeois image of woman carried with it, evoking the Christian framework of God the father and Eve the sinner. When in the second act Fedor has not returned to the Therens’ home for a week, Fanny again shows a lack of reserve and decorum similar to Antonie’s, going to his apartment alone, and strongly demanding an explanation, albeit in halting language: “Also nicht böse?... Plötzlich nicht mehr zu kommen!... Wissen Sie denn nicht, daß ich morgen spiele?... Und im Theater waren Sie auch nicht mehr... nirgends! Und bei uns acht Tage nicht... Und jetzt, an dem schönen Frühlingsabende sitzen Sie zu Hause... Warum waren Sie nicht bei uns...? Sagen Sie, Fedor?”⁴²⁹ Fedor claims he is glad she came, prompting Fanny to explain all that his words had meant to her:

Fanny: Erinnern Sie sich des letzten Abends... bei uns...?

Fedor: Den sollte ich vergessen haben – ?

⁴²⁷ *ibid.* 221.

⁴²⁸ *ibid.* 225.

⁴²⁹ *ibid.* 231.

Fanny: Darf ich Ihnen alles sagen – ? Daß Sie mich glücklich gemacht, daß Sie mich befreit haben – ?

Fedor: Fanny!

Fanny: Mit einem Male hatte ich wieder das Recht, glücklich sein zu dürfen... Wissen Sie, was das heißt... aus Ihrem Munde es gehört zu haben? Ja, wissen Sie denn, was Sie mir wiedergaben? – Alles, alles!⁴³⁰

All of this role-play on Fanny's part could indeed be an illusion, displaying exactly how pervasive the need for categorization was. In order to persuade Fedor to act in the way she has persuaded herself she wants, in her naïve desire to be "unermesslich geliebt," Fanny instinctively, as an actress, makes herself appear to be the mirroring counterpart to his role as savior. When pressed, Fedor states that he meant what he said, but that the problem of Fanny's past remains.⁴³¹ Fanny's response is that to which Fedor aspires, as an allegedly emancipated and rational man: "Frage ich Sie um Ihre Vergangenheit? – Warum weiß ich es denn, daß Sie mich anders lieben, als Sie je geliebt haben...? Warum zweifle **ich** keinen Augenblick an Ihnen – ?"⁴³² Fanny goes on to play down the significance of her past, dismissing her experiences as "böse Träume."⁴³³ Admitting that she should ideally have acted differently, Fanny feels that Fedor will now give her the future she thought was closed to her: "Ich bitte dich – stoß mich nicht weiter hinab... verlaß mich nicht... versprich mir, daß du wieder zu uns kommst, ja...? – Daß du ins Theater kommst, wenn ich spiele – daß du mich segnest, wenn du an mich denkst – daß ich deinen Namen flüstern darf bei allem, was ich beginne, mit dem Gedanken: Er hat mir verziehen."⁴³⁴

⁴³⁰ *ibid.* 232.

⁴³¹ *ibid.* 233.

⁴³² *ibid.* 234.

⁴³³ *ibid.* 234.

⁴³⁴ *ibid.* 234.

In her conviction, however, Fanny fails to see that Fedor cannot free himself from his jealousy and his antiquated responses to her past. When their conversation is interrupted by Fanny's former lover, the religious imagery of sinner and salvation continues in Fedor's discussion with Witte, with the latter mocking Fedor's enquiries: "Ach Gott!... Der Poet!... Wie? Du denkst wohl jetzt an irgendeine reuige Sünderin, die in deinen Armen all ihre Schuld sühnen wollte!"⁴³⁵ Witte's attitude is far more honest than Fedor's, as he says: "Ja, nur schade, daß die Sühne wieder genauso aussieht wie die Schuld... Für den Nächsten bist dann du wieder die Schuld!... Hast du das noch nicht bemerkt...?"⁴³⁶ As has been shown, the heart of Fedor's conflict about Fanny's past lies in the fact that other men have an intimate knowledge of her, and when she returns shortly after Witte's departure, Fedor demands to know all about her life.⁴³⁷ When she is unwilling to dwell on her past, Fedor begins to imagine it for himself:

Ich bin ganz ruhig... ich höre... ich philosophiere sogar... Ich sehe vollkommen klar. Es war die erste Liebe mit der Süßigkeit des Ahnens und dem Schauer des Erkennens... Mystizismus [...] Sie fliehen vor den Wonneschauern jener ersten Liebe, die Sie verwirrt, zu dem blühenden, sonnenhellen Leben, das Sie berauscht [...] Sie vergaßen ihn sehr schnell... nun... weil... o wie stolz ich bin... weil ich mit einem Male erschien... Zuerst der Mystizismus, dann der Leichtsinn der Lebensfreude. – Was bin ich...? Warten Sie nur, ich werde es Ihnen erklären können... Lassen Sie mich nachdenken, was ich für Sie zu bedeuten habe.⁴³⁸

Just as the Losattis imagined how Toni would act in the future, Georg seeks information about Lies from Walter, and Antonie asks about Heinrich's life, here too the dynamic of power is intricately linked with that of knowledge. In his desire to explain Fanny to herself,

⁴³⁵ *ibid.* 237.

⁴³⁶ *ibid.* 237.

⁴³⁷ *ibid.* 246.

⁴³⁸ *ibid.* 247.

Fedor imagines that he will be able to take absolute control of her, thereby denying her own self-knowledge and control.

Despite his assertions to the contrary, Fedor is unable to conceal his jealousy and contempt the next time he sees Fanny.⁴³⁹ Fanny feels that Fedor should be able to express his negative feelings, because he is entitled to them: “Fedor, quäle mich ja, ja, du hast recht, ich bete dich doch an!”⁴⁴⁰ As the evening progresses, however, she loses sympathy with him: “Du mußt vollkommen weg über – das Märchen! [...] Beim Himmel, ich würde nicht zurückdenken müssen, wenn du mich nicht immer gewaltsam erinnerst.”⁴⁴¹ Fanny pushes Fedor to take some kind of action by signing the contract for St Petersburg that her agent brings, and holds onto the document in case her tactic works, promising to send definite word the next day. Agathe can tell that a man is involved in Fanny’s indecision, and urges her to free herself from such concerns: “[Fedor], Sie verzeihen mich schon – aber die Männer sind es nicht wert, daß man sich ihnen opfert – sie tun es niemals für uns.”⁴⁴² Fanny suggests Fedor could wait for her, although he does not believe that a woman like her could remain faithful for a whole year.⁴⁴³ Ruth Klüger argues that Fanny leaves because she has no alternative: “Die Affäre scheitert an seiner Eifersucht, die junge Frau stürzt sich in ihre Karriere, wohlgemerkt, weil ihr nichts übrig bleibt, nicht etwa weil ihre Kunst oder ihr

⁴³⁹ *ibid.* 258.

⁴⁴⁰ *ibid.* 258.

⁴⁴¹ *ibid.* 263.

⁴⁴² *ibid.* 270. Such concerns echo what Dixon wrote at the time: “Then, again, a capable woman who has begun a career and feels certain of advancement in it, is often as shy of entangling herself matrimonially as ambitious young men have ever shown themselves under like circumstances.” Dixon, *Why* 394.

⁴⁴³ Schnitzler, *Märchen* 276.

Berufsleben plötzlich wertvoller als ein Hausfrauendasein scheint.”⁴⁴⁴ Fanny’s leaving is more significant than a display of defeat, however. As Ametsbichler and Julius Kapp argue, Fedor acts as a catalyst for Fanny’s own development:

When Fedor’s actions contradict his words, Fanny leaves Vienna for an acting engagement in Russia. In this case, Fedor’s inherent contradiction accelerates Fanny’s emancipation, and she pursues a career and her own self-fulfillment.⁴⁴⁵

Mit Verachtung wendet sie sich von ihm ab und unterzeichnet den Kontrakt. Durch diese bitterste Erfahrung ihres Lebens hat sie sich selbst wiedergefunden, jetzt ist sie stark genug, ihren Weg allein zu gehen.⁴⁴⁶

While it is Fedor who voices liberal and progressive views in the work, it is Fanny who acts upon their principles, disentangling herself from the society that categorizes and chastises her at every turn. She signs the contract not only to remove herself from figures such as Klara and Wandel, who make it clear they want her to leave,⁴⁴⁷ but also from a weak man who is unable to escape from his psychological constraints. Fedor makes it clear that he would never be able to reconcile himself with her past:

Fanny: Und nun willst du, daß gerade du und ich [...] zugrunde gehen sollen [...] an dem Märchen von den Gefallenen!

Fedor: Ja, ja... es mag ein Märchen sein! – Es gibt aber noch ein tausendfach lügenhafteres und heimtückischeres... das Märchen von den Erhobenen!⁴⁴⁸

In the end, then, it is Fanny who emerges as the powerful agent in their relationship:

entschlossend So geh! – Es ist genug, Fedor! *Sehr stark* Geh! – Wenn du zu eitel bist, um in meiner Liebe glücklich zu sein, zu feig, um an mich zu glauben [...] Ich bin es müde, um deine Gnade zu flehen wie eine Sünderin und vor einem auf den

⁴⁴⁴ Ruth Klüger, *Schnitzlers Damen, Weiber, Mädeln, Frauen* (Wien: Picus Verlag, 2001) 42.

⁴⁴⁵ Ametsbichler, *Century* 190.

⁴⁴⁶ Julius Kapp, *Arthur Schnitzler* (Leipzig: Im Xenien, 1912) 52.

⁴⁴⁷ Schnitzler, *Märchen* 270, 272.

⁴⁴⁸ *ibid.* 276.

Knien zu liegen – der um nichts besser ist als ich [...] Mit uns beide ist es zu Ende, Fedor. Geh und vergiß mich, wie ich dich vergessen werde.⁴⁴⁹

Rather than remaining, and having to atone for her sins for the rest of her life,⁴⁵⁰ Fanny takes control of her life and her career, as well as of her past, thereby negating the power that bourgeois society struggled to establish over her, moving into a future that men such as Fedor are not yet ready for: “Sei unbesorgt, Klara. Jetzt ist alles in Ordnung – ich kenne meinen Weg.”⁴⁵¹

Antonie also forges her own path out of bourgeois society. Because we learn of her escape through Eduard’s letter to Heinrich, we do not hear Antonie’s final rejection of the bourgeois world, left as we are with only Eduard’s impressions instead: “diese junge, seltsame Wesen, das da ein paar Monate bei uns war, [hat mich] stets an einen Kometen erinnert. Wir wissen nicht, woher sie kommen, wir wissen nicht, wohin sie gehen; sie kommen aus unbekannten Weltenfern.”⁴⁵² In taking all the blame himself, Eduard can remain as he was before marrying Antonie, with his place in bourgeois society intact, albeit tainted by his aging foolishness. The ignominy of having been rejected and abandoned by a younger woman is effectively ignored in this way. By claiming all blame, Eduard also lays claim to all agency in the situation: by refusing to blame Antonie, he also disallows any subjectivity on her part. By further reducing her to a natural phenomenon, a comet, he rejects her very humanity, underlining his own inability to perceive Antonie as a “Mensch.” All of this indicates an underlying disinclination to understand Antonie any better; she is not what society expected her to be, and as such becomes an intentional blind spot. Eduard’s is the

⁴⁴⁹ *ibid.* 278.

⁴⁵⁰ *ibid.* 202.

⁴⁵¹ *ibid.* 278.

⁴⁵² Hermann, *Heinrich* 385.

official, bourgeois version of the tale, of a marriage that he should not have undertaken, and which would be better forgotten. This is in keeping with Eduard's character: "Er war schon in dem Alter, in dem man es nicht liebt, daß der Boden, auf dem man steht, etwa wankend würde!"⁴⁵³

Antonie's departure with Maltitz should challenge his world-view, however. Her rejection is two-fold: on the one hand, she breaks away from a social order that would suppress her individuality, and on the other, she turns away from Eduard and Heinrich, both of whom cannot give her the freedom or afford her the agency that she needs. While both Fanny and Antonie differ from Lies and Toni, because they both voice their dissatisfaction and highlight the failings in bourgeois society, they too are ignored by those around them. Even an intellectual engagement in the social order thus fails them, and they too must remove themselves from the structures of family and of individual action that society would have them fit into. By relocating themselves in a new world, in which they can carry on and live as they wish, their rebellion is more positive than the death chosen by Lies and Toni, but there is as little indication here that their departure will be met with any reaction stronger or farther-reaching than Eduard's denial. As the discourse around all four of the female characters discussed thus far shows, as long as their bodies or opinions are accessible to society, society can categorize and therefore detract from their discontent. As the next chapter will show, however, information could be withheld and kept internal, placing society in the almost untenable position of not being able to cope with its problematic women at all.

⁴⁵³ *ibid.* 105.

Chapter Three

Introduction

Perhaps the most defined categorization of women in fin-de-siècle Europe was that of the hysteric. With university and public lectures, debate in journals, and photographic series depicting all the forms and manifestations of the dread disease, this was arguably the most readily available diagnosis of a mental disorder with which the lay population felt comfortable. Placing two fictional characters side by side with the subject of a case study shows exactly how co-dependent and interrelated were the literary and scientific methods of naming and categorizing the Other in woman. Hysteria as a label combined both physical and mental Otherness, compounding the dangerous elements in women that society needed to assimilate.

The disparate levels of critical interest in the two literary works discussed in this chapter is remarkable. Following Schnitzler's novella *Leutnant Gustl*, hailed as the first interior monologue in German literature, *Fräulein Else* is also very self-consciously engaged in issues of the psyche, subjectivity, perception and mental health. As a doctor and medical writer and critic, Schnitzler had been greatly interested in contemporary treatments and studies of mental disorders, publishing his own case studies, *Über funktionelle Aphonie und deren Behandlung durch Hypnose und Suggestion*.⁴⁵⁴ The majority of criticism on these works has linked Schnitzler's name with Freud, because of the similarities in their lives and

⁴⁵⁴ See Hillary Hope Herzog, "'Medizin ist eine Weltanschauung': on Schnitzler's medical writings" in Dagmar C.G. Lorenz, ed. *A companion to the works of Arthur Schnitzler* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003) 227-242.

medical careers, as well as their correspondence over a number of years. This has also served to link their attitudes toward mental illness and psychoanalysis, although there was discord between their own theories on the subject. *Fräulein Else* was thus born of the medical as well as of the social atmosphere of the age, and as such has earned a central place in the literary canon of the twentieth century. While *Fräulein Else* has featured heavily in studies of psychoanalysis and literature, *Jettchen Gebert* has remained unexamined, despite the clearly disturbed mental state of the title character, as well as the phenomenal success and popularity of the work in its time. In order for her to be claimed for the discourse, Jettchen must be brought out and placed alongside her more famous and famously “hysterical” sisters.

These two characters lend themselves fully to the discussion of hysteria. Both come from bourgeois, Jewish families, living in the capital cities of Berlin and Vienna. Both are young and powerless, and both become embroiled in their relative’s machinations to acquire wealth or prestige, by using them as objects to be exchanged, in marriage or for money. While Else could have featured in the first chapter of this work, with her suicidal contemporaries, and Jettchen could be placed with those who flee in chapter two, the attention in these works to these characters’ mental landscapes and their physical symptoms sets them apart. In none of the previous works discussed is the reader given so much access to the inner workings of the heroines’ minds. Here, the female character either narrates the tale, or the narrator has complete access to her thoughts and feelings. The fact that hysteria is also attributed to Else and Jettchen adds to their suicide and flight. As has been shown, both taking one’s life and fleeing a social setting can be read as aggressive and rebellious acts. The more nuanced, psychological portrayals of Else and Jettchen also involve an internal and impenetrable aspect, elevating their actions to an additional height of rebellion: before the

public act of rebellion, internal processes are at work, to which society has no access, and over which it has no control. As will be shown in this chapter, direct links can be made between their portrayal as hysterics and the role that Freud in effect created for his patient Dora. All three characters pose a diffuse and unknowable threat, expressing their social afflictions through uncontrollable, physical symptoms, and in each case, society's response is to hide the magnitude of their rebellion, and the hypocrisies and weaknesses that cause it, behind the label of hysteria.

Jettchen Gebert

Georg Hermann's *Jettchen Gebert* has not enjoyed modern acclaim, and despite a recent edition of his complete works, Hermann has not been paid serious critical attention. At the time of its initial publication in the *Vossische Zeitung*, however, *Jettchen Gebert* was a huge success: as C.G. van Liere puts it, "Verleger und Zeitungsredakteure rissen fertiggestellte Teile förmlich unter den Händen des Autors weg."⁴⁵⁵ This was the work that would bring Hermann real fame, after the more modest success of *Spielkinder*, and would warrant the publication of other, earlier works. The novel was published in book form, and it and its eagerly awaited sequel *Henriette Jacoby* both ran through several editions during Hermann's lifetime. Although Hermann's attempts to write for the stage were among his worst work, others adapted *Jettchen Geberts Geschichte* for the stage, operetta and film, each of which fed on the popularity of the original novels.

As a historical novel, *Jettchen Gebert* recreates, virtually to the last detail, the bourgeois world of 1839/40. Hermann's extensive research into the Biedermeier period

⁴⁵⁵ C.G. van Liere, *Georg Hermann: Materialien zur Kenntnis seines Lebens und seines Werkes* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1974) 34.

found its outlet in the creation of this world, with the furniture, ornaments and books that he had collected furnishing the rooms of the Gebert households.⁴⁵⁶ As Hans Otto Horch points out, this recreation is not restricted to the Jewish bourgeoisie: “Jettchen Geberts Geschichte spielt ausschließlich in jüdischen Bürgertum; die jüdische Großfamilie des Romans repräsentiert allerdings das Bürgertum schlechthin.”⁴⁵⁷ It is also the tale of the bourgeoisie at the turn of the century; despite the historical remove, Hermann’s depiction of society still rang true. Godela Weiss-Sussex claims: “the exact description of historical reality is combined with a nostalgic, elegiac mood.”⁴⁵⁸ One might expect an elegy to be more flattering, however; while Jettchen is an attractive and intelligent young woman, living in a financially affluent and secure environment, the very detailed descriptions of her lavish surroundings also serve to delineate for the reader the strict boundaries that control her life. It is her experience of the model bourgeois life that smothers her, and drives her to an apparent state of hysteria and flight. Before turning to her physical reactions, however, Jettchen’s external world must first be examined.

At this point in its history, the Gebert family spans three generations. Jettchen’s great uncle Eli has retired, while her three uncles Salomon, Ferdinand and Jason – her late father’s brothers – are respected businessmen. Salomon and Ferdinand married two sisters, Riekchen and Hannchen, respectively, and while Salomon and Riekchen took in the orphaned Jettchen, Ferdinand and Hannchen have three children. Jettchen’s closest relationship is with her uncle

⁴⁵⁶ Liere, *Hermann* 30.

⁴⁵⁷ Hans Otto Horch, “Über Georg Hermann” in *Bulletin des Leo Baeck Instituts*. 1987; 77: 73-94. 89.

⁴⁵⁸ Godela Weiss-Sussex, ‘Fontane’s and Georg Hermann’s Berlin’ in Patricia Howe and Helen Chambers, eds. *Theodor Fontane and the European Context* (Amsterdam : Rodopi, 2001) 244.

Jason,⁴⁵⁹ but her relationship with her other male relatives, especially Salomon, is also very amiable. The two Jacoby aunts cause strain upon all the Geberts, and are tolerated rather than actively liked. Jettchen's place in the greater entity of the Gebert clan is referred to in the very title of the novel – this is, after all, not the story of any woman called Jettchen, but of Jettchen Gebert. The strength of the familial bond is underlined by frequent family gatherings, the description of which takes up a great deal of the work, and the integral role that the relatives play in each other's lives, seemingly regardless of age or gender. Jason makes no distinction when he introduces his young friend Kößling to Jettchen and Eli, saying “Sehen Sie, da haben Sie ja gleich die drei Generationen von uns beieinander gehabt. Den alten Nußknacker, mich und sie.”⁴⁶⁰

Jettchen's heritage is obvious to any observer, from her “dunklen Gebertschen Augen”⁴⁶¹ to her comportment: “Sie ging stief und gerade, ohne nach rechts und links zu sehen, wie alle Geberts.” “[Jettchen ging,] den Kopf ein wenig ins Genick gelegt, wie das alle Geberts taten.”⁴⁶² This is not to Jettchen's disadvantage – her good looks, obvious breeding and impeccable outfits make a strong impression on those who see her – but there are negative connotations to the fact that she can be immediately identified as having been “produced” by the Geberts as just as easily as Kößling's waistcoat obviously comes from a

⁴⁵⁹ Indeed, in *Henriette Jacoby* it transpires that Jason has been lusting after his young niece for many years. She seeks refuge in his home at the end of the first novel, where the two gradually become more and more like a married couple, stopping short of a complete physical consummation, but indulging in passionate caresses, etc.

⁴⁶⁰ Georg Hermann, *Jettchen Gebert* (Berlin: Verlag das neue Berlin, 1998) 20.

⁴⁶¹ *ibid.* 14.

⁴⁶² *ibid.* 13, 222.

Gebert business: “die Weste da ist von uns. H. M. B. 17.”⁴⁶³ As will become important later in her tale, Jettchen herself is not yet actively involved in any production, but is, for the time being at least, a commodity for the Gebert family to manage as they see fit.

There is, at this stage, no question that Jettchen will be able to marry, and marry well, despite not having been left a dowry by her father,⁴⁶⁴ and she is confident and self-assured about her appearance: “Sie wußte, daß die Leute stehen blieben und ihr nachsahen, ... aber es gehörte zu ihr.”⁴⁶⁵ Her intelligence is also an important part of her character, and although she also engages in traditionally feminine activities such as running the household and its meals, and pastimes such as needlework, she also reads books borrowed from or selected for her by Jason, and her reading is placed in contrast with the low brow novels that her aunt Riekchen enjoys. Jettchen is also familiar with Kößling’s writing, and is therefore able to enter a “geheime Dreibund” with him and her uncle Jason, discussing literature and even political topics with them.⁴⁶⁶

Jettchen’s enjoyment of intellectual pursuits is limited to her free time, however, and she does not have a great deal of time at her disposal. Upon the reader’s first encounter with her, she is walking to market to buy fish for the family meal that evening. As she later complains to Kößling, nothing of any import happens in her life, yet she is constantly busy:

Was soll sich wohl bei mir ereignen? Was ereignet sich denn in meinem Leben überhaupt? – Jeden Tag, – nicht wahr, – tritt das Ungeheuer Haushaltung wieder mit gähnenden Rachen an mich heran. Da muß Rücksicht genommen werden auf

⁴⁶³ *ibid.* 21.

⁴⁶⁴ *ibid.* 39.

⁴⁶⁵ *ibid.* 13.

⁴⁶⁶ *ibid.* 20, 70. See also *ibid.* 44, 66, 144, 308

die Jahreszeit und daß der Onkel nicht alles essen darf, und da muß hin und her überlegt werden, was in der Wirtschaft fehlt.⁴⁶⁷

More active attempts to find Jettchen a husband could have been made, “wenn es [Salomon und Riekchen] nicht bequemer und billiger gewesen wäre, Jettchen zur Unterstützung der Tante im Hause zu haben.”⁴⁶⁸ Riekchen seems to do no work at all, and we are told about “[die] Mühe um den Haushalt, die nach wie vor ganz und ungeteilt auf Jettchen lastet.”⁴⁶⁹ Indeed, the main activities that Jettchen undertakes consist of shopping for or preparing meals for her family or even their staff, although she is not the female head of the house. These duties are typical of Jewish women in fin-de-siècle society, as Marion Kaplan writes:

If there was one generalization that can be made about Jewish women in Imperial Germany, it is that they were housewives or future housewives. Single, married, widowed, divorced, whether they held paid or unpaid jobs or not, they performed the tasks associated with running a home. Even if they hired other women to do the more menial chores, the responsibility of the home was theirs.⁴⁷⁰

This is always shown as a thankless task for Jettchen:

“Jettchen, wo du so lange bleibst?” fragte [Riekchen] indigniert. “Der Onkel wird gleich raufkommen, und du mußt nochmal nach ’m Kalbsbraten sehen. Das Mädchen versteht’s nicht.”⁴⁷¹

In real terms, therefore, Jettchen’s life is privileged and comfortable on the one hand, but restricted and dull on the other.

⁴⁶⁷ *ibid.* 135.

⁴⁶⁸ *ibid.* 39.

⁴⁶⁹ *ibid.* 382.

⁴⁷⁰ Kaplan, *Making* 63.

⁴⁷¹ Hermann, *Jettchen* 33. See also 47. “Dann kam Tante Riekchen hinein und sagte, daß Jettchen für den Abend alles nur gut zurecht machen sollte.” See also 291. “Da begann Tante Riekchen, Jettchen müsse ja alles gut richten, denn sie würden Mittag Gäste haben und Nachmittag und Abend vielleicht auch.” See also 15, 23, 232.

Jettchen is not alone in this role of the dutiful, socially conscious and conscientious bourgeois woman. She has peers throughout the literature of the nineteenth century, as well as in later recreations of the period, such as Theodor Fontane's Effi Briest, or Gustave Flaubert's Emma Bovary. What makes Jettchen herself so interesting, however, is the influence that Hermann's contemporary society and its fascination with the internal mental landscape had on his portrayal of her. As will be shown, her outward symptoms of inner turmoil could have been taken straight from the pages of a real case study, but so too could the details of Jettchen's life. One such study, which can be usefully compared with the novel, is Josef Breuer's relation of his treatment of Bertha Pappenheim, or 'Anna O.,' published with Freud in 1895. As a bourgeois Jew, she was a woman of Jettchen's age, social standing and religious and cultural background. The two also share character traits; as Breuer wrote of Anna O., she was "bubbling over with intellectual vitality":

She had hitherto been consistently healthy and had shown no signs of neurosis during her period of growth. She was markedly intelligent, with an astonishingly quick grasp of things and penetrating intuition. She possessed a powerful intellect which would have been capable of digesting solid mental pabulum and which stood in need of it – though without receiving it after she had left school. She had great poetic and imaginative gifts, which were under the control of a sharp and critical common sense.⁴⁷²

As the daughter in her household, she inevitably fell into the domestic roles, as did Jettchen. Anna O. nursed her father in his final illness, shortly before her own health deteriorated, at which point Breuer became involved in her case. His patient regained good mental health only upon having spent several years in an asylum after Breuer stopped treating her, rendering the doctor of secondary importance in her "cure," but Breuer was able to pinpoint authoritatively the underlying cause for many of her problems, namely her restricted life as a

⁴⁷² Josef Breuer, 'Anna O.' in Peter Gay, ed. *The Freud Reader* (New York: Norton, 1995) 62, 61.

young and unmarried bourgeois woman: “Her monotonous family life and the absence of adequate intellectual occupation left her with an unemployed surplus of mental liveliness and energy, and this found an outlet in the constant activity of her imagination.”⁴⁷³ This diagnosis could just as easily be applied to Jettchen, with her tentative efforts at political or literary engagement being continually restricted by her household duties. While more factors were at play in Anna O.’s complicatedly real life than in Jettchen’s fictitious one, the identification of external, social frameworks as creating internal, reactive pressures shows that Jettchen is not an atypical embodiment of the female bourgeois experience.

As Marion Kaplan argues, factors which played a role in the life of the bourgeoisie as a whole had a more concentrated effect on its Jewish members, such as Jettchen and Anna O., because “Jews built the walls around their homes to be highly permeable, allowing German bourgeois modes to penetrate intimate familial relationships as well as the decor and atmosphere of their interiors [...] Inwardly they accepted the middle-class mores for their family and made them their own.”⁴⁷⁴ As perceived outsiders, the minority Jewish bourgeoisie had to try harder than others to assimilate to the norms of the day: an even higher premium was thus placed on the Jewish family’s appearance to the outside world.⁴⁷⁵ The Geberts’ Jewish background is clearly of a secondary importance in the work. While dietary considerations come into play when the Jacobys visit from the east, and there is some concern that Kößling is not Jewish, there is no outward expression of their religion. Far more

⁴⁷³ *ibid.* 76. Anna O.’s acquaintance and contemporary described the lot of young, bourgeois women thus: “The unhappiest years of my life were between the ages of fifteen and twenty [...] I danced a lot [...] We were among the first [...] to play tennis [...] but there were twenty-four hours in a day [...] the life of a *höhere Tochter* was unbearable.” Teresa Brennan *The Interpretation of the Flesh*. New York: Routledge, 1992. 90.

⁴⁷⁴ Kaplan, *Making* 25.

⁴⁷⁵ *ibid.* 33.

attention is paid to fitting in with respectable society. As Kaplan argues, the idea of the family could be used as a bond, while not offending or overtly differing from the mainstream bourgeoisie:

Whereas old rituals were slowly replaced or forgotten, family ties – supported by Jewish minority status as well as by the socioeconomic forces affecting most bourgeois Germans – were reinforced. Thus, Jewish religious tradition and identity were married to an urban, secular lifestyle with the result that the family became the cornerstone of a more secular version of Judaism.⁴⁷⁶

This desire to fit in was especially salient in the treatment of young women, who were often to be given in marriages that served to build alliances between families rather than individuals.⁴⁷⁷ As is shown in Rieckchen's concern that Jettchen has been seen with Kößling, young women were not to jeopardize their value in the market of arranged marriages:

Ich weiß ja, du denkst dir nichts dabei, aber man tut's nicht. Nicht wahr, die Leute sehen dich, und es schadt dir. Du meinst, es schadt dir nicht? Hör auf mich, es schadt dir doch. Was kommt raus? Klatscherei kommt raus! Und nu sag mir das eine: Was hat es für 'n Zweck? Wozu ist's gut? Und zu welchem Ende soll es führen? [...] nu aber sei auch vernünftig.⁴⁷⁸

Women were left in little doubt as to what was expected of them: as Kaplan puts it, after the Industrial Revolution, “a value system which described women as domestic, weak, modest, dependent, self-denying, emotional, religious and virtuous gained currency.”⁴⁷⁹ The split between reality and ideal, between tireless domestic work and the premium placed upon the appearance of not having to work, and the education of intelligent women who were nevertheless restricted and unable to exercise free will for fear of creating conflict in the

⁴⁷⁶ *ibid.* 69.

⁴⁷⁷ *ibid.* 33.

⁴⁷⁸ Hermann, *Jettchen* 191.

⁴⁷⁹ Kaplan, *Making* 16.

“idyllic” home,⁴⁸⁰ all combined to create an environment in which women felt compelled to suffer in silence – unless, as in this case, their psychological situation made itself heard through the physical manifestations that were categorized and explained (away) as hysteria.

The presentation of Jettchen’s social and familial status undoubtedly constitutes an important part of the realistic portrayal of the Biedermeier world that Hermann wished to create. While this novel has not been categorized as a direct treatment of psychological theory, however, the entire text is permeated with information about Jettchen’s mental state. We are informed in the foreword that Jettchen will die, and although this does not happen until the end of the sequel, *Henriette Jacoby*, the stage for her suicide is set from the beginning, and her apparently hysterical flight from her own wedding celebration in this novel does not come as a surprise. As will be shown, the restrictive domestic setting in which she finds herself exacerbates her own psychological landscape, rendering her situation fatal. This is a landscape to which the reader is granted almost full access; while not as all encompassing as in the inner monolog form of *Fräulein Else*, the narrator’s insight into Jettchen’s character is extensive. The action follows Jettchen almost exclusively, with the exception of a few scenes involving Jason, who arguably represents Hermann himself most closely in this work. While we are not given Jettchen’s actual thoughts, her emotions and responses are catalogued throughout the narrative, and hers is thus the perspective from which the reader views most of the action. We are also, in a few instances, given insight into the secondary characters, as, for example, when Salomon wants Jettchen to speak out against her marriage, which serves to make the heroine’s inability to perceive her predicament all the more effective.

⁴⁸⁰ *ibid.* 85.

The main event that takes place in the course of the novel is Jettchen's engagement to her aunt's relation from the east, Julius. Until that point, Jettchen's daily life is relatively routine; afterward, she is forced to watch her aunts Riekchen and Hannchen as they delightedly take charge of the wedding preparations. The novel can thus be broken into three chronological stages: before the engagement becomes an issue, during Riekchen's machinations to create the union, and after Jettchen agrees to it. Jettchen's physical and mental deterioration progresses as these phases pass, with the engagement serving to worsen her pre-existing psychological difficulties. The nature of her decline can also be categorized into three broad groupings: her passivity and inability to express herself, her strong reactions to physical stimuli, and her mental detachment from the outside world. A chronological examination of these inner aspects of her character shows that her decline is the main aspect of the work, and that her eventual "hysterical" flight must therefore be read more deeply than as a convenient end to the novel, but as the only mode of expression available to the character, and one that is also entirely inevitable.

Passivity was considered to be an exclusively feminine trait in the bourgeois estimation of gender characteristics – in contrast to the active, male head of the household. Jettchen's own passivity is practically inevitable, for more than merely social expectations. Having been orphaned and taken into her uncle and aunt's home, where they by no means play the part of replacement, loving parents,⁴⁸¹ there is increased, if unspoken, pressure for her to conform to the role and traits expected of her. As Hermann puts it, the war in which her father died "hatte über ihr Schicksal entschieden, bevor sie nur selbst stimmberechtigt

⁴⁸¹ Hermann, *Jettchen* 22.

geworden war.”⁴⁸² Jettchen is acutely aware of her indebtedness to her family, and even before she is faced with the decision of whether to marry Julius, she explains to Kößling that she can never be as free as he imagines is possible: “Ich verstehe das wohl, lieber Herr Doktor, aber es ist doch wieder so fremd für mich und so seltsam. Sehen Sie, - bei *uns* ist das anders. Bei *uns* kommt *keiner* los von der Familie, bei *uns* nicht [...] Keiner kann, wie er will. Jeder wird von allen geschoben und gestoßen im Guten wie im Bösen.”⁴⁸³ Having lived in this environment for twenty years, Jettchen has internalised the bourgeois values of the day: that the individual does not control her own fate, and that even happiness and unhappiness are merely “Gemütsarten”:

“Es liegt wohl nicht in unserer Macht, Herr Doktor” – und sie hörte selbst auf ihre Stimme – “uns unser Leben zu formen. Aber ich will Ihnen versprechen, was an mir ist, Ihnen keinen Grund zur Beängstigung zu geben, trotzdem unser Leben nicht ganz wäre, wenn es einzig über Blumen ginge. Möchten Sie das Salz in Ihren Speisen missen? Es soll heute abend keine Prise Salz auf unsern Tisch kommen, und ich werde sehen, ob Sie es sich nicht fordern!”⁴⁸⁴

This resigned passivity leads to an inability on Jettchen’s part to express any dissatisfaction with her lot, or to tell Salomon about her relationship with Kößling, and this problem is on several occasions described as a literal, physical inability, as well as a lack of courage or opportunity: “Jettchen war es nicht gegeben, auf so etwas zu antworten. Es würgte ihr im Hals, das Wort blieb ihr in der Kehle stecken, und die Tränen traten ihr in die Augen.”⁴⁸⁵ The resolve to talk to Salomon at one point alleviates her distress, allowing her to sleep

⁴⁸² *ibid.* 91.

⁴⁸³ *ibid.* 145.

⁴⁸⁴ *ibid.* 228, 230.

⁴⁸⁵ *ibid.* 34. See also 288, 290, 382. This inability to speak echoes Lies’ respiratory illness, and is also mirrored in Freud’s case studies, where patients such as Dora and Emmi’s bodies act out their own silencing, in a loss of voice or difficulty articulating themselves.

peacefully, but her aunt Riekchen, ever wary, ensures throughout the work that Jettchen is incapable of either having a private conversation with her uncle, or of confiding in her aunt:

Jettchen hätte zu gern der Tante von dem Ihrigen gesprochen. Sie sehnte sich danach, jemanden zu haben, dem sie ihr Herz ausschütten könnte, - aber wie sie sich so gegenüber saßen, fand sie nicht den Mut und nicht den Anfang. Mehr als einmal war ihr das Wort schon auf den Lippen, aber es blieb immer erstarrt und gefroren, und wenn sie die Tante ins Gesicht sah, das in seinem besorgten Ernst mit den kleinen schwarzen Rosinenaugen gar zu komisch sich ausnahm, dann dachte sie wieder traurigen Sinnes daran, daß sie doch jetzt schweigen müßte, und daß es besser wäre, zu warten, bis der Onkel käme, und dem alles zu gestehen.⁴⁸⁶

Jettchen's reaction to these stifled attempts to communicate is to withdraw into herself; always having been of a solitary nature, her time alone becomes more self-destructive as the work, and her decline, progresses, choosing to spend time alone in her room or reading in the garden:

Da, in diesem Garten, war Jettchen Alleinherrscherin. Dort konnte sie stundenlang auf den Wegen gehen oder in der Holzlaube sitzen, lesen, sticken, nichtstun und Lieder summen. – und nur, wenn ihr die Sonne aufs Buch schien, rückte sie etwas zur Seite. Jettchen wich den Menschen nicht aus, aber sie brauchte sie nicht und befand sich ganz gut ohne sie.⁴⁸⁷

It is only in her room that Jettchen can cry and talk, about her situation, giving voice and expression to her unhappiness, if only to herself:

Und sie schloß ihre Stube hinter sich, zog den Schlüssel ab und setzte sich im Dunkeln auf den Bettrand. Sie wollte gar nicht weinen, aber die Tränen, große einzelne Tränen fielen ihr nur so aus den Augen und schlugen ihr wie warme, schwere Regentropfen auf die Hände.

Und dann war ein Weinen über sie gekommen, das ihren ganzen Körper geschüttelt hat. Sie wußte nicht, weswegen sie weinte, sie hatte nur das Gefühl unsagbarer Traurigkeit und galligen Überdrusses.

⁴⁸⁶ *ibid.* 259. See also 291.

⁴⁸⁷ *ibid.* 205. See also 170, 206, 256.

Und zwischen den Tränen und zwischen dem erstickten Schluchzen sprach Jettchen immer wieder halblaut und sinnlos vor sich hin, ein Wort, einen Satz, zehn-, zwanzigmal.

Und Jettchen redete sich immer mehr in ihr Elend hinein.⁴⁸⁸

In the absence of an actual “talking cure,” Jettchen’s body thus finds an alternative mode of expression early in the work, with tears taking the place of words as an outlet for her emotion. All of her nights spent lying awake and crying take their toll on Jettchen’s appearance,⁴⁸⁹ and coupled with an already corporeal nature, lead to increasingly physical reactions to her mental upheaval. When she plays piano during her first evening with Kößling, she is “halb verträumt” while her fingers touch the keys, and when listening to Kößling talk, she plays with a bowl of potpourri, letting the petals fall through her fingers.⁴⁹⁰ What is being demonstrated here is more than a propensity to fidget, however. The fact that she is a strongly physical being is highlighted every time anything unusual happens, or anything which might challenge her denial that something is lacking in her life. As soon as her equilibrium is compromised, Jettchen suffers from physical changes or symptoms; she becomes apathetic, and has at turns difficulty concentrating and difficulty controlling her thoughts:

Und die Gedanken Jettchens waren wie Dorfhunde in der Nacht. Der Ort liegt ganz ruhig; alles scheint zu schlafen. Aber plötzlich fängt ein Hund leise an zu knurren, [...] [E]in anderer Hund antwortet den ersten, und wieder und wieder einer, und dann sind alle Hunde wach und rufen einander zu, und jeder will mehr lärmern als der andere, und sie heulen unruhig und wild bis in den hellen Morgen hinein.⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁸ *ibid.* 190, 370. See also 364, 369.

⁴⁸⁹ *ibid.* p386.

⁴⁹⁰ *ibid.* 94, 99.

⁴⁹¹ *ibid.* 416. See also 45, 175, 384, 387.

Here, even thoughts are robbed of their language and of any coherence. Jettchen blushes and becomes pale, she feels weak and excitable, she fears choking, feels she cannot walk, and so on: “Alles an ihr zitterte, und bald lief ihr prickelnde Hitze, bald saugende Kälte über die Glieder fort.”⁴⁹²

Each of these conditions takes a turn for the worse when Salomon and Riekchen come to persuade Jettchen to marry Julius. This cousin of her aunt’s makes several appearances at dinners and at their summer home without Jettchen grasping why, and without endearing himself to her. She had been aware for some time that her aunt and uncle had been discussing her in private, and that some non-descript event that concerned her was going to happen, but she had not made any active attempt to find out what, again showing her mental withdrawal and apathy. Riekchen coming into the girl’s room to discuss the engagement is thus symbolic of reality forcing itself into Jettchen’s awareness, which is emphasized as a reflection of her unstable state by the fact that in the darkness she cannot quite see either her aunt or her uncle when they come to talk to her.⁴⁹³ This onslaught brings about more of the reactions that the reader has by now come to expect of Jettchen. She barely speaks during the exchange, and descriptions concentrate on her physical reactions of weakness and palpitations, and how she is too weak to save herself: “Sie empfand nur, daß das Wasser ihr bis zum Hals ging, und sie fühlte sich zu schwach und zu willenlos, um dagegen anzukämpfen. Vor acht Wochen vielleicht, aber heut war sie keine Schwimmerin mehr.”⁴⁹⁴

Her acceptance of the proposal is thus an admission of defeat and exhaustion:

⁴⁹² *ibid.* 370. See also 113, 114, 168, 255.

⁴⁹³ *ibid.* 417-426.

⁴⁹⁴ *ibid.* 420.

Jettchen war aufgestanden, sie war jetzt schlaff und zum Zusammensinken müde und jämmerlich zermürbt von all dem Reden und all dem Grübeln, den Vorwürfen [...] Sie wollte eigentlich gar nichts antworten, man sollte ihr nur bis morgen Zeit lassen, nur bis morgen noch; bis morgen könnte ja alles sich ändern, da könnte wer weiß was geschehen. Aber dann sagte sich Jettchen wieder, daß das ja alles doch fruchtlos wäre und daß sie morgen ebenso gehetzt und in die Enge getrieben sei wie heute, und daß es besser wäre heute wie morgen. Aber sie dachte nicht mehr, sie hatte keine Worte mehr, keine Wenn und Abers, sie empfand nur, daß sie diesem Zustand ein Ende machen mußte.

“Wenn ihr es für gut haltet,” sagte sie, und es klang, als ob eine Tonscherbe zerbricht.⁴⁹⁵

From this point on, Jettchen’s illness and symptoms reach new heights, and increasing similarity with those of Anna O., who was treated as a hysteric. Freud and Breuer argued that hysteria had its roots in some form of sexual trauma, that had to be repressed, or in sexual passivity.⁴⁹⁶ As Breuer put it, “The element of sexuality was astonishingly underdeveloped in [Anna O].”⁴⁹⁷ The same can be said of Jettchen. She allows her family and Köbbling to touch and kiss her, “willenlos,” and her physical reactions of disgust to Julius denote an immaturity when faced with a potential sexual partner: “‘Ich bin doch gar nicht seine Cousine, was redet er denn da!’ dachte Jettchen und hatte plötzlich das unangenehme Gefühl, als ob sie unvermutet an irgend ein lebendes, naßkaltes Wesen gestoßen hätte, einen Frosch oder eine Raupe.”⁴⁹⁸ Her relationship with Köbbling is more sexual, but still cast in a childish light:

ehe sie sich versahen, hatten sie sich beide an den Händen gefaßt wie Kinder und gingen im Rythmus ihres Liedchens frei und offen, hoch und gerade, mit den Händen taktierend nebeneinander her [... Jettchen] hing sich so recht schwer gleich einem ungezogenen Kind an Köbblings Arm [...] Köbbling streichelte ihr Haar und Schläfen

⁴⁹⁵ *ibid.* 426.

⁴⁹⁶ Serge André, *What does a Woman Want?* (New York: Other Press, 1999) 92.

⁴⁹⁷ Breuer, *Anna O.* 62.

⁴⁹⁸ Hermann, *Jettchen* 172. See also 308, 484.

und Wangen und sprach auf sie ein und tätschelte und herzte sie und küßte sie unter leisen Schmeichelworten, so wie man ein müdes, unglückliches Kind beruhigt.⁴⁹⁹

The truly arrested nature of her sexuality is made apparent in a scene with her teenaged cousin Wolfgang. It is decided that the boy should, for the sake of his health, spend some time with Riekchen and Jettchen at their summer home, and he is put up on a sofa in his cousin's room. Jettchen is unable to control her crying when they have both retired for the night, and the boy tries to comfort her. Her response is somewhat unexpected:

Und Jettchen zog den Jungen, der im weißen, langen Hemd zitternd und leicht fröstelnd vor ihr stand, zu sich auf den Schoß und umfing ihn mit ihren Armen und küßte ihn auf die Stirn und den Mund. Und die Küsse von vordem mit ihrer heißen, saugenden Gewalt, ihrer Glut und Innigkeit, drängten sich wieder auf ihre Lippen.⁵⁰⁰

Once she has kissed the boy for a few minutes, Jettchen feels relieved and at peace: “‘So, Wolfgang,’ und sie wunderte sich selbst, sie lachte sogar, ‘jetzt wird weiter geschlafen.’”⁵⁰¹ This case of incestuous physical affection with a minor is passed over as quickly and without comment as is Jettchen's later relationship with her uncle Jason – a relationship made more remarkable by the fact that he is her dead father's younger brother, and therefore an obvious father figure for her.⁵⁰²

Other of Jettchen's symptoms also echo Anna O.'s, which constituted a typical range of ailments attributed to hysteria at the time. Just as Anna created a rich world in her

⁴⁹⁹ *ibid.* 235, 241, 254.

⁵⁰⁰ *ibid.* 372.

⁵⁰¹ *ibid.* 373.

⁵⁰² While her inability to express herself, and her disgust at the thought of a physical relationship with Julius, might be read as hints of sexual abuse in her childhood, Jettchen is also capable of more “normal” sexual behavior with Kößling and with Jason. This instance of physical attention to her young cousin might rather be read as an exertion of the control, albeit limited, that Jettchen is capable of exerting, over one of the few characters who could be considered subordinate to her. The fact that Jason is her uncle, as well as Jettchen's inappropriate sexual advances on her own, young, cousin, allows for a reading of Jettchen as herself a victim of sexual abuse.

imagination, of which no one else was aware, so too is Jettchen able to put up a façade of normality: “Denn Jettchen war von Natur so, daß sie gern den Dingen das Gute abgewann und, wenn sie das Glück selbst nicht haben konnte, auch jenen Schimmer von Wohlleben und Behaglichkeit dafür nahm, den man meistens dafür gelten läßt.”⁵⁰³ This reaches an almost psychotic break with reality when Jettchen feels as if she is observing “Etwas” that has taken over her body in the days before her wedding, and especially during the ceremony and wedding party:

[S]ie ging hoch, gerade und aufrecht [...] das heißt, sie ging nicht, sie war selbst gar nicht dabei: es ging, *sie* tat nichts dazu; sie sah sich gehen, ganz seltsam, so ungefähr wie wir immer im Traum uns selber sehen. [...] Und Jettchen antwortete, das heißt *sie* antwortete *nicht*, sondern es antwortete aus ihr, ganz beredsam, ganz unbefangen, ruhig und freundlich, aber sie selbst hörte sich erstaunt zu und wunderte sich, wie ihr jedes Wort in den Ohren klang.⁵⁰⁴

Once again, Jettchen is silenced, feeling here as if something other than herself is speaking words over which she has no control, and for which she is not responsible. It is only when Jettchen takes on another persona, or when she feels that it has taken over her body, that she can conform to the role that society expects her to play. She sees herself act and hears herself speak, performing the part of the bride. It is exactly society's demands of her that causes the split in her mental state; Jettchen herself cannot live up to the expectations of others.⁵⁰⁵

Jettchen feels more like herself when she is alone, but still cannot grasp or put into words what is happening, mirroring Anna O's altered mental states. As Breuer describes of his patient, “Two entirely distinct states of consciousness were present which alternated very frequently and without warning and which became more and more differentiated in the

⁵⁰³ Breuer, *Anna O.* 62. Hermann, *Jettchen* 432. See also 429, 437.

⁵⁰⁴ *ibid.* 473, 474. See also 475, 478, 491, 496.

⁵⁰⁵ This split will be mirrored in Else's breakdown.

course of the illness.”⁵⁰⁶ Jettchen’s capacity for organized thought is lost, leaving her again unable to express herself, even internally, and with “Gedanken, die keine Worte hatten.” “die Erregung benahm ihr Gedanken und Worte [... sie war] gepeinigt von bohrenden Gedanken, die keine Worte hatten [...] Sie lag nur da und grübelte wortlos und angestrengt vor sich hin [...] das wortlose Sinnieren beherrschte sie jetzt ganz”⁵⁰⁷ Anna O. also suffered from paralyses, difficulty sleeping and disrupted vision,⁵⁰⁸ as does Jettchen, who has nightmares, and at the wedding finds herself unable to drink or to move her limbs.⁵⁰⁹ Her senses are also affected, at times having difficulty seeing and hearing clearly, and at others experiencing a heightened perception of sight and sound:

Den ganzen Tag über erblickte sie alles um sich her mit erstaunten Augen und zeitweise verschwand es ihr vollends. Und dann kam es wieder auf sie zugerollt, daß sie mit übernatürlicher Schärfe jedes Bild sah. Und sie hörte jedes Wort, das um sie gesprochen wurde, so deutlich, als würde es ihr durch ein Schallrohr zugerufen.⁵¹⁰

All of Jettchen’s symptoms are thus so reminiscent of the medical discourses on female psychology, and in particular the phantom ailment of hysteria, that although the diagnosis is never made in the novel, her tale can easily be placed in a context of hysteria, and, as will be shown, of rebellion, just as her more famous contemporary *Fräulein Else* has been.

Fräulein Else

Arthur Schnitzler’s *Fräulein Else* relates the final hours in the life of the title character. While Jettchen is the heroine of a novel, about whom the reader is given reliable

⁵⁰⁶ Breuer, *Anna O.* 63.

⁵⁰⁷ Hermann, *Jettchen* 469. See also 458, 475, 484, 485.

⁵⁰⁸ Breuer, *Anna O.* 62.

⁵⁰⁹ Hermann, *Jettchen* 492, 497.

⁵¹⁰ *ibid.* 485. See also 454, 478, 490, 492, 493, 494, 495, 497.

information by an omnipresent narrator, Else herself is the narrator of this interior monologue. On the one hand, this choice of genre can appear to give complete and unabridged access to a character, and to create a fully rounded portrayal of themselves and their worlds. As Craig Morris puts it: “[d]er vollständige innere Monolog ist daher [...] die literarische Gattung, die der Psychoanalyse am ehesten entspreche.”⁵¹¹ It can appear, from what a character, as from what a patient undergoing psychoanalysis, says, that theirs is the full story, unbiased and unaltered. This appearance is, of course, a fallacy. In her discussion of genre, Bettina Matthias justifies the interior monologue as being made necessary by Schnitzler’s social environment at the turn of the century:

Dialogue as a means to resolve conflicts has become impossible between members of an egocentric society and has made room for the mainly silent interior monologue in which the individual struggles to decide her fate in a world that has become devoid of positive meaningful encounters. As Schnitzler openly alludes to Lessing’s bourgeois tragedy *Emilia Galotti* in his choice of character constellation, motives and even wording, he ultimately deconstructs it in the early twentieth century.⁵¹²

While a fascinating literary method, this narrative forms does pose problems, however.

Morris identifies four such difficulties in the following way:

1) Der Erzähler ist nicht mehr da, um wichtige Handlungsmomente zu schildern, deshalb bleibt der Leser den Eindrücken des Monologisierenden überlassen. 2) Der Monologisierende kann wiederum von der Existenz des Lesers nicht wissen (nur der Verfasser des Textes weiß von dessen Existenz) und spricht oder besser: denkt für sich allein, d.h. im Gegensatz zum traditionellen Erzähler versucht er nicht, die Erzählung verständlich zu machen. 3) Der v.i. (vollständig innere) Monolog eignet sich folgerichtig besser für einen handlungsarmen Erzählstoff, in dem der Monologisierende relativ ungestört von seiner Umwelt über sein Leben nachsinnen kann. 4) Letztlich muß auch eine Sprache für das Unausgesprochene in der Psyche

⁵¹¹ Craig Morris. “Der vollständige innere Monolog: eine erzählerlose Erzählung? Eine Untersuchung am Beispiel von *Leutnant Gustl* und *Fräulein Else*” in *Modern Austrian Literature*. Vol. 31, no. 2, 1998. 30-51. 31.

⁵¹² Bettina Matthias. “Arthur Schnitzler’s *Fräulein Else* and the end of bourgeois tragedy” in *Women in German Yearbook*. 2002; 18: 248-266. 261.

gefunden werden, denn die Sprache der erlebten Rede, der direkten Rede, usw. Bedarf natürlich eines Erzählers.⁵¹³

Each of these difficulties applies to *Fräulein Else*. She is the reader's only source of knowledge, and her narration has no comprehensive information or a structure that can be easily followed, with interruptions disrupting the flow of consciousness. These problems are clearly manifested in what the reader is able to find out about the figures surrounding Else. In terms of their portrayal as characters, and their attitudes and behavior, we are entirely reliant on Else's perception of the others. In her eyes, they come across as what Siew Lian Yeo calls "clichéd": "The snobbish 'rich aunt,' the handsome cousin, his worldly mistress, the would-be roué."⁵¹⁴ As Yeo goes on to point out, the fact that the characters *are* clichéd is apparent from what little the reader has reliable access to; namely, their speech, both addressed to Else, and what she overhears.

Although she is holidaying at a fashionable resort with her relatives, there are no sympathetic characters around Else. The fact that she was able to go to this resort is beneficial for Else, implying as it does that her family and her own prospects are healthier than they really are. Social networking was of importance in any bourgeois girl's upbringing, as Kaplan points out:

Families with the financial means to make both leisure time and travel possible for their daughters sent them to care for sick relatives [...] to spend vacation time with distant cousins, [...] or to enjoy the "big city" while visiting a relative. Whereas boys left home for an apprenticeship or the university, girls left home in order to maintain family connections.⁵¹⁵

⁵¹³ Morris, *Monolog* 30.

⁵¹⁴ Siew Lian Yeo. "'Entweder oder': dualism in Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else*" in *Modern Austrian Literature*. 32: 2; 1999. 15-26. 18.

⁵¹⁵ Kaplan, *Making* 75.

Despite her generosity, her aunt is not someone to whom Else can turn; as with the rest of their relations, she will not consider helping Else's father, and Else is instructed not to mention their most recent financial crisis to her.⁵¹⁶ Else suspects that her aunt is anxious about her making advances toward her cousin Paul, and while this is only her perception, the aunt's reaction to Else's public exposure is telling: "Du denkst doch nicht, Paul, daß ich in ein und demselben Coupé mit dieser Person nach Wien fahren werde. Da könnte man schöne Sachen erleben."⁵¹⁷ The aunt's use of the word "Person" shows exactly how little affection she has for her niece: as soon as the girl becomes ill, she is dehumanized, to be disposed of, rather than cared for or worried about. Else's perception of Paul is mixed, but he shows in his actions and words a concern for the girl that is lacking in his mother. Paul defends "das arme Kind"⁵¹⁸ from his lover Cissy Mohr, whose attitude toward Else and her collapse is more cynical. She mocks Paul for naively defending Else's innocence, and implying that his intentions toward the girl are less than honorable: "Ob du mich auch ein armes Kind nennen würdest, wenn ich mich im Musikzimmer nackt hingestellt hätte?" Else's attitude toward this young, married woman is equally uncharitable: she is aware of the affair between Cissy and Paul, and is unimpressed by Cissy's performance as a mother. Herr von Dorsday is the only character whose persona in Else's eyes matches his words: there is no ambiguity about what he wants from her, and no way that she could be misreading his intent.

Because of the absence of an external narrator, the details of Else's life and character must be gleaned and pieced together, as well as taken at face value. What can be said with certainty is that she is the only daughter in a bourgeois, Jewish family. Her father is a lawyer,

⁵¹⁶ Arthur Schnitzler, *Fräulein Else* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 2000) 56.

⁵¹⁷ *ibid.* 149.

⁵¹⁸ *ibid.* 156.

and has proven incapable of avoiding, or of extricating himself from, suspicious financial dealings and debts. Else's feelings about her father are characteristically confused and conflicting. She feels sure that he has had affairs – "Sicher. Öfters."⁵¹⁹ – but her attitude toward her mother is so negative that Else does not blame her father for betraying his wife. Else describes her mother as "ziemlich dumm,"⁵²⁰ and is critical of both the style and the content of the letter she receives from her: "Einen furchtbaren Stil schreibt Mama [...] Hältst du mich für eine Gans, Mama? [...] Glaubst du wirklich, Mama?"⁵²¹ Else is torn between the urge to condemn and the urge to save her father, who has, by this stage, no friends or other relatives upon whom he can rely for assistance, as her mother writes:

Du weiß ja, Kind, du bist ja klug, wir waren ja, Gott sei's geklagt, schon ein paar Mal in einer ähnlichen Situation und die Familie hat immer herausgeholfen. Zuletzt hat es sich gar um hundertzwanzigtausend gehandelt. Aber damals hat der Papa einen Revers unterschreiben müssen, daß er niemals wieder an die Verwandten, speziell an den Onkel Bernhard, herantreten wird.⁵²²

Else's family is thus in dire straits, with her father's latest and mounting debt. Else's loyalty to her family is by no means to be taken for granted, however, because of their strained and superficial relationships: "Alles in unserem Haus wird mit Scherzen erledigt, und keinem ist scherzhaft zu Mut. Jeder hat eigentlich Angst vor dem andern, jeder ist allein."⁵²³ Neither her parents nor her brother Rudi can command either Else's respect or her affection, rendering their request for her self-sacrifice all the more problematic. At the same time, Else has no friends, at the resort or at home in Vienna: "Wie weit ist Wien! Wie lange bin ich schon fort?"

⁵¹⁹ *ibid.* 44.

⁵²⁰ *ibid.* 44.

⁵²¹ *ibid.* 51, 54.

⁵²² *ibid.* 52. See also *ibid.* 55. "Papa hat so viele beste Freunde gehabt und in Wirklichkeit keinen."

⁵²³ *ibid.* 69.

Wie allein bin ich da! Ich habe keine Freundin, ich habe auch keinen Freund.”⁵²⁴ Else is entirely alone in the world, and must rely upon herself to make it through her ordeal.

Else’s isolation in the world is thus similar to Jettchen’s. The two also share a self-assurance about and an awareness of their physical beauty. Else is confident that she has admirers, and she has had at least one serious flirtation, with a Doktor Froriep, who subsequently disappeared, “Wegen Papa, vielleicht? Wahrscheinlich.”⁵²⁵ There is now a man called Fred who is enamoured with her, but Else finds him unappealing: “Fred ist mir sympathisch, nicht mehr. Vielleicht, wenn er eleganter wäre. Ich bin ja doch ein Snob.”⁵²⁶ Herr von Dorsday tells Else she is beautiful, and Paul compliments her: “Du bist geheimnisvoll, dämonisch, verführerisch [...] Man könnte geradezu toll werden, wenn man dich ansieht.”⁵²⁷ There was also at some point an artist who wanted to paint Else, apparently nude, and even Cissy tells her how lovely she looks: “Du siehst wirklich entzückend aus, Else, ich hätte große Lust, dir den Hof zu machen”⁵²⁸ Else’s own descriptions of herself depict a very attractive young woman: she does not think she looks Jewish, thinking: “Mir sieht’s niemand an. Ich bin sogar blond, rötlich-blond, und Rudi sieht absolut aus wie ein Aristokrat. Bei der Mama merkt man es freilich gleich, wenigstens im Reden. Beim Papa wieder gar nicht.”⁵²⁹ Else is also aware that she stands out among the other hotel guests: “Ich bin heute wirklich schön [...] Ich habe eine edle Stirn und eine schöne Figur [...] Guten

⁵²⁴ *ibid.* 63.

⁵²⁵ *ibid.* 67.

⁵²⁶ *ibid.* 44.

⁵²⁷ *ibid.* 86, 72.

⁵²⁸ *ibid.* 66, 71.

⁵²⁹ *ibid.* 59.

Abend, schönsten Fräulein im Spiegel [...] Wie schön meine rotblonden Haare sind, und meine Schultern; meine Augen sind auch nicht übel [...] Bin ich wirklich so schön wie im Spiegel?“⁵³⁰ Indicative of Else's vanity is her constant attention at the beginning of the work to whether people are looking at her, and to how she appears to them:

Sehe ich nun gnädig aus? [...] Hab' ich ungnädig gedankt? Oder gar hochmütig? [...] Die Marchesa [...] Ich lasse sie vorbei, nicke ein wenig, - nicht als wenn ich mir eine besondere Ehre daraus mache, daß mich eine Marchesa anlächelt [...] Das schwarze zieh' ich an. Sie haben mich gestern alle angestarrt [...] Schön bin ich eigentlich nicht, aber interessant.⁵³¹

Else's obsession with her body and how others see it, as well as her conflicting attitudes to her sexuality, may hint at sexual abuse as a child. Else's dismissal of her mother, and her criticism of Cissy as a mother, coupled with her assertions that she is alone in the world may well indicate that she has endured some trauma in the past, and that an older maternal figure did not help her through it. Evidence for this is almost as scarce as in Jettchen's case, however.⁵³² At the very least, Else seems to be a somewhat typical nineteen year old girl: a mass of contradictions. Her vanity is at odds with her feelings of isolation and her wish to rebel or to shock, she wants to be independent of others, while at the same time envying a life that she cannot share with them because of her father's social and financial standing, and she is ashamed of being an "arme Verwandte."⁵³³ These are timeless and stereotypical reactions of adolescents, and there is little concrete reason to suppose that,

⁵³⁰ *ibid.* 62, 65, 66, 68, 121, 127.

⁵³¹ *ibid.* 42, 43, 48, 62.

⁵³² The similarity with Dora's attention to Frau K's children, and her dismissal of both Frau K's and her own mother's maternal qualities is striking here. Dora's mother and Frau K. are also described as showing no interest in their children, which could be read as not paying enough attention to Dora's abuse. See Freud *Bruchstück*. 178, 196.

⁵³³ *ibid.* 43.

although the seeds of her later neuroses are already present, lacking a crisis, Else would degenerate to the state of mental disruption that she does.

As with Jettchen, the mental states that Else goes through have a distinct turning point in the novella – namely, at the point when Herr von Dorsday announces “Je vous désire.”⁵³⁴ Beforehand, Else displays a number of potentially unhealthy symptoms or proclivities. Afterward, each of these swiftly becomes part of a downward spiral in her mental health. The one concrete physical factor of which the reader is made aware is Else’s impending period:

Auch die vorige Nacht hab’ ich so miserable geschlafen. Freilich, es sind gerade diese Tage. Drum hab’ ich auch das Ziehen in den Beinen. Dritter September ist heute. Also wahrscheinlich am sechsten.⁵³⁵

Ich habe Fieber, ganz gewiß. Oder bin ich schon unwohl? Nein, Fieber habe ich.⁵³⁶

This information is of significance because of Else’s attitude toward her period: it is something that makes her unwell, affecting her physically and mentally, creating an imbalance that affects all that will follow. As Astrid Lange-Kirchheim puts it: “[d]as hormonelle Geschehen bewirkt eine physische Destabilisierung.”⁵³⁷ It is in order to combat these symptoms that Else has packages of the drug Veronal, despite its dangers: “Ich werde heute Veronal nehmen. O, ich werde mich nicht daran gewöhnen. Nein, lieber Fred, du mußt nicht besorgt sein.”⁵³⁸ The girl is thus portrayed in a compromised mental state from the beginning, which is only exacerbated by subsequent events.

⁵³⁴ *ibid.* 87.

⁵³⁵ *ibid.* 47.

⁵³⁶ *ibid.* 61.

⁵³⁷ Astrid Lange-Kirchheim. “Adoleszenz, Hysterie und Autorschaft in Arthur Schnitzlers Novelle ‘Fräulein Else’” in *Jahrbuch der deutschen Schillergesellschaft*. 1998. 42: 265-300. 268.

⁵³⁸ Schnitzler, *Fräulein Else*. 48.

As Morris points out, the interior monologue is not as accessible to the reader as a conventional narrative: as is the case here, threads and associations must be traced by the reader, while Else's mind flits from one often contradictory thought to another. Her attitude toward sexuality is especially problematic in the early part of the work, as she tries to counter her clear lack of sexual experience with a typically defiant, adolescent reaction of both desire and denial, asserting that she will have a thousand lovers, or none at all. She is jealous of others and their experience, most notably Cissy and Paul, but believes "ich kann mich nicht verlieben,"⁵³⁹ and does not even want to, because of its physical implications: "Dann liegen sie zusammen im Bett. Unappetitlich."⁵⁴⁰ Her ideas about her future are equally at odds: "Aber Kind will ich keines haben. Ich bin nicht mütterlich,"⁵⁴¹ but "[e]inen Gutbesitzer werde ich heiraten und Kinder werde ich haben."⁵⁴² At the same time, Else hopes to be dead by the age of forty-five.⁵⁴³ It seems that given her lack of a happy family background, or perhaps her abusive past, Else has no model upon which to base her ideas about her own future as a wife or mother. Her later death fantasies are foreshadowed before she reads her mother's letter, when she imagines a report about her own, accidental death:

Ich setze mich aufs Fensterbrett und lese ihn. Achtgeben, daß ich nicht hinunterstürze. Wie uns aus San Martino gemeldet wird, hat sich dort im Hotel Fratazza ein beklagter Unfall ereignet. Fräulein Else T., ein neunzehnjähriges bildschönes Mädchen, Tochter des bekannten Advokaten... Natürlich würde es heißen, ich hätte mich umgebracht aus unglücklicher Liebe oder weil ich in der Hoffnung war. Unglücklicher Liebe, ah nein.⁵⁴⁴

⁵³⁹ *ibid.* 44.

⁵⁴⁰ *ibid.* 68.

⁵⁴¹ *ibid.* 66.

⁵⁴² *ibid.* 67.

⁵⁴³ *ibid.* 48.

⁵⁴⁴ *ibid.* 50.

At this stage, there is no actual reason for her to seek death, other than in her imagination; later, suicide will become a viable escape from her situation.

Else's attitudes toward other aspects of life are also markedly different before and after her conversation with Dorsday. When thinking about marriage, Else feels, quite calmly, that when any woman marries she is in fact selling herself. At this point, Else can view the possibility with a sense of detachment, as something that other women have had to do: "Wenn ich einmal heirate, werde ich es wahrscheinlich billiger tun. Ist es denn gar so schlimm?"⁵⁴⁵ After it is made clear that Dorsday does want to buy something of her, her rejection of the notion becomes more vehement: "Aber ich verkaufe mich nicht. Ein Luder will ich sein, aber nicht eine Dirne." "Bin ein anständiges Mädchen aus guter Familie. Bin ja keine Dirne..."⁵⁴⁶ Before Dorsday's request, Else's attitude toward her father is negative, yet conciliatory, blaming him for his weaknesses, but wishing to save him: "[...] der Papa ist zum geringsten Teil selber daran schuld.' – Wer denn, Mama?" "Warum tust du mir das an, Papa?" "Ich werde ihn retten. Ja, Papa, ich werde dich retten." "So darf es nicht weitergehen. Ich werde einmal ernsthaft mit Papa sprechen."⁵⁴⁷ These sentiments and almost parental intentions turn to an accusatory and defiant tone, after Else sees her father as complicit in Dorsday's wishes:

Vor wem werde ich mich das nächste Mal nackt ausziehen müssen? Oder bleiben wir der Einfachheit wegen bei Herrn Dorsday?

Sie haben sich verrechnet, Herr von Dorsday. Und der Papa auch. Ja, verrechnet hat er sich. Er muß es ja vorher gesehen haben. Er kennt ja die Menschen. Er kennt doch den Herrn von Dorsday.

⁵⁴⁵ *ibid.* 61.

⁵⁴⁶ *ibid.* 95, 141.

⁵⁴⁷ *ibid.* 56, 65, 59, 69.

Und es geschähe ihnen ganz recht, ihnen allen, sie haben mich ja doch nur daraufhin erzogen, daß ich mich verkaufe, so oder so.

Und sterben müssen wir alle. Aber du hast das alles vorläufig nicht nötig, Papa. Du hast ja deine herrlich gewachsene Tochter, und Adresse bleibt Fiala.⁵⁴⁸

Else's appearance naked in the music room thus occurs in the context of her extremely confused and changeable psychological landscape.

Just as Jettchen feels that a foreign entity has taken over and is operating her body, so too does Else feel at a remove from reality. She is in a state of high agitation during her conversation with Dorsday, finding the situation unreal: "Wie merkwürdig meine Stimme klingt. Bin das ich, die da redet? Träume ich vielleicht? Ich habe gewiß jetzt auch ein ganz anderes Gesicht als sonst."⁵⁴⁹ Her running commentary throughout the scene on how she or Dorsday is talking, and about what is being said, also creates the impression of a temporal distance, as if reality has slowed down in comparison to the speed at which her mind feverishly takes it in. She is painfully aware of how degrading her situation is, thinking "Ach, ich lasse es mir gefallen. Was tut's! Wenn man einmal so tief gesunken ist [...] O Gott, wie ich mich erniedrige."⁵⁵⁰ Her sense of humiliation and injustice is heightened by what Dorsday says, and by his protestations of his own innocence: "Ja, Else, man ist eben nur ein Mann, und es ist nicht meine Schuld, daß Sie so schön sind, Else [...] Sie sehen mich an, Else, als wenn ich verrückt wäre. Ich bin es vielleicht ein wenig, denn es geht ein Zauber von

⁵⁴⁸ *ibid.* 93, 95, 106, 130. Although the evidence is, once a gain, sparse, it appears that similar conditions were placed on Dorsday's previous loan to Else's family, at that time involving her mother. Else's assertions that her parents know what they are doing in sending her to him certainly indicates that something is amiss.

⁵⁴⁹ *ibid.* 78.

⁵⁵⁰ *ibid.* 79, 80.

Ihnen aus, Else, den Sie selbst wohl nicht ahnen.”⁵⁵¹ If Dorsday is innocent, then Else must be being blamed, but she is unable to defend herself, retreating almost into a state of shock, and only able to think about how she should react:

Und ich stehe noch da. Warum denn? Ich gehe, ich gehe ohne Gruß [...] Ich bleibe wirklich stehen. Warum denn? Da stehen wir uns gegenüber. Hätte ich ihn nicht einfach ins Gesicht schlagen sollen? Wäre nicht noch jetzt Zeit dazu? Die zwei Engländer kommen vorbei. Jetzt wäre der Moment. Gerade darum. Warum tu’ ich es denn nicht? Ich bin feig, ich bin zerbrochen, ich bin erniedrigt.⁵⁵²

Warum schlage ich ihm nicht ins Gesicht, dem Schuft! [...] Warum schlage ich ihm nicht ins Gesicht? Riesengroß ist sein Gesicht. Warum so nah, du Schuft? Ich will deinen Atem nicht auf meinen Wangen. Warum lasse ich ihn nicht einfach stehen?⁵⁵³

After the arrival of a second message from her mother, increasing the amount needed from Dorsday, Else’s mental language begins to deteriorate, as she laughs and sings to herself.⁵⁵⁴ Her reaction to this further demand is to resign herself to it:

Warum denn sterben? Keine Spur. Lustig, lustig, jetzt fängt ja das Leben erst an. Ihr sollt Euere Freude haben. Ihr sollt stolz werden auf Euer Töchterlein. Ein Luder will ich werden, wie es die Welt noch nicht gesehen hat. Adresse bleibt Fiala. Du sollst deine fünfzigtausend Gulden haben, Papa. Aber die nächsten, die ich mir verdiene, um die kaufe ich mir neue Nachthemden, mit Spitzen besetzt, ganz durchsichtig und köstliche Seidenstrümpfe. Man lebt nur einmal. Wozu schaut man denn so aus wie ich.⁵⁵⁵

Else prepares the Veronal powders, but tells herself she will not necessary use them: “Ich will sie ja nur ansehen, die lieben Pulver. Es verpflichtet ja zu nichts. Auch daß ich sie ins Glas schütte, verpflichtet ja zu nichts.”⁵⁵⁶ It is while still in the safety of her room that Else

⁵⁵¹ *ibid.* 86, 88.

⁵⁵² *ibid.* 86.

⁵⁵³ *ibid.* 88

⁵⁵⁴ *ibid.* 119.

⁵⁵⁵ *ibid.* 121.

⁵⁵⁶ *ibid.* 123.

decides that everyone should have the honor of seeing her naked. This would fulfil her bargain with Dorsday, saving her father, and be a form of rebirth for her: “Ich bin nur ein wenig erregt. Das ist doch ganz selbstverständlich, bevor man zum zweitenmal auf die Welt kommt [...] Ich freue mich darauf. Hab’ ich mir nicht mein ganzes Leben lang so was gewünscht?”⁵⁵⁷ In this rebellious mood, she feels convinced she is not mad, but sane for the first time. When she goes to leave a note for Dorsday, however, her resolve begins to weaken, and her thoughts again lose structure, with the first actual breaks in her otherwise flowing thought processes: “So, da liegt er ... Macht nichts ... Ich kann noch immer tun, was ich will.”⁵⁵⁸

The inclusion of music in the text, in between Else’s thoughts, also serves to highlight her strained and overwrought mental state, as she loses more and more control over what enters her consciousness and what direction her thoughts take.⁵⁵⁹ As she encounters other hotel guests, Else begins to look for ways out of her chosen path, turning events into omens of good or ill: “Wenn der Kellner den schwarzen Kaffee dem alten Herrn dort serviert, so geht alles gut aus. Und wenn er ihn dem jungen Ehepaar in der Ecke bringt, so ist alles verloren.”⁵⁶⁰ There is no turning back, however. As soon as she has exposed her naked body, Else loses control of it, and she is unable to stop herself laughing and screaming.⁵⁶¹ She then apparently falls unconscious, and she decides to remain so, as she is carried to her room. She feels wide awake, and can, as with Jettchen, hear everything with an unusual clarity, as Paul

⁵⁵⁷ *ibid.* 128, 131.

⁵⁵⁸ *ibid.* 132. See also 135.

⁵⁵⁹ *ibid.* 140, 141, 143.

⁵⁶⁰ *ibid.* 135.

⁵⁶¹ *ibid.* 144.

explains: “In diesem Zustand sind die Sinne manchmal unheimlich geschärft.”⁵⁶² Else has difficulty moving, but is able to rouse herself enough to drink her fatal dose of Veronal, leaving the reason for her exposure and suicide unexplained to those around her.

Jettchen and Else are thus imprisoned in a role unsuitable for their individual characters. What causes a break in their ability to cope with this situation is the demand by society for them to sacrifice themselves fully for the benefit (either economic or social) of others.

The Traffic in Women

Both Jettchen Gebert and Fräulein Else are involved in in a system of traffic: the system by which the female body is negotiated between others, for a gain which is not their own. In her article “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of sex” (1975), Gayle Rubin charts the role of women in a number of political and social frameworks, whether theoretical or sociologically observed. Beginning with Marx and Engels’ characterization of capitalism, Rubin identifies the unacknowledged work that women traditionally do in the home as the backbone of the economics of Western capitalism. Because, however, woman’s work is not regarded as real work, it is given neither the respect nor the compensation that other work is. As Rubin puts it, a woman’s work, by catering for the welfare of herself and her family, is thus “a key element in the process of the reproduction of the laborer from whom surplus value is taken.”⁵⁶³ Although the domestic role of women predates capitalism, the capitalist system has literally been able to profit from the

⁵⁶² *ibid.* 151.

⁵⁶³ Gayle Rubin. “The Traffic in Women: Notes on the ‘Political Economy’ of Sex” in Rayna R. Reiter, ed. *Toward an Anthropology of Women*. (New York: Monthly Review Press, 1975) 162.

beliefs and assumptions that it is somehow natural for women to do this work. Rubin takes issue with the very notion of natural gender roles, arguing that the term “sex/gender system” is more accurate: “sex/gender system [...] is a neutral term which refers to the domain and indicates that oppression is not inevitable in that domain, but is the product of the specific social relations which organize it.”⁵⁶⁴ The traffic in women began, in Rubin’s argument, with the use of women as the social glue that would bind individuals, families and entire groups together: promises of support, foodstuffs or other objects could be used to build such bonds, but an exchange of women could create a tangible, familial, blood link, with future generations literally embodying the deal. Formative societies are based almost entirely upon such exchanges, with high premium placed upon reciprocity: “Gift-giving confers upon its participants a special relationship of trust, solidarity, and mutual aid. One can solicit a friendly relationship in the offer of a gift: acceptance implies a willingness to return a gift and a confirmation of the relationship.”⁵⁶⁵ What this system means for women in an androcentric society is that they are the gifts; they become objects in an exchange between men. As Rubin puts it, “it is the partners, not the presents, upon whom reciprocal exchange confers its quasi-mystical power of special linkage.”⁵⁶⁶ While men can also be exchanged, it is only as the exception to the rule, because it is not the purpose of the system to keep men in a subordinate position, along with livestock and goods, but women. The exchange itself can take place on a number of levels of societal intercourse: “Women are given in marriage, taken in battle, exchanged for favors, sent in tribute, traded, bought and sold.”⁵⁶⁷

⁵⁶⁴ *ibid.* 168.

⁵⁶⁵ *ibid.* 172.

⁵⁶⁶ *ibid.* 174.

⁵⁶⁷ *ibid.* 175.

Such is the unspoken system of exchange that Jettchen and Else live in. As Bettina Matthias argues: “*Fräulein Else* is Schnitzler’s variation on themes of female sexuality, the place of the daughter in the early twentieth-century family and the impact of socio-economic realities, especially capitalism, on the private sphere and the family.”⁵⁶⁸ Just as men, or a male-dominated society, “create” prostitutes, so too do they create women as objects of exchange.⁵⁶⁹ The fact that it is women who orchestrate the transactions concerning Jettchen and Else does not negate this: they are older, maternal figures who are either used by men, or have taken on masculine roles. Else’s mother writes on her father’s behalf, and is clearly being used by him to achieve the results they both require. Jettchen’s brash and overbearing aunt Riekchen is portrayed throughout the novel as being the dominant figure in her household, and is the character most concerned with the upkeep of traditional bourgeois and thus androcentric norms. Jettchen’s marriage is intended to be a very obvious link between two families: a textbook case of social networking. The demands made of Else are less palatable in the eyes of bourgeois society, but no less rooted in the history of society’s dealing with women: her body is being traded for monetary and social gain.⁵⁷⁰ That they should have such expectations placed upon them does not come as a surprise, either to the reader or to the female characters themselves. Else knows that her peers sell themselves into marriage, and Jettchen is well aware that her “account” with Riekchen and Salomon must at some point be settled.

⁵⁶⁸ Matthias, *Tragedy* 248.

⁵⁶⁹ See Schmidt, *Geschlecht* 27.

⁵⁷⁰ As will be discussed below, Astrid Lange-Kirchheim notes the significance of Dorsday’s role as an art dealer, for whom Else’s body becomes a “Handlungsobjekt.”

What causes a crisis for these women is that the unspoken system becomes very explicitly articulated. The fact that this is a critical point is shown in *Fräulein Else* through Dorsday's use of French to express his wishes: "Je vous désire."⁵⁷¹ This is striking to Else, who thinks: "Er hätte es auch deutsch sagen können, der Herr Vicomte."⁵⁷² His use of French clearly has no softening effect, although it does allow the speaker to distance himself somewhat from an undesirable and a potentially dangerous suggestion. Riekchen does not make any attempt at such niceties, but in her approach to the subject of Julius' proposal she makes it almost impossible for Jettchen to refuse: "'Nu', sagte sie, 'Jettchen – wie lange bist de eigentlich schon bei uns? – Ich glaub, auf den nächsten vierzehnten werden's einundzwanzig Jahr [...] Möchtest de nich mal weg von uns, Jettchen? Ich mein so, deinen eigenen Haushalt haben.'"⁵⁷³ By first stating exactly how much Jettchen owes her family, and then reminding her that she is not in her own home while she still lives with them, Riekchen manipulates Jettchen into giving the response she wants, although as Horch points out: "[Jettchen] findet aber am Hochzeitstag selbst die Kraft, die 'Rechnung' an Onkel Salomon nicht zu bezahlen und ihren Mann zu verlassen."⁵⁷⁴ Jettchen is indeed finally capable of breaking the deal that was made, fleeing, and thereby denying her new husband his wedding night, and all that it traditionally entailed.

This flight can be directly compared with that of Freud's patient Dora. As was the case with Else, Dora's body was intended to be used in exchange for harmony between her

⁵⁷¹ Schnitzler, *Else* 87.

⁵⁷² *ibid.* 87. The same might strike the reader of Freud's works, where his use of foreign languages, as in his protestation that "J'appelle un chat un chat," seems to indicate anything but a self-evident and unashamed confidence in his statements.

⁵⁷³ Hermann, *Jettchen* 418.

⁵⁷⁴ Horch, *Hermann* 87.

parents and another couple, Herr and Frau K. It becomes clear in her case study that the intrigue between the two couples had been going on for years, and as the girl had matured, she had had more potential to become sexually involved. The issue of Dora's complicity in this is extremely problematic, not least because her ages were changed by Freud in writing the study.⁵⁷⁵ On the one hand, this aided his attempts to keep the patient anonymous, but on the other hand, adding one or two years to an adolescent girls' age is far more significant than adding to the age of a sexually mature adult. Just as Dorsday in effect blames Else for his attraction to her, this projection of knowledge and maturity onto a child serves to mask the responsibility, and guilt, of the adult. Dora is a child at the beginning of the tale, however, and as such has little recourse available to her against the bargaining that is going on around her.

While it is the articulation of the demands being made of Jettchen and Else that brings about their crises, here it is Dora who speaks the unspeakable, bringing about crisis among the adults. She shows that she knows exactly what is going on: "Wenn sie in erbitterter Stimmung war, drängte sich in ihr die Auffassung auf, daß sie Herrn K. ausgeliefert worden sei als Preis für seine Duldung der Beziehung zwischen Doras Vater und seiner Frau, und man konnte hinter ihrer Zärtlichkeit für den Vater die Wut über solche Verwendung ahnen."⁵⁷⁶ As long as the others did not acknowledge the deals that they had made with each other, their odd relationships could continue unchecked. When Dora speaks out, both literally and through her symptoms, it is she who brings disorder to the system, and she seems to have

⁵⁷⁵ Liliane Weißberg, „Exit Dora: Freud's patient takes her leave“ in *Psychoanalytic Enquiry*, (25:1), 2005, 5-26. 6. See also Patrick J. Mahony, *Freud's Dora* (New York: Yale University Press, 1996) 11.

⁵⁷⁶ Sigmund Freud, "Bruchstück einer Hysterie-Analyse" in *Sigmund Freud: Gesammelte Werke* Band 5 (London: Imago, 1942) 193.

seen through her parents' attempts to find a doctor who could control her: "Das [...] Kind gewöhnte sich daran, der Bemühungen der Ärzte zu spotten und zuletzt auf ärztliche Hilfe zu verzichten."⁵⁷⁷ As Mahony puts it, Dora was trapped in a conspiracy of silence among the most powerful adults in her life: "The game's name was intrigue [...] The adults now colluded in denial of Dora's sexual abuse [...] Dora found herself in a snare of lies and betrayal constructed by two married couples. On all sides they boxed her in, a commodified object – worse still, damaged goods."⁵⁷⁸ Freud took his place in this conspiracy, which, as Mitchell points out, did nothing to endear him to his patient: "From Dora's point of view [...], she has come to see a physician about her sick body, like any good nineteenth-century middle-class woman hysteric. But during the two-month treatment she learns that what Freud wants to hear about are her Oedipal fantasies. Dora is understandably confused."⁵⁷⁹ Even in choosing the name Dora for her, Freud allied himself with those who used and abused the girl, denying her own will or agency: "Dora was the name of a servant in the Freud family who had been his sister's nursemaid. She had been forced to give up her own name, Rosa, as it was also his sister's name. Through his choice, or lack of choice, Freud revealed his recognition that in his mind, as in [Dora's], servitude was a metaphor for femininity."⁵⁸⁰ All three of these women rebel against that which society is trying to force them into. Jettchen and Dora leave, as did Antonie and Fanny. Else dies, as Lies and Toni did, but not before apparently acquiescing to, but also fundamentally confounding the spirit of Dorsday's

⁵⁷⁷ *ibid.* 180.

⁵⁷⁸ Mahony, *Dora* 10, 12.

⁵⁷⁹ Juliet Mitchell, *Mad men and Medusas: reclaiming hysteria* (New York: Basic Books, 2000) 92.

⁵⁸⁰ Maria Ramas, "Freud's Dora, Dora's Hysteria" in Charles Bernheimer and Claire Kahane, eds. *In Dora's Case* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990) 176. Mahony also notes the Greek association between the name Dora and the nouns "gifts." Mahony, *Dora* 2.

request. Before becoming absent or dead women, however, these three rebel further in their apparent hysteria.

Hysterical Women

In the trafficking of women, it is their bodies that are at stake. In her discussion of the bourgeois tragedy, and in particular, Lessing's *Emilia Galotti*, Matthias argues: "the female body, i.e. the body of the daughter, emerges as the main site of attention over which individuals, the family as a group, and society negotiate their relationships."⁵⁸¹ Jettchen's body is being given in lawful matrimony, while Else's and Dora's are being manipulated in more underhanded ways, but all three are pawns in a transaction that is neither of their choosing nor in their best interests. Their response is to remove themselves, with Else committing suicide, as Lies and Toni did, and Jettchen and Dora echoing Antonie and Fanny's escapes. Before following these courses of action, however, Else and Jettchen first undergo a physical transformation and a series of symptoms that mirror those of case study patients such as Dora, and that would at the time have been deemed hysterical, although the term is not central in either work.

Jettchen's illness is not acknowledged by the other characters, and the notion of hysteria is never mentioned. The Gebert family's reaction is to ignore Jettchen's physical and psychological symptoms. Even in the sequel *Henriette Jacoby*, no effort is made to reconcile the others with Jettchen's outbreak, and, again, no mention of mental illness is made. After Else's exposure, those around her are extremely quick to make a diagnosis, and to try to take control back from the girl. It is Cissy who tells the seemingly unconscious Else, with

⁵⁸¹ Matthias, *Tragedy* 249.

apparent glee, that it has been decided that she has had a hysterical attack: “Ein hysterischer Anfall, wird behauptet.”⁵⁸² Paul is careful not to use the word hysteria, preferring the less controversial language of an “Anfall”: “Es ist ein Ohnmachtsanfall [...] Jetzt braucht sie nichts als Ruhe.”⁵⁸³ Her aunt also asserts that she knew something of this sort was going to happen, in her own attempt to exert her authority over her niece: “Ich habe es ja kommen gesehen, Paul [...] Schon die ganzen letzten Tage habe ich so etwas kommen gesehen. Sie ist überhaupt nicht normal.”⁵⁸⁴ The aunt’s and Cissy’s immediate diagnosis of Else’s condition is an assumption of control over the girl, a knee-jerk reaction to her shocking behaviour that robs her actions of any import. In Dora’s case, her father brought her to Freud with exactly this intention, in the hope that by labeling her, Freud could gain control and get her “back on track,” similarly robbing her symptoms of any import, and allowing the denial of any wrongdoing to continue. If their diagnosis of hysteria could be upheld, then Dora would become nothing but a willful girl.

Indeed, hysteria was categorized in its very name as a feminine condition, as opposed to the active courses available to men. Else contrasts her own impossible urge to take some form of physical, violent action against Dorsday with the fact that any man would be capable of and justified in doing so: “Paul soll ihn fordern und ihn totschießen. Oder Rudi. [...] Von Dorsday geh’ ich direct zu Paul und erzähle ihm alles. Und dann soll Paul ihn ohrfeigen.”⁵⁸⁵ So-called hysterical outbursts are not afforded the status or admiration that a duel or physical confrontation between men could be. Freud believed that it was women’s passive nature, and

⁵⁸² Schnitzler, *Else* 153.

⁵⁸³ *ibid.* 145, 153.

⁵⁸⁴ *ibid.* 149.

⁵⁸⁵ *ibid.* 91, 120.

therefore their propensity to have frustrated desires that they could not act upon, that lay at the heart of their hysterical symptoms: “Symptoms like inertia, overexcitation, excessive role-playing, or motoric function disorders signal a recourse to body language that stands in for the stifling domestic situation women found themselves in as the nineteenth century progressed.”⁵⁸⁶ Rather than an act of rebellion, hysteria is thus often seen as a retreat into passivity. Hayward describes the process of becoming hysterical thus: “hysteria essentially involves giving up on living and thinking for oneself, and instead gives over one’s identity to another who is experienced as more powerful.”⁵⁸⁷ As Porter puts it:

In [...] stringent force fields, feelings of distress or resentment, anxiety or anger, were inevitable but difficult to manage; they were commonly “repressed” or rerouted into one of the rare forms of expression that were legitimate: the presentation of physical illness. Being sick afforded respite and release to those who needed temporarily or permanently to opt out [...] Being a hysterical woman [...] meant exhibiting a battery of incapacitating symptoms emblematic of helplessness, enfeeblement, and (with lower limb paralyses) immobilization, acting out thereby, through sickness pantomime, the sufferer’s actual social condition.⁵⁸⁸

Kronberger points out that such individualized expression was the only kind available to women in the fin-de-siècle social climate: “In [der] Situation, in der ein sprachliches Aufbegehren (noch) nicht möglich war – politische Ämter oder ein Studium an den Universitäten waren für Frauen unmöglich – blieb Krankheit eine der wenigen Möglichkeiten wirksamen Aufbegehrens.”⁵⁸⁹ Dora’s case study offers further insight into how illness could be, and was, used for personal gain, or to extricate oneself from situations – often physical –

⁵⁸⁶ Elisabeth Bronfen, *The Knotted Subject* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1998) 137. See also Paul Verhaeghe, *Does the Woman Exist?* (London: Rebus Press, 1999) 15.

⁵⁸⁷ Helen Hayward, *Never Marry a Girl with a Dead Father* (New York: I.B. Tauris, 1999) 9.

⁵⁸⁸ Roy Porter “The body and the mind, the doctor and the patient” in Sander Gilman et al., eds. *Hysteria beyond Freud* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1993) 225-285. 229.

⁵⁸⁹ Sylvia Kronberger, *Die unerhörten Töchter* (Innsbruck: Studien Verlag, 2002) 133. See also Mark S. Micale, *Approaching Hysteria* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1995) 74.

that were undesirable. In Mitchell's words: "For Dora and her family sexuality and sickness are linked."⁵⁹⁰ Dora turned to her aunt for a model of symptoms and sicknesses,⁵⁹¹ but she was also not blind to examples closer to home, namely her father and Frau K. As Mahony puts it: "[Frau K.] in particular grew healthy when [Herr K.] was away on business trips but, more often than chance would have it, became ill upon his return. Musical illnesses: Dora could develop aphonia when the ever-attentive [Herr K.] was away [...], and [Dora's father] simulated sickness in order to vacation with [Frau K.]."⁵⁹² While the apparent weakness of using illness was commonly attributed to women, it was thus open to both genders as a means of getting what one wanted.

Although this was an extreme resort, the potency of a retreat into illness was not diminished, even if it did not take place in the masculine spheres of politics or academia. As Bronfen puts it: "Having recourse to this psycho-somatic illness defeated their husbands' and families' demands to support the domestic order, given that they concomitantly left the household unattended."⁵⁹³ Just as Lies and Toni's suicides and Antonie and Fanny's flights are underestimated, both in their respective works and in criticism, so too are Jettchen, Else and Dora doomed to failure in terms of what concrete and positive change they can bring about in their lives. In a traditional reading, Jettchen achieves little more than causing a scene, and a public scandal. Her family and peers continue in *Henriette Jacoby* to try to persuade her to accept her husband. It is only after Julius' questionable financial dealings begin to cost the Geberts money that they agree that Jettchen should be allowed to divorce

⁵⁹⁰ Mitchell, *Medusas* 87.

⁵⁹¹ Freud, *Bruchstück* 177.

⁵⁹² Mahony, *Dora* 9.

⁵⁹³ Bronfen, *Knotted* 138.

him. Jettchen does not have to acquiesce to the marriage, and earns the right to be buried under her maiden, rather than her married name, but at the same time, she fails to lead a fulfilling life on her own terms, or to bring about any changes in her milieu. Else also fails, in this view, in that her accusations are silent, and that no public revenge is exacted through her breakdown: neither her family nor Dorsday will be held accountable for her death, and her exposure will do little more than provide gossip until another titillating event takes its place. Dora's departure from Freud's care did nothing to prevent his labeling of her either. Just as with other patients such as Emmi, Dora herself is blamed for abandoning the treatment, the implication being that Freud would of course have succeeded in restoring her to normal if she had only allowed him to.⁵⁹⁴ It is not Dora, but Freud who narrates her tale, but even though she is portrayed as a weak or ineffective rebel, her apparent hysteria, along with that of Jettchen and Else, can clearly be read as active rather than passive.

Both Else's and Jettchen's conditions are mainly internal and private, but their main outbursts are infinitely public. As has been shown, family holidays in fashionable resorts, or lavish family occasions, such as Jettchen's wedding feast, were a public expression of bourgeois status and respectability, and as such, settings in which the bourgeoisie could be at its most vulnerable. The vehement dismissal at the time of hysteria as merely weak and abnormal women's reactions to their unnatural dissatisfaction with their bourgeois life was indicative of just how destructive the phenomenon could be to society. By using their bodies in order to enact their rebellion, women could strike at the very heart of society's ideal of what constituted femininity. The visible representation of respectability was, after all, one of the main components in the creation of the bourgeois self-image. As Anderson argues:

⁵⁹⁴ Freud, *Bruchstück* 168.

“Indeed, making one’s way through the city in general implied putting oneself on display and entering into an economy of glances and stares. This sense of being watched helped enforce social and gender norms.”⁵⁹⁵ Jettchen is continually being described as she walks through, and is seen and greeted in, the streets of Berlin. Her demure and dignified image is starkly negated, however, by the spectacle of her running through the city in her wedding dress – the very costume in which she is to express and enact her passive and feminine nature – entirely out of place, out of character, and out of control. As Kronberger argues: “Der hysterische Anfall hat einen Sinn, einen Grund, den nur die Umgebung nicht kennt. Er wird interpretiert als Durchbruch ihrer weiblichen sexuellen Gefühle und ist in Wirklichkeit das Gegenteil davon, die Abwehr der auf sie gerichteten Projektionen.”⁵⁹⁶ Far from being an excess of femininity, then, the hysterical act in fact directly opposes that version of femininity with which women were supposed to comply. *Fräulein Else* is especially fitting in this regard, because, as Anderson puts it: “Schnitzler’s prose and drama are interesting [...] because they use tropes of watching, being watched, eluding observation, voyeurism, and the hypnotic gaze to explore ideas about sexual difference, subjectivity, voice, and the social role of men and women in early twentieth-century Vienna.”⁵⁹⁷ By exposing her body to everyone, Else takes control of it, and instead of being an impassive image for Dorsday to contemplate and own, as he does other works of art, she actively forces the sight of her body onto society at large.⁵⁹⁸ She at once confronts her audience with that with which it is obsessed, that is, naked

⁵⁹⁵ Susan C. Anderson, „The power of the gaze: visual metaphors in Schnitzler’s prose works and dramas“ in Dagmar C.G. Lorenz, ed. *A companion to the works of Arthur Schnitzler* (Rochester, NY: Camden House, 2003) 303-324. 303.

⁵⁹⁶ Kronberger, *Töchter* 182.

⁵⁹⁷ Anderson, *Gaze* 305.

⁵⁹⁸ See Lange-Kirchheim, *Adoleszenz* 280. See also Matthias, *Tragedy* 257.

femininity, but also that which it cannot bear to see, namely woman as a subject rather than an object.

Hysteria has long been linked with a blind spot in bourgeois society, as in Bronfen's argument: "Hysteria exists only insofar as it results from a given network of medical, supernatural, religious, and aesthetic discourse."⁵⁹⁹ The strict norms and codifications that bourgeois society attempted to enforce, as an expression of its own supremacy, actually highlighted each of its weaknesses. Each apparently flippant labeling of a woman as a hysteric was thus an attempt to contain and explain her, and to characterize her strictly as a transgression from the norm. As Martha Noel Evans puts it, "Patients' emergence from their assigned roles as women, that is, as passive and obedient objects, caused them to be perceived not only as troublemakers, but as perverted and monstrous examples of gender infringement."⁶⁰⁰ Each deviation from gender norms had to be controlled, because, as Silvia Kronberger argues, such cases of abnormality threaten the very basis for normality: "Das subversive Element der hysterischen Symptomatik wird zum Vorbild der 'Dekonstruktion' eines 'phallogozentrischen' Weltbildes. Die Hysterikerin erinnert in ihren Anfällen und Leiden an eine weibliche Sexualität und Körperlichkeit, die die 'normale Frau' vergessen musste."⁶⁰¹

The use of the female body to query the roles prescribed for it is thus far more than merely a revolt on the small scale, or within the family sphere: Else and Jettchen may undergo interior rebellions, but the effects are far from private. These are attacks on society as a whole, undermining all allegedly enlightened attempts to create a world based on

⁵⁹⁹ Bronfen, *Knotted* 102.

⁶⁰⁰ Martha Noel Evans. *Fits and Starts* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1991) 39.

⁶⁰¹ Kronberger, *Töchter* 12.

universal norms: “Die Symptome der Hysterie sind Ausdruck einer massiven Verunsicherung durch die Tatsache, dass die gesellschaftlichen Vorstellungen von Weiblichkeit nicht mit den eigenen Wünschen und Bedürfnissen übereinstimmen.”⁶⁰² Hysteria was thus a means of expressing that which society wished to disguise, and as such, hysteria is a social, rather than a purely physical, disorder. While this aspect of Hermann’s novel has been ignored, much scholarship has been dedicated to reading *Fräulein Else* in this light, as a reaction against what Yeo calls the “mendacity of society.”⁶⁰³ As Bettina Matthias points out, this is a very different society from that which Lessing propounded in Emilia Galotti:

Whereas Emilia and her beautiful body became the symbol of power over which the father (as the representative of bourgeois morals) and the seducer (as the representative of the corrupted upper class) fight, father- and seducer-figure in *Fräulein Else* have basically joined the same ideological camp [...] If Else tries to protect herself from this kind of objectification and subjection to immorality in the traditional sense, she has to fight this battle alone.⁶⁰⁴

As Astrid Lange-Kirchheim puts it, Schnitzler uses *Fräulein Else* to comment upon society as a whole: “Schnitzler [stellt] ein Korrespondenz- und Bedingungsverhältnis her zwischen dem Mißbrauch der Tochter durch den Vater in der Familie und dem Mißbrauch der Frau in der patriarchalischen Gesellschaft.”⁶⁰⁵ Marianne Knoblen-Wauben also places emphasis on this social commentary, rather than on the psychological aspects of the work: “Obwohl psychoanalytische Elemente innerhalb der Novelle nicht zu leugnen sind, läßt Arthur Schnitzler die Handlung sich vor einem konkreten sozialen Hintergrund abspielen: ein korruptes scheinheiliges Bürgertum, das der Gesellschaft seine Normen auferlegt und in dem

⁶⁰² *ibid.* 93.

⁶⁰³ Yeo, *Entweder* 22.

⁶⁰⁴ Matthias, *Tragedy* 253.

⁶⁰⁵ Lange-Kirchheim, *Adoleszenz* 279.

von Freiheit kaum die Rede sein kann.”⁶⁰⁶ The same reading of society can of course be applied to *Jettchen Gebert*. Jettchen is surrounded by surrogate father figures, and she too is used by them as an object of exchange. As will be shown, however, leaving criticism at such a superficial level does nothing to draw Else and Jettchen out of the works: critics seem to have approached these heroines in the same way that the other characters do in the work, brushing them aside as simply hysterical or weak. Such a reading fails to decode the rebellion expressed by their physical symptoms.

While both heroines display symptoms linked at the time with hysteria, they constitute more than an engagement with the demonstrable science of the disease: these are works in which hysteria becomes the language of dissent, through which woman can break away from the roles and expectations placed upon them by society. Kronberger describes Else’s “Anfall” in these terms: “Er wird für sie zu einem Ausdrucksmittel, zu *ihrer* Inszenierung.”⁶⁰⁷ As Gail Finney argues of *Rose Bernd*, it is the incomprehensibility of her action that makes the heroine’s infanticide so powerful an expression: “Inconceivable to the male imagination, her infanticide is the extreme manifestation of the female powerlessness betokened on so many earlier occasions by her silence.”⁶⁰⁸ Hermann certainly makes no overt reference to hysteria in *Jettchen Gebert*. While Else’s condition is quickly diagnosed by those around her, the narrator says absolutely nothing to clarify or diagnose Jettchen’s bizarre behavior. In speaking out through her body in this way, Jettchen in effect silences all those who had taken it upon themselves to discuss and negotiate her fate.

⁶⁰⁶ Marianne Knoben-Wauben, “Ambivalente Konstruktionen der Weiblichkeit: Das Bild der Frau aus der Sicht des Wissenschaftlers Sigmund Freud und des Dichters Arthur Schnitzler” in Guillaume van Gemert and Hans Ester, eds. *Grenzgänge: Literatur und Kultur im Kontext* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 1990) 276-296. 286.

⁶⁰⁷ Kronberger, *Töchter* 182.

⁶⁰⁸ Finney, *Women* 137.

The success or failure of this expression is a matter of some debate, however, not least because the works end with Else's and Jettchen's breakdowns. Critics such as Knobn-Wauben highlight the one-sided nature of this expression, because that which is expressed by Else's breakdown is not interpreted accurately by those around her. Criticism of Fräulein Else does not fail to pinpoint society as the reason for her breakdown: "während die Introspektion stellt sich heraus, daß Else sich der bürgerlichen, materialistischen Existenz nicht entziehen kann. Sie ist unfähig, ein selbstständiges eigensinniges Dasein aufzubauen [...] Obwohl Else Zeitkritik äußert, ist sie nicht imstande, diese zum Ausdruck zu bringen."⁶⁰⁹ If Else fails, it is thus because she has been too strongly influenced by society's dictates. Else's suicide also holds a problematic place in criticism, both in terms of whether she actually wants to commit suicide, and whether that is a decision of which she is capable in her weakened mental state, and in terms of whether death itself is a victory or a defeat. Barbara Gutt discusses the ambivalent nature of suicide among Schnitzler's female characters, arguing that their ambivalence is deliberate:

An den Frauenfiguren, die ein 'selbstgewähltes Ende' finden, analysiert [Schnitzler] die Hintergründe dieser Tat. Keine von ihnen agiert wahrhaft stoisch-überlegen. Mit Selbstmord reagiert das Individuum zwanghaft auf extremen äußeren und inneren Druck, auf eine ausweglose Konfliktsituation, die im Freitod zwar nicht gelöst, aber doch beendet wird. Die Befreiung von Tödlichen bringt allein der Tod. Selbstbefreiung wird identisch mit Selbstzerstörung.⁶¹⁰

Else's suicide is thus no more an acquiescent or defeated, passive end than was Lies' or Toni's.

⁶⁰⁹ Knobn-Wauben, *Konstruktionen* 292.

⁶¹⁰ Barbara Gutt. *Emanzipation bei Arthur Schnitzler* (Berlin: Verlag Volker Spiess, 1978) 94. See also Kronberger, *Töchter* 182.

Scholarship on Hermann's works has neglected to notice his apparently hysterical heroine. While Else has received more attention, critics such as Knoblen-Wauben have painted her in a very negative light, laying the blame for her failure to communicate at her, rather than at society's, feet. In the same way, Dora was blamed for Freud's failure to treat her, and his revenge was arguably to write his study of her, which represents an attempt to define and control the world of a woman who is herself conspicuous in her absence from the narrative.⁶¹¹ Despite the statements that she allegedly made, Dora's voice itself is missing, as the reader cannot trust the words that Freud, as the narrator, puts in her mouth. As Michael puts it: "Freud participates in the case history of 'Dora' – as author, narrator, protagonist, and censor [...] The role left for Dora in Freud's *psychomachia* is, of course, that of antagonist, Freud having taken up the other roles for himself."⁶¹² By leaving, Dora enables Freud to take complete control of her story, manipulating it as he sees fit, and to serve his own ends.

It is here that the parallels between the case study and the two literary works become most apparent. In all three cases, the heroines have something, some demand by society, that they must resist. In *Fräulein Else* and *Jettchen Gebert*, the secondary characters are at a loss to understand the young women's behaviors, and the diagnosis of hysteria is tacitly made, not justifiably, but in order to silence their resistance. By placing the label of "hysteric" on these characters, society can at once silence their expression, be it vocal or physical, and deny the need to understand it at all. They are, after all, only hysterical. The medical diagnosis wielded by doctors such as Freud did exactly the same in fin-de-siècle society. If Dora objected to her parents' abuse, then the blame was placed on her, thereby removing any need

⁶¹¹ See Nina Auerbach, "Magi and maidens: the romance of the Victorian Freud" in Lyn Pykett, ed. *Reading fin de siècle fictions* (New York: Longman, 1996) 22-38. 34.

⁶¹² Michael, *Elektra* 39, 41. See also Weißberg, *Dora* 9.

to listen to her complaints. The medical method of assimilation thus mirrors the reaction to Jettchen and Else in the literary works.

The misreading or ignoring of these two heroines has also been mirrored by the critical attention that has been paid to them, or in Jettchen's case, the lack thereof. These characters are not driven to their end by vanity, on Else's part, or by a failed love affair, on Jettchen's.⁶¹³ Dismissing them as weak characters, who must be expunged for the works to achieve a harmonious end, constitutes a blatant failure to read these characters. Else not only creates a public scandal, but leaves the future of her entire family in question. Her rebellion is to exact revenge on those who would abuse her body, by using it to express her resistance, and then removing it altogether from society's grasp. Jettchen, on the very day when she is to become a productive and reproductive member of society as a middle class housewife, absolutely refuses to be coerced in such a manner. Even though the demands made of her are arguably more reasonable, and appear to be made by well-meaning relatives who wish to ensure her, as well as their own, future, Jettchen's situation is an extremely interesting one. There is no concrete evidence of abuse in her tale, and she is not really being asked to transgress any moral boundaries, but this is exactly the point of her rebellion: her situation is rendered more realistic because of its banality, and the forces that are exerted over her more insidious by their friendly demeanor. Without the sensational trappings of Else's tale, Jettchen's rebellion is perhaps more disturbing. Hermann depicts here a society in which every character has been assimilated, and continues that assimilation. Jettchen stands alone in the world, and her rebellion is deliberately ignored by all.

⁶¹³ "die Frau geht an ihrer Liebe zugrunde, die zwar nicht ganz unerwidert bleibt, aber sich trotzdem nicht erfüllen kann. Ihre Liebeserfüllung scheitert an der Schwäche des Helden." Liere, *Hermann* 150.

While Dora's case was not created as fiction, the same tale of assimilation and rebellion is played out in it. It has a beginning, a middle, and an end – but only for Freud. The patient is brought to him, he attempts to treat her, and in the end he is left free to write the story as he wishes. Just as Jettchen's and Else's rebellions must be teased out from the frameworks that enclose them, so too must Dora's. Faced with an audience which heard only what it wanted to hear, and continually misread her meaning, Dora broke free. In leaving Freud, she not only defied her father, and her father-figure doctor, but she also provided living proof of rebellion present in the literature of the age. All three of these hysterical heroines thus speak volumes about the society that needed to silence their active and expressive rebellion behind a controlling and assimilating diagnosis.

Conclusion

It is the dynamic of social control and individual rebellion that makes these six works so compelling. Even when theirs is not the narrative voice, the female characters serve to shift the lens through which one can perceive their social reality, and it is exactly this kind of shift that makes literature so crucial a part of historical understanding. Each narrative ends with a closed door, through which a woman has passed. We can no more follow Fanny, Antonie or Jettchen into her future than we can follow Lies, Toni or Else into her death. The traditional view of these characters is to some extent correct: there is no place for these women in the society portrayed in the works. As I have shown, however, their role in that society is far from silent, whether they are given the actual words to articulate their rebellion or not.

What this dissertation has also shown is that there is much more to be studied in Georg Hermann's works. Arthur Schnitzler's works have been researched, examined, and re-examined, and the volume of scholarship on his work is hardly likely to diminish. Hermann, on the other hand, has been left in the shadows. The focus of this study, on gender and the role of women, could easily be continued into a discussion of his other novels. The three servant girls who accuse the hero of fathering their children in *Kubinke*, or the prostitute who infects Dr Herzfeld with a sexually transmitted disease, would not only be interesting because they are female figures, however. Discourses of gender mix here, as in *Spielkinder*, with discourses of class. Hermann, with his tacit understanding of the major social as well as the literary issues of the turn of the last century, offers fertile ground for more study.

The recent surge in interest in Hermann, albeit minor when compared to that in other authors, has been motivated for the most part by the fact that he was a Jewish author, whose works fell from grace for that very reason – Nazi policy struck a terrible and lasting blow to the work of many “un-German” artists. Attempts to reappropriate works by European Jews have recovered vast amounts of literary production, bringing it back into the public and critical eye. The fate of Hermann’s work, as with that of so many other artists of the era, has been determined by his Jewish heritage, but he would not necessarily have applied the category of Jewish to himself, or to his work. Hermann considered himself an author, and, at least before the First World War, a German author. A retrospective labeling of his and other authors’ works as Jewish literature, while crucial in bringing them back into the public consciousness, obscures the individual qualities that can be found within them, much as the categorization of Dora and her sisters obscured their own voices, and denied them their right to be recognized as individuals. Sadly, upon concluding his discussion of anti-Semitism in *Der doppelte Spiegel*, Hermann wrote what would ultimately become a prophecy for his own future:

Aber, so wird man mich fragen, wie soll der deutsche Jude dem Antisemitismus entgegentreten? [...] Er soll nicht reden, sondern etwas leisten, und man wird ihn anerkennen, endlich doch anerkennen. Wenn man ihn nicht anerkennt, wenn man ihn, wie einen Einstein, begeistert, so soll er trotzdem etwas leisten. Denn, wenn man ihn nicht schätzt, wird er wenigstens etwas geleistet haben. Und das ist zum Schluß das Einzige, das in der Welt Wert hat und bleibt.⁶¹⁴

It is the task of literary criticism to seek out these unrecognized achievements, just as it is to seek out the silenced or submerged narratives that lie within them.

⁶¹⁴ Hermann, *Spiegel* 91.

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