A MONOLOGUE ON SHAME:
SEXUALITY AND SOCIETY IN ARTHUR SCHNITZLER'S *FRÄULEIN ELSE*

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ABSTRACT

A MONOLOGUE ON SHAME:
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Arthur Schnitzler's novella *Fräulein Else* is an inner monologue of a nineteen-year-old bourgeois woman in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. This literary form enables direct access to both latent and manifest content, that is, to Else's conscious, preconscious, and unconscious thoughts. Insight into her mental data exposes psychical conflict and uncovers sexual desire. For Else, this desire translates into shame due to her internalization of the social code of Vienna, which denies her sexual expression. Her psychical conflict reflects inefficacious attempts to maintain the social bond by adhering to the social code and avoiding the shameful exposure of her sexuality. Else's failure to uphold the social standards regarding female sexuality in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna finds representation in an act of exhibitionism, which creates irrevocable shame and ultimately ends in self-destruction. This paper utilizes an amalgamation of psychoanalysis and sociology to locate the causality of Else's shame within the relationship between sexuality and society.

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I. INTRODUCTION

Conflict: It is situated at the very foundation of social structures. It is inherent in the conceptualization of selfhood. Shame presupposes conflict; for it solidifies in the presence of social conflict and psychical tension. This explains why conflict and tension are in the intersection of society and self. The very nature of society creates conflict with the individual at the point of its inception, that is, from the onset of socialization and internalization. Society molds the individual and establishes the capacity for shame. It is the social order that marks the threshold for the experience of shame. The individual struggles against desires to maintain the equilibrium between social demands and psychological processes. When this delicate balance is lost, shame ensues. When the scale of harmony, that is, compliance, is tipped towards instability, shame is inevitable. As such, the affect of shame directly correlates to the social bond. *Fräulein Else* exemplifies both the interpersonal and intrapsychic conflicts, inherent in the experience of shame, because Else's failure to uphold the social standards of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna creates psychical tension through which shame manifests itself and translates into self-destruction.

This paper underscores shame as a critical bonding between self and society in *Fräulein Else*. The phenomenology of shame, as it relates to Else's experiences, will be constructed within the cultural, historical, and sociopolitical contexts of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. More specifically, the constellation of shame in *Fräulein Else* regards the intersection between society and sexuality. Else's sexuality, manifested in thoughts and actions, stands in contrast to the social and sexual standards of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Shame is a critical bonding between her and the rest of society because it arises in reference to social codes and aims to perpetuate propriety. Schnitzler's work holds a lens to the social order just as his other works are interested in matters of sexuality. In looking at the resulting shame of the relationship between sexuality and society, influenced by

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the social milieu of Vienna at the turn of the century, Schnitzler captures the social and psychological atmosphere that cultivates shame. In regards to sexuality and shame, *Fräulein Else* is his quintessential work.

Arthur Schnitzler's novella *Fräulein Else* is the inner monologue of a nineteen year-old Viennese woman. The story takes place in a resort town in northern Italy, but it depicts Viennese bourgeois society. The protagonist, Else is on holiday there when she receives word from her mother that her father has once again accrued a large debt that the family cannot pay. This time, however, he faces imprisonment. To maintain the family's livelihood and save her father, the mother asks her to request the sum from a man who has helped them in a similar situation in the past: Herr von Dorsday. He agrees to pay the sum, but in return he wishes to see Else nude. Else contemplates the deed as her thoughts oscillate between repulsion and excitation. In the end, she exposes herself in the music room of the hotel to all the guests, including Dorsday. After having fainted and having been taken to her room, she takes a lethal dose of Veronal.

Else's character in *Fräulein Else* constitutes an ideal case study of the experience in shame. She reflects the inner corrosion resulting from continuous shame in the face of social standards prescribed to bourgeois women in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Her thoughts and behavior enunciate the detrimental and irreversible effects of shame. The psychological element of the text, heightened by Schnitzler's use of inner monologue, accommodates psychoanalysis, in that hidden latent content becomes accessible. I have included sociological frameworks to highlight social structures, bonds, and interactions. The amalgamation of psychoanalytic and sociological principles paints a more complete portrait of Else. It grasps more accurately the irreducible reciprocity between the individual and society.

I will investigate Else both as a literary figure and as a patient subject to psychoanalytic analysis, two perspectives that, at first glance, look incongruous, but they actually complement one another. Else's character establishes a dialogue between author and reader. Through her words—or more specifically, through the illusion of her words, constructed by Schnitzler—the reader finds articulation in the process of rewriting and self-discovery (Edel 22). Furthermore, this dialogue between author and reader allows for the repetition and reiteration of critical discourse, so that Schnitzler allows the reader to rewrite and reinterpret his social criticism (Edel 15). In this sense, there is a certain amount of transference and repetition in the process of writing, reading, and rewriting, by which the end of the process of reading cycles back to the beginning of the process (Edel 24). Yet, what makes Else a particularly efficacious mediator is the element of desire, which is, the link between psychoanalysis and fiction, due to its link between the conscious and unconscious, reality, and fantasy (edel 16).

As a psychoanalytic case study, Else fills the gaps (as fiction and psychoanalysis do) that escape from the analysis of external realities. Perception and affect provide insight into internal realities, which are established as truth through their articulation (Edel 12-13). As such, Else's desire provides access to conscious, preconscious, and unconscious material, which constitutes an internal reality, constructed through perception and reproduction. In other words, treating Else as a subject for psychoanalytic, as well as sociological, inquiries establishes a monologue of truth, attainable only through the process of interaction with an Other.

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Notions of shame are inseparable from subjective perceptions and conceptualizations, as well as from an individual's role in society. Social roles are ingrained, in that the self is defined, in part, by her social role and the expectations that correlate to it. As such, behavior and social

interaction are partly defined by the function of shame. The individual will strive to act in accordance with her social prescriptions.

Although the intricacies of shame correlate to all social standards, this paper will underscore one aspect of the social code: sexuality. An analysis of the function of shame is crucial for discussions about sexuality, a theme that governs the works of Arthur Schnitzler. When sexuality becomes interwoven with modes of repression and self-destruction, as it does in *Fräulein Else*, analyses of the experience of shame can shed light on the dangers of codified social standards.

Discussions of social standards and values demand critical attention regarding the role of shame in upholding such standards. Social commentaries regarding these standards, which are exemplary in Schnitzler's works, demand the inclusion of their socio-historical context. For Schnitzler, this context is that of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Scholarship surrounding *Fräulein Else* emphasizes the trope of female sexuality and its relationship to *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Yet, none investigates exclusively the role of shame in this relationship.

Much of the current scholarship on *Fräulein Else*, particularly in the psychoanalytic vein, centers on dream interpretation, the Elektra complex, and hysteria. Glenn Sandberg appropriates Freud's *Traumdeutung* to translate the metaphorical content of Else's dreams. According to him, Else's dreams present her incestuous desires for her father (117). Robert Bereikis proposes that Else ultimately agrees to Dorsday's request because he has replaced her father as a love-object, he has assumed the role of a paternal figure. Through this cathexis, Else enacts her own incestuous desires. For Breikis, Else's collapse following her exhibitionism is a regression to the "intra-uterine state [because] [s]he has acted contrary to the most sacred taboo of the super-ego"

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(26). Nevertheless, Breikis fails to mention either shame anxiety prior to her act or actual shame as a result.[1]

The majority of analyses regarding hysteria rely heavily on the turn-of-the-century metapsychology. Catherine Mainland underscores the inability to cope with social demands in terms of hysteria (165). In fact, Else does exhibit the two primary, yet contrasting, symptoms of hysteria. She avoids sexual acts, yet has exaggerated sexual desires. Freud himself acknowledges shame as a reaction formation that aids sexual repression. Furthermore, he states that this function of shame is heightened in the hysteric (Freud, *Drei* 64). Mainland's argument lacks any discussion about this relationship between hysteria and shame. Yet, this discussion would maintain that shame is merely a reaction formation, a postulation that will be rejected in this paper. Furthermore, Mainland's recognition of social demands fails to highlight the symptomatic ambivalence of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, a sexual ambivalence that is characteristic of the hysteric.

Generally speaking, the majority of the current research is not directly beneficial to discussions of shame. However, what is of relevance to this paper is research on the exposure of Else's nude body. Gabriele Brandstetter points out that "[d]ie Inszenierung des nackten weiblichen Körpers berührt in der Gesellschaft des späten 19. Jahrhunderts (immer noch) die Grenzen der bürgerlichen Moral" (241). She recognizes "die Sehnsucht nach freier Sexualität, die Lust an der Exhibition des eigenen Körpers" (256). Yet, she fails to mention the inevitable experience of shame that is indispensable from such desires, let alone in *pursuit* of such desires. Brandstetter mentions the definitional elements of guilt, i.e. "Nackheit als Grenzüberschreitung", that are inherent in Else's exhibition (242). The subtle hint towards Else's guilt within

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[1] Other authors that discuss the relationship between the social order and Else's sexuality include: Raymond (1993); Anderson (1997); Caspari (2006); Yeo (1999); Oswald & Mindess (1951); These works do not, however, initiate discussions regarding shame.

Brandstetter's analysis avoids addressing the detrimental effects on the whole self, that is, the destructive effects of shame. I will amalgamate prior literary inquiries and theoretical frameworks to gain new perspective on the analysis *Fräulein Else*. This paper will confront the symptoms and responses of Else's inner conflict to determine causality, which can only be accomplished by pursuing the relationship between society, sexuality, and shame.

The scholarship of this paper holds relevance for multiple reasons. Shame is rarely examined in detail in any field. Reasons include the emphasis on empiricism or the predilection for inquiry into guilt. It comes as no surprise, then, that the role of shame in *Fräulein Else* has not been fully investigated. This neglect is pernicious to fully understanding the thoughts, the entire psychic make-up, as well as actions that Else takes. Furthermore, the analysis of shame is necessary for outlining the parallels between Else's personality structure and the social structure in which she interacts. This social order, which is internalized and erected in the psyche in accordance with its external structure, defines and reinforces the role of the individual in society and, thus, the function of shame in the individual.

At this point, it is helpful to outline the progression of this paper. It begins by delineating the experience of shame and distinguishing its psychological functions from the sociological ones. The affect of shame corresponds to a particular locale in the psychical apparatus, but other psychological operations, such as narcissism, contribute to the experience of shame. This experience also arises in reference to the social order. Shame presupposes exposure and erupts when the social bond is in jeopardy. The psyche then initiates defensive mechanisms in the attempt to restore the social bond and alleviate shame. This paper then presents the relationship between shame, sexuality, and society before placing this relationship within the context of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna and underscoring *Fräulein Else* as literature, that is, Else as a literary figure, as

being symptomatic of this sociohistorical context. Concluding remarks will analyze how Else's

inability to rid herself of shame ends in self-destruction.

II. THE PSYCHOLOGY OF SHAME

It is imperative to construct a definition of shame to explore the intersection of individual and society in *Fräulein Else*. I will establish the foundational elements, as well as the distinguishing factors of shame, in order to discuss Else's affective experience of shame, that is, in order to determine its causality and representation. The forthcoming definition is, in part, formulated in comparison to guilt. I will underscore their similarities as well as their differences. Due to the dynamic nature of shame, the following reflection is by no means exhaustive, but it sheds light on the definitive properties of shame in its phenomenology. A layout of these attributes is crucial for distinguishing Else's thought processes and behaviors. Though she encounters guilt, it is shame that plagues her.

There is a certain danger in the dichotomization of shame and guilt. The juxtaposition of shame must be occasionally presented as such, given the blurred lines of demarcation. At times, the affect of shame intersects and overlaps with that of guilt. The two may conflate and reinforce each other. They may even obscure one another (Piers 28). Yet, shame and guilt are unique experiences and, as such, they require differentiation. Shame is a broad category, encompassing many facets and, thus, requiring delineation on multiple levels. Shame is conscious and unconscious, interpersonal and intrapsychic. Therefore, shame concerns conflict between the individual and others (who constitute the social order), as well as individual conflict with oneself (who has internalized the social order).

Of these two interrelated conflicts, the latter is most accessible and identifiable in *Fräulein Else*. For the purpose of this paper, the discussion of the psychology of shame will begin with its incorporation into psychoanalysis. It is no coincidence that psychoanalysis evolved from the context of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, and that Freud and Schnitzler's works run parallel in

topical scope. Nevertheless, there is an avoidance of the study of shame in psychoanalysis, particularly in its infancy. In part, this aversion stems from the conceptualization of shame in Freudian psychoanalysis and from Freud's own divergence from shame and concentration on guilt (Lewis 59-60).

On the rare occasions that Freud addresses shame, it is regarded as a reaction formation, a process for the nullification of desire and/or anxiety (Piers 9). Furthermore, shame is rarely addressed directly, but is rather lumped together with other affects and relative concepts. Freud writes:

> Während dieser Periode totaler oder bloβ partieller Latenz werden die seelischen
> Mächte aufgebaut, die später dem Sexualtrieb als Hemmnisse in den Weg treten
> und gleichwie Dämme seine Richtung beengen werden (der Ekel, das
> Schamgefühl, die ästhetischen und moralischen Idealanforderungen). […] [Die
> sexuellen Regungen] rufen daher seelische Gegenkräfte (Reaktionsregungen)
> wach, die zur wirksamen Unterdrückung solcher Unlust die erwähnten
> psychischen Dämme: Ekel, Scham und Moral, aufbauen. (*Drei* 78-9)

What ties shame to morality is taboo. Shame and sexuality are intimately linked because morality reflects the objection of prohibited behavior and it dictates how, and to what extent, the superego reacts against taboo. Libido is repressed or suppressed, only to be released through accepted channels, designated by morality, which bypass taboo. In this conceptualization, shame operates psychically to prevent the violation of taboo, which would result in guilt (Freud, Totem 40-41).

Notions of shame were ignored for some time and it was not until psychoanalysis shifted from its Freudian lens that it became of interest (Lewis 59). This is, for the most part, due to the

manner in which Freudian psychoanalysis conceptualized, or failed to conceptualize, the self. Yet, even with the incorporation of shame into the scope of psychoanalysis, shame and guilt were considerably juxtaposed. The polarity of guilt and shame corresponded to the internal and external, respectively. According to Helen Lynd, accepted definitions suggested the following: "Guilt, or self-reproach, is based on internalization of values, notably parental values—in contrast to shame, which is based upon disapproval coming from outside, from other persons" (21). This sense of guilt coincides with that of Freud's hypothesis. Critical notions of self remained absent in the conceptualization of shame.

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Now, I will explore the fundamental and current conceptualizations of shame and guilt in order to underscore the attributive notions of the former in analyzing *Fräulein Else*. The constituents of this outline stem from the fields of psychoanalysis and sociology. The dialogue between them is necessary for discussing the reciprocity between interpersonal and intrapsychic tension in regard to shame and to underscore the function of shame in social bonding.

There are numerous difficulties with defining shame and distinguishing it from guilt. The first one is the conventional usage of these terms. They are often understood to be interchangeable or, at the very least, to go hand-in-hand, as though they encompass the same experience (Lynd 21). This is understandable since the two affects may occur concurrently or successively, that is, one situation could potentially give rise to both affects, or guilt could lead to shame. Furthermore, shame and guilt may reinforce and conflate each other (Lynd 22). Thus, shame and guilt are not antithetical: "[T]hey involve different focuses, modes, and stresses" (Lynd 23). Lynd continues to explain that there is often overlap, which contributes to the scholarly neglect of shame (23). Another related difficulty for scholars in finding definitive

separations is due to the nuanced nature of the experiences of shame and guilt. Definitional overlap is, in part, due to similar characteristics, and, to some extent, due to physiological, sociological, and psychological uncertainties.

It is substantially more difficult to communicate a sense of shame than of guilt because the latter usually involves clearer distinctions, as in verdict (Lynd 64). One is either guilty or not guilty, transgression has occurred or it has not. On the other hand, shame has shades of gray due to its subjectivity. The lines of success and failure are not so easily demarcated. This matter of communication concerns my thesis because analyzing the experience of shame in *Fräulein Else* requires the interpretation of thoughts and physical response in determining the presence of shame. In other words, Else communicates her shame through modes of representation, which are symptomatic of the experience of shame.

In a rough differentiation, guilt is the product of transgression, whereas shame denotes failure. In guilt, the sense of transgression emphasizes a specific act. The committed transgression is in relation to a clearly prescribed boundary. Guilt arises when this boundary, the marker of a given social or ideological standard, has been breached (Piers 11). It denotes the violation of a proscription.

In comparison to guilt, shame is the product of the failure to reach a particular goal or expectation. Lynd claims that shame occurs after significant self-investment, requiring a great deal of time (49-50). When the self experiences inadequacy and failure, shame affects the whole self because it is this whole self that is invested in the long-term battles of the ego in its aspirations to regulate anxiety and maintain a positive level of self-esteem. This battle finds representation in Schnitzler's novella. *Fräulein Else* acknowledges the longevity of this conflict and, furthermore, the investment of the self

and plausibility for subsequent failure. In the contemplation of her own suicide, she

admits: "Ich weiß ja schon lange,daß es so mit mir enden wird" (50). She is clearly

anxious about the possibility for failure. She is invested in the battle against shameful

thoughts and behaviors. Ironically, this investment creates a damaging capacity for

failure.

Shame affects the whole self due to the fact that it presupposes a failure. David Lester

makes a clear distinction between "'I can't believe that I did *that*' (guilt) and 'I can't believe that

I did that' (shame)" (353). This example articulates both the overlap and nuanced differences

between guilt and shame. There is a shift in significance from the act to the actor. This subtle

difference is of great importance since it demonstrates the emphasis on the exposure and

accentuation of the self. Guilt is only partly representative of a shortcoming self because a

transgression allows the possibility for reparation or atonement. The shame experience does not

simply demand the analysis of a particular failure, but of the self in general as failure, of the self

as a failed self (Lynd 49). The self has an ideal self-image, as well as established goals, that

coincide with those positive ideals. Failure to uphold one's ideal violently challenges the

construction and perception of self. In this regard, shame is damaging to the whole self. The

failed self does not have the proclivity for repair. Oscillation must occur in order to endure the

experience of shame and adjust its ideals (Lynd 50). A failed self requires redefinition.

When Else asks herself "Was habe ich denn getan? Was habe ich getan? Was habe ich

getan?", she is not focusing on the act of transgression, but on her failed self (70). This focus on

the shameful failure of the self is important for understanding her psychological tension. She is

taken by surprise in her exhibition. What confounds her most is the fact that *she* went through

with it. Her conceptualization of self, however, remains referential to a codified social 'other.'

This perspective focalizes individual failure and elicits psychical conflict. Else's shame has negatively affected her whole self. This damage is compounded by her preexisting vulnerability to shame, a curious byproduct of her narcissistic personality.

Else's narcissism has a direct effect on her shame and the capacity for its detrimental proportions. Narcissistic ideations lay the foundation for shame precisely because they, too, correlate to the ego's relationship to the ego ideal. Narcissism allows for the avoidance of shame. Yet, ironically, the construction of ideations leaves the self vulnerable in the undeniable truth of external and internal realities perceived as failures (Lewis 165). Else's symptomatic narcissistic ideations center around her physical appearance.

The term narcissism stems from the Greek myth of Narcissus whose obsession with his own reflection leads to his demise. Else, too, obsesses over the beauty of her reflected image. Herr von Dorsday comments on Else's physical beauty multiple times, but her own thoughts regarding her beauty exist as narcissistic ideations, regardless of her actual beauty. Else's perception of her beauty is projected outward from her self-esteem. The external image, as well as the comments and opinions of others, simply reinforces this projection. She is dependent on her narcissism and positive self-esteem regarding her (sexual) attractiveness. Both viewing herself and being viewed are required to maintain the narcissistic image (Oswald 282). Due to this dependency, her narcissistic idealizations of perfection make her more vulnerable to the experience of shame, as well as more susceptible to greater degrees of shame, and thus, more prone to self-destructive behaviors.

Freud asserts that vis-à-vis narcissism "[d]ie Person verhält sich so, als wäre sie in sich selbst verliebt" (Freud, *Totem* 109). "Der Mensch bleibt in gewissem Maße narziβtisch," that is, narcissism need not be pathological (Freud, *Totem* 110). Lewis claims that "an inability to cope

with shame and humiliation underlies this pathological disturbance" (165). Narcissists are prone to shame. Through the creation of ideations, they attempt to avoid shame, and when avoidance is impossible, they mask their shame with such constructions. The avoidance of shame demonstrates efficacy, that is, the avoidance of failure (Lewis 165). Freud's "Zur Einführung des Narziβmus" begins:

> Der Terminus Narziβmus entstammt der klinischen Deskription und ist von P.
> Näcke 1899 zur Bezeichnung jenes Verhaltens gewählt worden, bei welchem ein
> Individuum den eigenen Leib in ähnlicher Weise behandelt wie sonst den eines
> Sexualobjekts, ihn also mit sexuellem Wohlgefallen beschaut, streichelt, liebkost,
> bis er durch diese Vornahmen zur vollen Befriedigung gelangt. (138)

Else views herself as a sexual object, defined by (sexualized) beauty. She thinks: "Ich muß mich jetzt sehr hübsch ausnehmen in der weiten Landschaft. Schade, daß keine Leute mehr im Freien sind. Dem Herrn dort am Waldesrand gefalle ich offenbar sehr gut. O, mein Herr, nackt bin ich noch viel schöner" (37). This quote illustrates the relationship between her narcissism and exhibitionism in which her narcissistic thoughts accentuate the body as an object of sexualized beauty and her desire reinforces the presentation of herself as such.

Freud further delineates the anomaly of narcissism and notes that some people, instead of investing libidinal energy into a love-object modeled after their mother, seek themselves as love-objects. In this case, one "[zeigt] den narziβtisch zu nennenden Typus der Objektwahl" (Freud, *Narziβmus* 154). Narcissism demands the reinforcement of this object choice through narcissistic expression. The presence of shame, which dams narcissistic urges, creates powerful psychical tension. Else's avoidance of narcissistic sexual expression in the presence of shame anxiety

results in the impending accumulation of unpleasure, which pushes psychical tension to perilous proportions.

While remembering her first, and perhaps only, exhibitionistic experience (before the two men in the boat), she thinks: "Ja, so bin ich, so bin ich. Ein Luder, ja" (38). Her desire for sexual expression has become hyperbolized. This hyperbolization stands in reference to the language of shame, which violently ostracizes female sexuality. Else briefly acknowledges herself as a "Luder." Yet, her narcissism serves a psychical purpose, namely to safeguard her from the experience of shame. Her declaration, a confession of sorts, is a way of keeping her sexuality at bay. Her declaration is not so much a genuine acceptance as it is a mode to practice the opposite: veiling shameful truths.

Else's frequent narcissistic tendencies become apparent through her inner monologue and her behavior, which resembles that of Narcissus. Her thoughts often turn to narcissism in the face of shame anxiety. The grandiose self is often defined in relation to her body as an aesthetic sexual object. Prime examples of this are Else's thoughts directed towards her mirror-self, particularly in reference to the psychoanalytic conceptualization of narcissism and the reflected image. Again, she addresses herself, but in this instance, she is visually dichotomized through her reflection in the mirror:

> Ah wie hübsch ist es, so nackt im Zimmer auf und ab zu spazieren. Bin ich
>
> wirklich so schön wie im Spiegel? Ach, kommen Sie doch näher, schönes
>
> Fräulein. Ich will Ihre blutroten Lippen küssen. Ich will Ihre Brüste an meine
>
> Brüste pressen. Wie schade, daß das Glas zwischen uns ist, das kalte Glas. (60)

Else's consideration of herself not only as being beautiful, but also as being more beautiful than other envious women elucidates her narcissistic ideation. Furthermore, through the perception of herself as beautiful, she objectifies her own body and cathects it as the image of her love-object.

The mirror also symbolizes Else's psychical tension, the dissonance between the id and ego, the separation from the self. With the mirror, two Elses are presented. One is Else's reflection. This is the Else which is presented as her social image, that is, the ideal Else. Her reflection represents her outer image. The second Else is the one who sees and reflects upon this other self, which is simultaneously connected, but removed from her true self. This true self is sexual and it invests her libidinal energy into the other self. The Else in the mirror reflects modesty. She reflects the social standard. The experience of shame would shatter this image. Else's psychical tension, represented in the metaphor of conflicting images, reflects a psychological conflict between two specific sites.

To examine further Else's experience of shame, the locality of conflict, as well as its phenomenology, must be delineated. Again, shame will be distinguished from guilt, which arises as conflict between the ego and superego proper (Piers 11). The formation of the superego occurs as the internalized presence of the parental authority image. This image reflects the personalities of both parents, including the parental projection of their (the parents') own internalized image of the social milieu (Freud, *Abriss* 69).[2] Although this image may reflect certain realities, it is nevertheless perceived and can therefore be founded upon imaginative projections. The sense of omniscience and omnipotence of the parental figure is instilled in the superego (Piers 6). The superego is proscriptive; it sets standards and boundaries. As can be expected, the superego

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[2] In discussing the epigenesis of the superego, James Grotstein notes that the phallic stage of psychosexual development includes both the establishment of the law of the father, as well as the establishment of exhibitionistic behavior (263).

operates authoritatively, that is, it restricts, it punishes. It has been previously stated that guilt corresponds to a type of transgression. It is the transgression of the constructed boundaries and restrictions, erected by the (socialized) superego, which creates the sense of guilt.

The sense of shame, however, stems from the ego's reference to a different constituent of the psychical apparatus: the ego ideal. As such, the ego ideal, not the superego proper, is of interest in the analysis of shame. What must be determined is the formation of the ego ideal and how this construction contributes to the affect of shame. The *Dictionary of Psychology* states:

> [The ego ideal is] the ego's conception of positive ideals; in short, what a person would like to be or prefer to accomplish in terms of that which is positive and good. Generally a distinction is made between the Ego-Ideal and the Super-Ego on the grounds that the former represents prescriptions for life, is modified through growth and experience, and behavior that violates it produces shame; the latter represents proscriptions, is fixed at a young age, and behaviour in conflict with it evokes guilt. (231)

The ego ideal, unlike like the superego proper, represents the aggregation of *positive* parental images. These images are that of a nurturing, reassuring figure (Piers 14). Therefore, the ego ideal does not punish in the manner of the superego due to the fact that positive images have been internalized. Furthermore, the parental images are not the only ones to be internalized in the ego ideal. Piers states that "the Ego-Ideal contains layers of later identifications, more superficial, to be sure, and more subject to change that the earlier ones, but of the greatest social importance" (14). These identifications are constructed through the process of socialization. They determine the appropriate social standards for particular people, as well as the felicitous situations, in which they are to be applied.

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The experience of shame "occurs when a goal (presented by the Ego-Ideal) is not being reached" (Piers 11). This shame is representative of intrapsychic tension between the ego and the ego ideal. The ego has "die Aufgabe der Selbstbehauptung" (Freud, *Abriss* 68). Self-preservation means the ego must satisfy simultaneous demands, or rather, it must balance the demands of the id, the superego (including the ego ideal), and reality. The tension between these demands allows for the accumulation of psychical energy, or 'unpleasure.' The reduction of unpleasure, i.e. the satisfaction of demands, results in pleasure (Freud, *Abriss* 68). The tension present in the experience of shame is the corollary of the ego's failure to meet the demands or expectations of the ego ideal, which are established, to a large degree, by the prescriptive social order.

Through the internalization of the social standard, thoughts and desires may also create a sense of shame (Wurmser 46). Shame, then, is not always a psychic phenomenon against an external event. This is due precisely to the ego ideal's internalization of codified standards. Else experiences shame because she desires that which would jeopardize her social character, she wants what her ego ideal strives to avoid. She longs for sexual expression, free from restraint. Yet, she recognizes the social demands, and thus the demands of the ego ideal. Hence, she acknowledges her inability to adhere to such standards: "Bin nicht geschaffen für eine bürgerliche Existenz." (50). In other words, she is not cut out for the life prescribed by her own ego ideal, an existence that is specific to her social role.

III. THE SOCIOLOGY OF SHAME

A definition of shame which solely underscores psychological operation and function lacks the requisite social component to the experience of shame. In other words, shame is not only a matter of psychology, but it also concerns sociology. It has been previously noted that shame arises in the psyche due to a capacity for the affect of shame, created through the process of socialization by which the social code becomes internalized and the social order mapped onto the psychical structure. With the social bifurcation of behavior into poles of acceptability comes the alteration of personality composites. Norbert Elias comments on the psychical tension resulting from the hierarchical relationship between society and individual: "Pleasure promising drives and pleasure denying taboos and prohibitions, socially generated feeling of shame and repugnance, come to battle within him" (156). This conflict illustrates the confrontation between the psychical and social orders. It marks the intersection of the psychology and sociology of shame and it shows the inseparable reciprocity between internal and external realities. The individual constitutes the social bond, and vice versa. Elias focuses on the role of the social bond in the affective state of shame. The sociology of shame finds a cyclical interchange between social modes of representation, internalization, and projection. The individual battles himself because he battles society.

Again, shame regards the perception of failure. This failure, and thus shame, is contextually defined. A failure is socially defined by one's inability to adhere or to ascribe to his or her particular prescribed standards. The psychological process of socialization, which internalizes these goals and standards, establishes social bonds. Shame maintains the social bond because it encourages the reconstitution of the social order within the psyche of the individual. As such, shame is inseparable from the social bond, which binds the individual to all aspects of

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the social order. Since the individual is defined by socialization (and reciprocally, society by the individual), any disruptions in the social bond negatively affect the psychical makeup of the individual. The resulting shame alters both the psychological and sociological landscapes. This disturbance requires publicity.

A sense of shame is always tied to notions of concealment and exposure. Shame, in contrast to guilt, "seeks secrecy" (Lester 352). Simply put, shame arises when something that should have been concealed is exposed. For Else, the act of exhibitionism exposes what society would wish to conceal: the female genitalia. Her shame culminates in the literal exposure of her nude body, which exposes herself as a sexual creature, signifying her failure to live up to the standards of the ego ideal. These standards are culture specific and may differ in their incorporations and conceptualizations of shame. In Western civilizations, shame is often related to the exposure of one's body, particularly the genitals. Furthermore, the etymology of "Scham" connotes nudity or exposure of the genitals (Lynd 28). For Else, although exhibitionism is her modus operandi, it is the social failure of exposure that creates shame. Coincidentally, the specificity of her shame is a literal exposure.

Freud, too, discusses shame in relation to the exposure of the genitals: "Das Zurücktreten der Geruchsreize scheint aber selbst Folge der Abwendung des Menschen von der Erde, des Entschlusses zum aufrechten Gang, der nun die bisher gedeckten Genitalien sichtbar und schutzbedürftig macht und so das Schämen hervorruft" (*Unbehagen* 459). This signifies the dynamic nature of shame. Sexual exposure is shameful because societal goals have been internalized in the ego ideal. Modesty is the social standard. Failure to adhere to this standard exposes the self. Yet, Freud draws a parallel between biological evolution and the establishment of civilization and the formation of civilized behavior. What Freud suggests is that shame is a

modern experience. The upright man knows shame, because he is a man of modern times, a man of morality, in which exposure (of the genitals) is defined as a shameful act by modern standards of civilization. Thus, in addition to physically standing upright, this man has acquired moral standing. Freud states that a moral man is marked by his strict ability to adhere to the social code and, when he fails, is psychologically tormented (Freud, *Unbehagen* 485). This requires the individual to avoid shameful behavior. Yet this avoidance, symptomatic of modernity, is alienating. With increased investment into constructions of civilization the shame threshold lowers (Scheff 89). With more exposure due to the modernization of civilization, the capacity for shame also increases. Else is a product, and constituent, of modernity, in which exposure exhibits shame, and visibility is inescapable.

This element of visibility is essential for the evocation of shame. What is important to note here with regards to shame and exposure is that visibility may be actual or perceived (Schneider 34). Exposure, and thus shame, is directly tied to being seen, that is, there is an (actual or perceived) audience, which is looking. A situation of exposure is highly subjective due to the very subjective nature of visibility and perception. Shame is not merely the product of exposed failure, but rather it arises as the product of a perceived exposure, of the interpretation that an action or situation is shameful.

Furthermore, for the creation of shame there is no necessity for actual publicity (Lewis 75). This is due to the fact that shame signifies tension between the ego and the ego ideal. The ego ideal is, in part, established through socialization (Piers 14). As such, internalized social standards create a referential publicity in the elicitation of shame. In other words, failure is relative. It belongs, no doubt, to the self, but it reflects codified social markers, which are internalized in the ego ideal and used to measure the ego's efficacy.

Else believes herself to be visible at all times. When the letter from her mother arrives, she worries that the content of the letter has been exposed. "Warum schaut mich der Portier so merkwürdig an? Hat er am Ende den Expreßbrief von der Mama gelesen?" (22-3). Although this thought is a fleeting one, it points towards her frequent preconscious anxiety of being exposed to the male gaze. In this particular instance, her shame surrounds her social standing. Her bourgeois lifestyle is in danger due to her father's financial difficulties. She affirms: "Und doch wissen es alle Leute. Rätselhaft, daß wir uns immer noch halten" (15). She is ashamed that her expectation of maintaining a high social status is in danger, and fears that others, too, are aware of her shameful situation. This notion of maintaining the social position also speaks to Freud's conceptualization of moral uprightness, in that not only does she wish to maintain her social position, but this position must be maintained with proper moral standing. The thought of losing either is terrifying for her. While considering the possibility of having to ask Dorsday for money, she thinks: "Zu Tod würde ich mich schämen" (16). The fear of exposure is very real.

When social demands are not met, shame is invoked. The self, in the face of exposure, wishes to conceal itself. Carl Schneider pinpoints the "generic core" of shame as being tied to notions of covering (29). Social conceptualizations of shame, especially those rooted in biblical ideology, propose that "the exposure of that which should be covered is shameful" (31). Here, the purpose of shame is to reconstitute concealment in the pursuit of prescriptive goals. However, like Freud's discussion on the birth of shame, it is tied to the exposure of the body. When Else faints to the floor, she remains exposed, and onlookers remain exposed to the shameful experience. The social code calls for the covering of the genitals. She is immediately covered by those present. "'*Man kann sie doch nicht auf dem Boden liegen lassen.*' – '*Hier ist ein Plaid.*' – '*Eine Decke.*' – '*Decke oder Plaid, das ist ja gleichgültig.*' – '*Bitte doch um Ruhe.*'

– '*Auf den Diwan.*' – '*Bitte doch endlich die Türe zu schließen.*' – '*Nicht so nervös sein, sie ist ja geschlossen.*'" (71). The people close to Else want to cover that which incites shame, which is to say, cover the visibility of her nude body. The social protocol in response to Else's exhibitionism is automatic and systematic.

What is curious about Else's shame experience is that her mechanisms of coping do simply correlate to conflicts within the psychical apparatus. Else also exhibits responses that are materialized outside the site of conflict. These psychologically initiated mechanisms aim at repairing the self vis-à-vis the social bond. One such material response found in Else's intense moment of social exposure is laughter, which aims not only to alleviate her shame, but also to break the social transference of shame.

Lewis emphasizes the "social significance" of shame. When a person experiences shame before an audience, those witnesses, too, experience shame. Lewis states that "experiencing someone's shame is shameful" (130). The reciprocity of shame becomes apparent in the moment of Else's exposure. Paul, like other guests, has internalized the inappropriateness of public exposure. He becomes ashamed and wishes to conceal Else's nude body. He quickly has the doors of the music room closed and covers her. His panic, however, in demanding that she be covered and the room be closed off, reflects more on his perception of shame and his desire for concealment.

In this moment, Else's shame becomes transferred to Paul in a contagion of sorts. This contagion, the transfer of shame, is referred to as a "spiral of shame" (Lewis 131). This spiral of shame can, however, be broken (Lewis 131). The transfer of shame can be severed by the laughter of the ashamed person. Due to the metaphorical movement of the self through the associative shift, the laughter of the ashamed person severs the juxtaposition between the

ashamed person and the audience. The newly established proximity allows for the breaking of the spiral of shame (Lewis 130). More significantly, Else uses laughter in an attempt to alleviate shame. Thus, laughter becomes antagonistic to the presence of shame.

Although laughter can break the spiral of shame through the self's metaphorical relocation, this seems secondary, as its primary aim is to remove shame from the self. Else's compulsive fit of laughter following her fainting spell is an uncontrollable psychical mechanism through which her psyche attempts to eliminate the shame of her act somatically. "'Ha, ha, ha!' Wer lacht denn da? Ich selber? 'Ha, ha, ha!' Was sind denn das für Gesichter um mich? 'Ha, ha,ha!' Zu dumm, daß ich lache. Ich will nicht lachen, ich will nicht. 'Haha!'" (70). Else experiences a somatic response to her extreme embarrassment. Her involuntary laughter bursts from her in the moment of exposure, the moment of shame. As she exposes her sexual desire for exhibition there is a moment of lowered inhibition, in which psychical energy is discharged in the form of laughter.

Material response to the experience of shame is typical. Although laughter is common in a tense social setting, Else's laughter becomes hysterical in nature due to the severity of the shame experience. The scope of physical response correlates to the perceived level of shame. As embarrassment translates into shame, "[t]here seems to be a critical point at which the flustered individual gives up trying to conceal or play down his uneasiness; he collapses into […] paroxysms of laughter, […] faints, […] or becomes rigidly immobile as when in panic" (Goffman 103). For Else, in the immediacy of the shame experience, there is little control over her thoughts, laughter, and mobility.

The affect of shame may be so powerful that it becomes physically debilitating and may result in fainting, weakness, or unconsciousness (Wurmser 53-55). Else's act of exhibitionism

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creates a level of shame that is psychologically overwhelming to the extent that it produces material responses. Most notably, she collapses during her traumatic experience of shame. Her thoughts reflect the extreme level of shame and indicate her psychosomatic response: "Was habe ich getan? Ich falle um. Alles ist vorbei" (70). Her shame is so severe that its psychical tension translates into a physiological immobility. Her body has seized up and it appears as if she were unconscious, yet her thoughts prove otherwise. "'*Du siehst doch, Mama, daß sie ohnmächtig ist.*' Ja, Gott sei Dank, für euch bin ich ohnmächtig. Und ich bleibe ohnmächtig." (71). Her immobility is advantageous because it affords a certain distance.

In her altered state of consciousness, Else is incapable of the speech act. "Ja, ich höre, ja, ja,ja. Aber sie hört mein Ja nicht. Warum denn nicht? Ich kann meine Lippen nicht bewegen. Darum hört sie mich nicht. Ich kann mich nicht rühren" (76). This is due to the immobilizing power of shame. Else becomes almost comatose as her somatic response leaves her paralyzed. Any physical movement or attempt to speak would only increase the perception of publicity, thus strengthening the experience of shame. As such, her silence is a method of concealment.

Else's desire for concealment also corresponds directly to the visual. Her extreme shame is apparent in her desire to remove visibility. It is impossible for her to conceal that of which she is ashamed. She employs, then, a type of denial, in which she simply shuts her eyes. "Meine Augen sind zu. Niemand kann mich sehen." (71). By closing her eyes, that is, by removing her own visibility, she breaks the bond of visibility between herself and the other onlookers. By doing so, she denies their ability to see her (Fenichel 139). This visibility can remain detached as long as her eyes remain closed. In other words, Else closes her eyes in an attempt to remove visibility, that is, to subtract her exposure and shed the resulting shame.

Nevertheless, Else is not successful at reducing shame. More specifically, her defensive efforts are unsuccessful. Else's exhibitionism is a direct rejection of the social order. She has completely severed the social bond by failing to meet the demands of her ego ideal. This conflict has damaged the self beyond repair. When this is the case, psychical tension reaches paramount levels and the self turns destructive.

IV. SHAME, SEXUALITY, SOCIETY

There is an urgent need for a more specific conceptualization of the relationship between shame and the social order, specifically the function of socially prescribed sexual mores, since this is the most pervasive aspect of Else's shame. Her psychological tension results from the conflict between her own sexuality and the social expectations regarding its (proscribed) expression.

I have already stated that the affect of shame does not exclusively concern internal, that is, psychical tension. It has a social point of reference. The individual is manipulated by society for the perpetuation of conceived notions of civilization. Shame reinforces social standards and reconstitutes the social order, and thus the social bond. These social structures are dynamic and intricate. They are restrictive in nature and demand the conformity of all social members.

The social code demands modesty. Social standards require sexuality and sexual expression to correlate to the social conceptualization of modesty. Propriety means that the failure, or fear of failure, to maintain modesty results in shame anxiety. Else's paranoid anxiety creates a substantial amount of psychical tension, which leads to the appropriation of defensive mechanisms. Else denies her sexual desires in her internalized pursuit of modesty and acceptability. Despite all this, propriety fails and her sexuality is exposed. Through her exhibitionism, her sexuality finds expression in the antithesis to socially prescribed modesty.

Although definitions of modesty differ, certain abstractions can be attributed to Western cultures. A factor in the social bond, shame operates in relation to the social order. Elias underscores components of the social order which perpetuate its composition. He notes that there is a "necessity of instilling 'modesty' (i.e., feelings of shame, fear, embarrassment, and guilt) or, more precisely, behavior conforming to the social standard" (148). The necessity for the

standardization of modesty presupposes restrictions and prohibitions. Failure to adhere to such standards becomes "charged with sociogenetic shame and embarrassment" (Elias 155). In this regard, shame is a tool for manipulation that maintains conformity and reinstates acquiescence.

The maintenance of modesty is of utmost importance to members of society, who wish to avoid shameful experiences. The relativity of modesty like other standards has the capacity for individual redefinition, particularly for members of a society who stand higher on the social ladder. Herr von Dorsday manipulates the conceptualization of modesty for his personal benefit. He describes the request to see Else nude as one of relative modesty. "Aber für diesmal will ich genügsam sein, wie Sie" (34). His viewing of Else's body would not cross physical boundaries, it would leave no physical signs (Matthias 253). Therefore, Herr von Dorsday's voyeuristic request wouldn't affect future matters of morality. He wants to be modest in his initial request, but he has clear intentions for future demands.

Else never articulates her desires and strives for modesty. Her sexual propriety maintains the social bond, but it creates a great deal of psychological tension. Her social necessity to keep a lid on her sexuality stirs her inner desire for expression, which pushes her psychical conflict to its boiling point.

The intersection of the social and psychological landscapes establishes an apex of anxiety. This anxiety is a psychological manifestation produced to maintain the social bond. Else exhibits anxiety resulting from the threat of exposure, as well as an anxious perception of exposure. Else exemplifies the fact that shame must be linked to notions of (paranoid) anxiety. This anxiety regards the "imminent danger of unexpected exposure, humiliation, and rejection" (Wurmser 49). Obsessive or irrational fear of exposure often indicates shame anxiety. Wurmser describes this anxiety:

All eyes seem to stare at the shamed one and pierce him like knives. Everyone

seems full of taunts and mockery; everyone undoubtedly knows about his

profound disgrace. This tendency for shame anxiety to spread from one situation

to all situations makes it akin, even it not causally related, to paranoid ideas. (53)

Else exhibits this type of paranoia and anxiety described by Wurmser in regards to her own

visibility. She is evidence of the pervasiveness of shame anxiety. Her fear of exposure seems to

creep up, suggesting that some level of anxiety is always there; at times dormant, at other times

active. She is invariably on guard. This fact points towards an unhealthy level of anxiety,

approaching paranoia.

Changing situations constantly triggers an anxiety regarding exposure. Before speaking

to Herr von Dorsday for the first time, she has the perception that all eyes truly are on her. In the

lobby of the hotel she sees guests pouring out of the music room. "Alle sehen sie mich an" (25).

This anxiety for exposure can be described as paranoid, as it is quite exaggerated. Else fears

exposure and thus feels as though everyone is watching her. If everyone were watching her, then

everyone would be privy to the shameful thoughts, desires, and actions that she had wished to

conceal.

Else also experiences the capacity for shame anxiety to approach painful proportions. She

says: "Ich fühle den Blick von Dorsday auf meinem Nacken, durch den Schal" (25). This is

similar to Wurmser's description of shame anxiety. This 'piercing' feeling signifies the act of

looking as a violent act against the self by the other. In this manner, looking is an aggressive

violation of the self as concealment is broken. In addition to being a literal shawl that covers her

body, Else's garment is a metaphorical veil for her desires. More specifically, the shawl covers a

sensual part of Else's body, that is, her shoulders. She explains: "Ich nehme den weißen Schal,

der steht mir gut. Ganz ungezwungen lege ich ihn um meine herrlichen Schultern? Ich könnte einen Mann sehr glücklich machen" (21). Therefore, Else's perception of Dorsday's piercing gaze is representative of the exposure of that which Else wishes to conceal *and* reveal: her sexuality. Dorsday's ability to penetrate the shawl symbolizes Else's visibility and Dorsday's access to her sexual desires.

In the pursuit of modesty and presence of anxiety, the self often denies desires. Else's psychological experiences of paranoid anxiety, at its basic level, is coupled with the need for psychological defenses to avoid failure and the excitation of shame. When acknowledged, one wishes to rid oneself of shame (Lewis 128). It has been stated that shame is a very painful experience. As such, forms of denial are possible responses to restoring balance. Denial is a form of hiding. Failure is hidden from self, by the self, in an attempt to protect the whole self (Lewis 128). In this regard, the relationship between shame and concealment is apparent. When exposure creates shame, the self seeks negation. Shame creates a desire to hide oneself. One can then deny one's existence, and thus shed oneself of shame.

Else's denial is most apparent in her own contradicting position on her sexuality. Her thoughts regarding this position are constantly in flux. Although they involve differing men, the common denominator is her oscillating affirmation of sexual pursuits, followed by a complete rejection of such ideations. Paul is often a primary choice for Else's investment of sexual energy:

> Paul, wenn du mir die dreißigtausend verschaffst, kannst du von mir haben, was
>
> du willst. Das ist ja schon wieder aus einem Roman. Die edle Tochter verkauft
>
> sich für den geliebten Vater, und hat am End noch ein Vergnügen davon. Pfui
>
> Teufel! Nein, Paul, auch für dreißigtausend kannst du von mir nichts haben.
>
> Niemand. Aber für eine Million? – Für ein Palais? Für eine Perlenschnur? (17-18)

Her initial thought reflects her repetitious disclosure of sexual desire for Paul. She quickly denies these desires as being shameful and, presupposed by the presence of denial, her thoughts shift towards those which adhere to social standards. By denying her willingness to give herself to Paul, she keeps her sexual desires at bay. She upholds the prescribed sexual standards and avoid failure.

Else's denial is not consistent, as she cannot always suppress her sexual desires. Later, she consciously impugns her animosity towards Dorsday:

> Nun, Mademoiselle Else, was machen Sie denn für Geschichten? Sie waren doch schon bereit auf und davon zu gehen, die Geliebte von fremden Männer zu werden, von einem nach dem andern. Und auf die Kleinigkeit, die Herr von Dorsday von Ihnen verlangt, kommt es Ihnen an? (47)

This awareness directly challenges moments of denial in which Else is also ashamed to acknowledge her sexual desires. This internal debate underscores her apparent contradiction.

In regards to exposing herself before Dorsday, her thoughts fluctuate between repulsion and excitation. Her aggression towards Dorsday is a projection of her own shame onto the other (Glenberg 118). Upon his request to see her naked, she thinks:

> Ist er verrückt? Er sieht mich doch. – Ah, so meint er das, so! Warum schlage ich ihn nicht ins Gesicht, dem Schuften! Bin ich rot geworden oder blaß? Nackt willst du mich sehen? Das möchte mancher. Ich bin schön, wenn ich nackt bin. Warum schlage ich ihn nicht ins Gesicht?" (35)

By making Dorsday contemptible, she relaxes the reflex of denial while focus is shifted to the other. This projection of shame establishes the space necessary for fortifying the

narcissistic self. Else's denial becomes more apparent when she questions her own hostility towards Dorsday. She does not slap him because she wants the very thing that he requests. She does not slap him because, unconsciously, she desires such an act of exhibitionism.

The denial of Else's desire surrounding the circumstances of her exhibition also disguises her wishes to pose nude as a mere act to help her father. Her claim of selfless necessity aims to remove the possibility for choice. Therefore, her denial would pretend as though her own desires are irrelevant, as though she must do it for a greater purpose. She constructs her exhibitionism as self-sacrifice. With such a construction she attempts to turn shame into pride. "Was bleibt mir denn übrig? Es muß es ja sein, ich muß es ja tun, alles, alles muß ich tun, was Herr von Dorsday verlangt, damit der Papa morgen das Geld hat, - damit er nicht eingesperrt wird, damit er sich nicht umbringt" (56-7). In reality, though, the denial of her own interest is a mechanism that is employed to reduce or avoid shame.

Nevertheless, Else is a prime example of the possibility that anxiety and denial are not entirely efficacious in reducing or avoiding shame. Ultimately, she is exposed or, rather, she exposes herself. Shame resulting from an inner conflict of thoughts and desires may be disturbing to the extent that one attempts to transfer inner shame to outer shame. Else's exhibitionism achieves this active transfer of shame. Wurmser explains that "situations in outer life therefore may be actively created in which humiliation is expected and provoked" (47). Thus, a person may create a situation of public shame to divert inner shame. Wurmser speaks specifically of the exhibitionist who exposes himself to "assure himself that he is not weak and

castrated" (47). In such a scenario, a modest person's "exhibitionistic act is […] a counterphobic attempt to deal with shame and anxiety" (Wurmser 47).

Not only does Else do exactly that, which creates shame, but the consequences of that act are magnified by the presence of the guests in the music room of the hotel. In other words, she actively creates a shameful situation, that is, a situation that translates inner shame to outer shame. Her external exhibitionism is, ironically, the culmination of inner tension. Her sexual drive, suppressed by the ego in an attempt to please the ego ideal, becomes conflated. This conflation requires an outlet. She has little preference as to whom she would give herself. In fact, she would prefer it be a multitude of men: "Ich werde hundert Geliebte haben, tausend" (18).

In considering this conflation, it comes as no surprise that Else exposes herself to a large group of people. "Wenn einer mich sieht, dann sollen mich auch andere sehen. Ja! – Herrlicher Gedanke! – Alle sollen sie mich sehen. Die ganze Welt soll mich sehen" (58). Her exposition is the exposure of that which she is ashamed: her very interest in exhibitionism, her very sexuality. This act becomes not only the release of psychical tension through the enactment of desires, but also a systematic attempt to reduce this inner tension through its outward projection. This reexternilization does, however, sever the social bond and, as such, fires back. It creates a level of shame that approaches mortification and translates into self-destruction. I shall return to this point in a moment.

Else's exhibitionistic act is the most obvious case of exposure. By definition, Else's exhibitionism affects the social bond. The experience of shame is always lurking in the socially inappropriate exhibition of one's genitals. The *Dictionary of Psychology* provides a definition for exhibitionism: "A paraphilia characterized by a compulsion to expose one's genitals under socially inappropriate circumstances" (255). I do not wish to diagnose Else's exhibitionism as a

typical obsessive mode of the paraphiliac. I use this quote as a reference point to discuss her

exhibitionistic desires in a social context. Exhibitionism requires a particular level of social

unacceptability. More specifically, Else's desire to expose herself stands in opposition to social

standards regarding sexuality.

Furthermore, Else's exhibitionistic desires seem to dominate as her preferred mode of

sexual expression. Freud asserts that, "[w]o der Keim dieser Neigung nicht das gewöhnliche

Schicksal der Überlagerung und Unterdrückung erfährt, da entwickelt er sich zu […]

Exhibitionsdrang" (Freud, *Witz* 107). Else relives the excitement of exposing herself to men

outside her window:

> Und wie war denn das heuer in Gmunden in der Früh um sechs auf dem Balkon,
>
> mein vornehmes Fräulein Else? Haben Sie die zwei jungen Leute im Kahn
>
> vielleicht gar nicht bemerkt, die Sie angestarrt haben? Mein Gesicht haben sie
>
> vom See aus freilich nicht genau ausnehmen können, aber daß ich im Hemd war,
>
> das haben sie schon bemerkt. Und ich hab mich gefreut. Ah, mehr als gefreut. Ich
>
> war wie berauscht. Mit beiden Händen hab ich mich über die Hüften gestrichen
>
> und vor mir selber hab ich getan, als wüßte ich nicht, daß man mich sieht. Und
>
> der Kahn hat sich nicht vom Fleck bewegt. Ja, so bin ich, so bin ich. Ein Luder,
>
> ja. (38)

What is striking here is Else's form of address. Her conflict is apparent as her inner

monologue exposes her dissonance. She is engaging in a confrontation with herself, in

which she reminds herself in order to convince herself, that she is a "Luder." Here, the

dominant voice belongs to the sexual Else, who is speaking to the modest Else, who still

strives for the goals of the ego ideal. Else's enjoyment in the recapitulation of this

exhibitionistic act underscores the fact that her nudity is much more than that; it is a

mode of sexual exploration and expression. Self-exposure is a recurrent impetus of

excitation, and Else's desire to expose herself sexually in acts of exhibitionism and thus

exposes her sexuality, frequently enters her preconscious and conscious thoughts. Else's

body is displayed and sexualized in the presence of onlookers, and her sexual excitation

requires her to place herself at the center of attention.

V. *FIN-DE-SIECLE* VIENNA

The conceptualization of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna consists of interrelated social and political ambiguity. The simultaneous existence of social binaries occurred, in part, as the result of political instability. The years between 1848 and roughly 1900 were "a period of transition between absolute monarchy and modern democratic politics" (Luft 13). Although the political institutions of the monarchy dissipated, its social representation continued (Parsons 220). By the 1860s, Austrian liberalism had officially replaced absolutism, signifying the replacement of the aristocracy by the bourgeoisie. Within two decades mass parties had established themselves as contenders for political power. Liberalism's hold on Vienna and Austria, in general, had been lost by 1895, by which point Christian Socialism had fastened its own grip (Schorske 5-6).

Carl Schorske identifies two prominent value systems in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna: aesthetic and moral. The moral culture, as one of science and reason, was affixed to the bourgeoisie. Schorske notes: "Morally, [Vienna] was secure, righteous, and repressive; politically, it was concerned for the rule of law, under which both individual and social order were subsumed" (6). The aesthetic and "highly eroticized" culture of the aristocracy had an affinity for the applied and performing arts (Luft 21). Even with the rise of liberalism, the bourgeoisie could not acquire true assimilation into the aristocracy's culture of entitlement. Nevertheless, elements of aesthetic culture, which were ideologically juxtaposed to moral culture, were adopted. However, the juxtaposition of these two value systems could not be fully amalgamated and the fluidity of contradiction and oscillation resembled a mixture of oil and water. In other words, the entrenched persistence of internalized moral culture prevented the expression of hedonism free of shame. In this sense, politics and society stood in interchange with and in opposition to each other.

Schorske underscores the presence of this tense relationship in *fin-de- siècle* Vienna:

> The disaster of liberalism's collapse further transmuted the aesthetic heritage into
> a culture of sensitive nerves, uneasy hedonism, and often outright anxiety. To add
> to the complexity, the Austrian liberal intelligentsia did not fully abandon the
> earlier strand in its tradition, the moralistic-scientific culture of law. The
> affirmation of art and the life of the senses thereby became, in Austria's finest
> types, admixed with and crippled by guilt. The political sources of anxiety found
> reinforcement in the individual psyche through the persistent presence of
> conscience in the temple of Narcissus. (10)

Schorske highlights the ambivalence of Viennese modernism. More importantly, although not classified as such, implicit in his assessment are notions of shame at the crux of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. Decadence and hedonism carried repercussions. Traditional mores, constructed ideations of conscience, were steadfastly ingrained in the collective psyche. Any indulgence of pleasure was inseparable from the internalized moral culture of law. Social expectations and constructions of shame were rooted in the moral fiber of the social order. Although the transgression of prohibitions would certainly result in guilt, the very possibility for failure to adhere to social expectation creates an anxiety more closely related to shame. Furthermore, anxiety arising from the relationship between the existence of conscience and individual narcissism can only correlate to oscillations in the perception of self in shame. Schorske's quote casts light on the role of shame in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. The fact that an experience of shame is not investigated as such, but is cloaked behind the conceptualization of guilt, is the symptom of this neglect.

This is a prime example of the failure to acknowledge the experience of shame. It is still overshadowed by notions of guilt. Although shame remains unspecified, its characteristics are

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often presented, but lack the proper attention. Nevertheless, it is reasonable to postulate that there was an abundance of shame tied to social mores in turn-of-the-century Vienna. This is due to the fact that wherever there is obligation to a codified social standard or goal, there arises shame in moments of absence or failure. Sexuality and sexual openness were definitive elements of Viennese modernism (Luft 41). The liberal tradition of moral culture was directly challenged. However, this defiance, evident in much of the literature and art of the time, had a short leash. Embedded notions of morality provided instances of shame to accompany dissonance. Conceptualizations of eroticism were systematic of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna's ambivalent nature.

Although conceptualizations of sexual morality were ambivalent, there were still codified prescriptions and proscriptions. The social order establishes rules and roles; it fabricates the model for acceptable sexuality and defines shameful behavior. Not only do modes of representation make certain things shameful, but they ascribe certain notions of shame to particular people or groups of people. Elias highlights the fact that shame is not only socially tied, but more specifically it is bound to one's social standing (495). In other words, just as society is hierarchical, so are the experiences of shame. An individual of a particular social sphere must adhere to the standards of that domain. The social standards of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, particularly that of the bourgeoisie, are presented in *Fräulein Else*. Although the geographical setting of the novella is in Martino di Castrozza in northern Italy, "the world of Vienna hovers threateningly in the background as a determinant factor" (Thompson 43). Else, as a member of the bourgeoisie, has different standards than those of other classes; as a woman, her standards of expectation are different from those of men.

Else's gender has a direct impact on her experience of shame, due to socially gendered expectations. There was a definite hypocrisy inherent in the 'openness' of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna.

To a great extent, this was, the result of the perpetual double-standard regarding sexuality in which femininity was socially constructed in terms of shame.

   In considering sexuality in the context of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, Freud's essay, entitled "'Die 'kulturelle' Sexualmoral und die moderne Nervosität", sheds much light on the consequences of socially defined sexual mores, the nature of which is suppressive or repressive. The social standard requires complete abstinence until marriage. However, Freud asserts that, for men, failure to adhere to the social code does not always result in condemnation (Freud, *'kulturelle'* 144). Women are not provided with such latitude. Therefore, Else is subject to the strict social code by which she is expected to uphold the standards of bourgeois sexual morality. Societies that ascribe to restrictive standards of sexual morality "muβ ihre Mitglieder zur Verhüllung der Wahrheit, zur Schönfärberei, zum Selbstbetruge wie zum Betrügen anderer anleiten" (Freud, *'kulturelle'* 144). Yet, as Else proves, concealment and deception do not guarantee attainment. She exhibits what Freud calls "ein Miβglücken der Unterdrückung" (Freud, '*kulturelle'* 153). Her act of exhibitionism and subsequent suicide proves more destructive than the uninhibited sexuality that her society deems unacceptable. Furthermore, Else's behavior reflects the "Konflikte zwischen dem Drängen der kulturellen Einflüsse und dem Widerstande ihrer Konstitution (Freud, *'kulturelle'* 155). For Else, the social code of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna and her desire for sexual expression is the foundational conflict that creates shame.

VI. ARTHUR SCHNITZLER'S FRÄULEIN ELSE

Amidst political disintegrations in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, an increased emphasis on "literature as a political product" (Schorske 8). Artists and intellectuals turned their attention inwards and focused on aspects of the psyche. Art replaced action as "sensitivity to psychical states" became hyperbolized (Schorske 9). With ever growing encroachments of societal ails, external realities were inverted and mapped onto psychical structures.

Fräulein Else is a literary product of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. As such, Schnitzler embeds social symptoms of interest, including shame, in literature. Else's shame is the manifestation of conflict regarding internalized social standards. Shame is a universal experience of civilization, but any universality in Else's experience of shame must also encompass the specificity of shame as it regards the socio-historical context of Viennese modernism. The contextual foundations of *Fräulein Else* are structured upon the intricacies of social and political frameworks, which are themselves products of a given temporality.

Fräulein Else is a social commentary that engenders the literary character of Else as a case study of a social macrocosm. She is the archetype of an inevitable failure to adhere to internalized, codified social standards. Her psychical tension embodies the inherent conflict of the bourgeois social sphere. Else is the quintessential female character of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna.

This was not only the period in which Arthur Schnitzler wrote; it was also the period that he portrayed and criticized in his works. *Fin-de-siècle* Vienna, due in part to political instability, experienced social stagnation and cultivation. The residue of liberal values muddied the desires for social reform. This dissonance defined turn-of-the-century Vienna. Its indispensable ambivalence was not only present in Schnitzler, but was also, in turn, embodied in the character of Else in *Fräulein Else*.

Arthur Schnitzler, in line with his contemporaries of the *Jung Wien* literary circle,

situated his work around social discontent and psychological conflict. Schnitzler "offered

realistic portrayals of the sexual customs of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna" which exposed the "hypocrisy

and destructiveness of the social conventions surrounding sexuality in bourgeois Vienna" (Luft

40-41). It is this "attention to the realities of contemporary life [that] sets him apart from the

majority of the Jung Wien writers of the 1890s" (Thompson 31). Schnitzler investigated the

effects of tension between individual and society and the resulting affects through the tensions

within the individual psyche.

It was within this milieu that Schnitzler's inner monologue and literary case study found

expression. *Fräulein Else* is representative of the macrocosm of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna.

Schnitzler's novella underscores "the prevailing code of sexual morality, which smothered and

repressed natural sexual desires" (Thompson 54). This aesthetic portrayal is accomplished

through the formal structure of inner monologue, through which Else's psyche is layered,

exposing her conscious, preconscious, and unconscious activity. This exposition provides insight

into Else's psychical tension, which is socially fueled to elicit shame so powerful and enduring

that it leads to self-destruction. In other words, the inner monologue provides access to the

psychical workings of Else's shame.

The use of inner monologue does not simply reflect the literary atmosphere towards

inwardness. It underscores the elevated psychical conflict in relation to the inability for dialogue

and discussion in what Bettina Mathias calls an "egocentric society" (261). This literary form

reflects the social and intellectual context of fin-de-siècle Vienna, but it allows the respective

conflicts to be situated around and within one particular psyche. The inner monologue in

Fräulein Else lends itself to psychoanalysis because Else's latent content becomes accessible

through her preconscious thoughts. In this regard, the inner monologue is a translation. These fleeting preconscious thoughts are the translation of latent, metaphorical representations of desire, such as the content presented in Else's dreams, for example. Furthermore, the inner monologue exposes Else's desires by underscoring contradicting thoughts, or by showing the contradiction between thoughts and spoken dialogue. These hidden desires, which are concealed in the psyche, become apparent in the inner monologue. Therefore, through the appropriation of the inner monologue, Schnitzler establishes a social dialogue on external reality, established by the symptomatic monologue of internal reality. Both form and content are reflections of the social landscape, yet, for the purpose of this paper, the inner monologue finds substantial merit in its ability to capture and embody psychological data, especially the experience of shame.

Schnitzler's texts are informative representations of social and psychical tension as they profile and criticize socially constructed notions of sexuality. *Fräulein Else* is crucial in the discussion on shame in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, precisely because it embodies, both in form and content, the ambivalence and shame in relation to sexuality. The novella serves as a model for the detrimental effects of shame. It underscores the psychical tension created through the internalization of social standards in the psyche. Else's social expectations demand the full suppression of her instincts and desires. The prescriptive bourgeois code is unattainable. A product of the bourgeoisie, Else is destined to live in shame. Her moral standards and aesthetic desires are in constant conflict.

VII. CONCLUSION

Else is aware of her fate. Her suicide is "a remedial act – the wish to wipe out the unbeatable sense of mortification and nameless shame" (Kohut 241). Else's shame stems from her inability to meet the demands of the social standards regarding female sexuality in *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. The social context of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna, of Schnitzler's Vienna, is crucial for conceptualizing Else's shame, which reaches its climax the moment her sexuality is exposed. This exposure severs the social bond and creates an overwhelming experience of shame. Her self-destruction is a last resort, following multiple efforts to cope with the presence of shame.

Shame presupposes conflict. Else's shame manifests from psychical tension between the ego and ego ideal, and thus, embodies the conflict between the individual and society. *Fräulein Else* begins with an exchange between Paul and Else, "*Du willst wirklich nicht mehr weiterspielen, Else*? Nein, Paul, ich kann nicht mehr. Adieu." (5). Astrid Lange-Kirchheim recognizes that, "[D]as Verlassen des Tennisplatzes metaphorisiert den Abgang von der Lebensbühne" (37). Furthermore, Schnitzler employs the symbolic representation of the tennis match—or more generally, a game—to reflect conflict. The back-and-forth movement of the ball between two sides signifies the reciprocal conflict between the individual and society. The individual's movement around their side of the court symbolizes the oscillation of the self in the attempt to maintain play. Else can no longer play; to incorporate Schnitzler's double-meaning, she is done acting (spielen) as though she can play. She drops the façade with the racket.

Else's suicide mirrors this representation. She can no longer endure the conflicts surrounding her shame. She can no longer battle the social standards of fin-de-siècle Vienna, the standards of her own ego ideal. The social code forces individuals into a game, a game in which, for some, victory is unattainable, failure is inevitable, and every match ends in shame.

Suicide is Else's victory over the game, over conflict, over shame. She removes herself entirely and indefinitely from the scope of the social order. Her ego cannot succeed in successfully adhering to the demands of the ego ideal. "Addresse bleibt Fiala" means exactly that, regardless of intent, self-destruction is unavoidable (Lange-Kirchheim 37). Suicide is inevitable because Else lives within a social structure that does not allow her to express her sexuality. Her ego ideal will always present the unattainable goals of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. She is destined to fail and the resulting shame is irrevocable. Unable to repair the social bond or her whole self, suicide, too, is inevitable. By passing through the game room of the hotel and exposing herself in the music room she rejects the social order of *fin-de-siècle* Vienna. In removing her coat and drinking the Veronal Else's shame finds its own articulation: "Ich kann nicht mehr. Adieu."

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